

THE MINUTES OF THE 328TH STATED MEETING

OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

8 FEBRUARY 1989

EDWARD A. MONTGOMERY, JR., CHAIRMAN

Present: Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman
Christine Washington, Vice Chairman
David Brownlee
Caroline Golab
David Hollenberg
Jason Nathan
Benjamin Ellis, Department of Public Property
David Baldinger, Deputy Executive Director, Philadelphia
City Planning Commission
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing and Community Development

Maria Petrillo, Esq., Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation
Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner

Also: Steven Joblin of Joseph Berenholz, P.C. regarding 26, 28
and 30 South 21st Street
Lauren Leatherbarrow, Architect regarding 309 S. Camac
Street
Kay Laliasen
George C. Lutz, Contractor for 309 S. Camac Street
Julie Johnson
Seth Cooley, Duane, Morris & Heckscher
MaryLou McFarland, Executive Director, Preservation
Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Shep Houston, Architect regarding 507 Delancey Street
Marvin Verman, Architect regarding 1229-1231 Locust Street
Eric Olson, Foundation for Architecture
Vincent Hauser, Philadelphia Center Realty regarding John
Wanamaker Department Store Building, 1300-1324 Market
Street.

THE MINUTES of the 327th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, 14 December 1988, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman. The Commission members reviewed the Minutes of the December meeting and asked that the minute regarding the conceptual approval for the Reading Terminal trainshed be clarified. On page 5, item 2. which presently reads "the establishment of a visual link between the headhouse and the trainshed" should be changed to read "the establishment of a visual link between the ground floor of the headhouse and trainshed with only a minimum of demolition on the link floor. The link floor should continue to read as a floor and not as a bridge."

Subject to this change, the Minutes of the 327th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission were approved.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, 29 December 1988, David Hollenberg, Chairman.

Mr. Hollenberg reported to the Commission that his Committee recommended a final approval on five projects. These five projects include One Mellon Bank Center, Two Mellon Bank Center, 511 South 2nd Street, the John Wanamaker Building at 1300-24 Market Street, and 419 South 17th Street. The Commission voted to accept the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and approve these five projects.

Approvals in concept were recommended for 1810 Rittenhouse Square, 1225-31 Locust Street and 29 E. Penn Street. Mr. Hollenberg explained that the approval in concept for 1810 Rittenhouse Square was contingent upon the replacement of the existing windows with a reasonable match. The Commission accepted the Committee recommendation and granted a conceptual approval for each of these three projects.

Next, Mr. Hollenberg described for the Commission three projects for which an approval subject to certain conditions was being recommended. These included 815-17 Sansom Street, 1702 Locust Street and 104-106 Arch Street. The Commission voted to approve the three projects subject to the conditions specified in the 29 December 1988 Architectural Committee report.

Finally, three projects reviewed by the Architectural Committee required no action by the Commission. These three projects included 2018-26 Sansom Street/2017-21 Moravian Street, 318 S. Fawn Street and 69-71 North 2nd Street.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee, 26 January 1989, David H. Hollenberg, Chairman. Mr. Hollenberg reported that the Committee recommended an approval for 115-17 North 3rd Street subject to staff review and final approval of shop drawings for all millwork and for

cleaning and pointing specifications. The Commission voted to accept the Committee recommendation and approve this project.

The Committee recommended approvals for three projects subject to certain conditions. Revised drawings for two of the projects, 712-16 Walnut Street and 309 S. Camac Street, have been received and are acceptable. The staff is still awaiting receipt of corrected drawings for 27-29 S. Bank Street. The Commission voted to accept the recommendations of its Committee for the three subject properties as conditioned.

The Committee recommended an approval, in concept, for the construction of a hotel tower at the rear of the property at 1811-13 Walnut Street. The Commission accepted the Committee recommendation and granted a conceptual approval for this project.

Finally, Mr. Hollenberg reported his Committee's recommendation for the denial of the building permit application for alterations to the rear of 507 Delancey Street. The Committee did not object to the design of the proposed third floor addition and roof deck atop an existing two-story back building at the rear of the property. It did object, however, to the construction of the proposed over-sized, dormer-type structure, known as an airplane roof, on the rear of the main building. The Committee found the proposed roof alteration to be completely out of scale with the original building and its roofline and suggested that the proposed main roof alteration be scaled down to a more compatible size. Mr. Hollenberg noted that the Committee report did not record his abstention from both discussion of this project and the vote and asked that the report be amended to reflect this fact.

The applicant, Shep Houston, presented to the Commission her plans for this property and a cardboard model of the house showing the proposed additions. The Commission members, in particular, discussed the design of the over-sized, dormer-like structure; its visibility from Delancey Street, Reese Street, Chancellor Street and 5th Street; the proposed use of the interior space and other related issues. Ms. Houston wishes to expand the roof at the rear of the main building in order to convert the attic space into a billiard room.

Following considerable discussion of this project, the Commission voted to support the recommendation of its Architectural Committee and deny the application as presented. The Commission asked that the applicant restudy the design of the proposed roof alteration and scale it down to a more compatible size. Mr. Hollenberg abstained from voting on this matter; Messrs. Nathan and Baldinger opposed the motion supporting the Committee recommendation.

THE REPORT of the Committee on Historic Designation, 10 November 1988, David Brownlee, Chairman. Dr. Brownlee presented the Committee's

November report to the Commission. Owing to their association with the University of Pennsylvania, both Dr. Brownlee and Dr. Golab absented themselves from the Committee's discussion and vote on the three University of Pennsylvania buildings nominated for designation. Owing to their absence from the meeting, Dr. Brownlee asked Mr. Tyler to report on this matter.

The three buildings reviewed by the Committee at the 10 November meeting included the Laboratory of Hygiene at 215 South 34th Street and the Music and Morgan Buildings at 201-205 South 34th Street.

Mr. Tyler reported to the Commission that the University of Pennsylvania has requested a continuance on this matter. The University has appointed a Committee to evaluate all buildings located on the Penn campus with an eye toward preservation and to develop a preservation over-lay for the University's Master Plan.

Mr. Tyler recommended to the Commission that it defer taking a decision on the proposed designation of the three Penn buildings at this time. He pointed out that the buildings are protected under the City's preservation ordinance and that the University is aware of this status. This continuance would be contingent upon substantial progress toward the development of a larger study to achieve a greater preservation end. It was further suggested that the University be advised against the expenditure of any significant amount of time or money on design development for the site upon which the three buildings under consideration stand.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed to grant the University a one month continuance and to request a presentation at the Commission's March meeting on the preservation study and its present status. It was further agreed that so long as work on the preservation study progresses at a steady pace, the Commission would be receptive to the granting of further requests for continuances.

Dr. Brownlee next presented to the Commission members his Committee's recommendation on the proposed designation of 920-22 Chestnut Street, 926 Chestnut Street and 930 Chestnut Street. Dr. Brownlee stressed the importance of these three buildings. These buildings stand as three of four remaining significant commercial structures on Chestnut Street constructed in the decade and a half prior to the Civil War.

Mr. Tyler advised the Commission members that pursuant to policy adopted by the Commission about a year ago, he had already granted a single continuance on this matter. The owners, the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association, have now come to the Commission to request yet another continuance on this matter.

Seth Cooley, Counsel for the PMA Insurance Company, addressed the Commission and requested of its members a two-month continuance on the proposed designation of the Chestnut Street properties. As

suggested by Mr. Tyler, Mr. Cooley will arrange a meeting of all the principals involved in the proposed development of the 900 block of Chestnut Street, the Planning Commission staff, the Historical Commission staff and other concerned parties. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss all existing development controls in the 900 block of Chestnut Street and to determine whether preservation might yield greater development opportunities for the site than would total clearance.

Following some discussion of this matter, the Commission agreed to grant a two-month extension as requested by Mr. Cooley for the purpose of arranging an informational meeting for all concerned parties and discussing preservation concerns. The Commission stressed the fact that its approval of the requested two-month extension should not be interpreted as a willingness to accept a lesser standard of compliance than would be expected had the Commission acted to designate now.

Finally, it was pointed out that the Designation Committee in its report had identified two additional buildings on the south side of Chestnut Street in the 900 block which appeared to possess historical and architectural significance. The Commission members agreed that these buildings should be researched and a nomination form prepared and presented for consideration.

THE REPORT of the Committee on Historic Designation, 15 December 1988, David Brownlee, Chairman. Dr. Brownlee reported to the Commission on the two items of business contained in the 15 December 1988 report.

Members of the Committee walked the proposed Girard Estate Historic District and agreed that a potential local district does exist in the proximity of Girard Park at 21st and Shunk Streets in South Philadelphia. Dr. Brownlee noted that identification of a potential district is the first stage in the designation process and that no action is required by the Commission at this time. Dr. Brownlee also took the opportunity to report on the status of the proposed Rittenhouse/Fitler, Society Hill and Spruce Hill districts. This report prompted a discussion of on the staff's ability to administer these additional districts.

MaryLou McFarland, Executive Director of the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, addressed the Commission and stated her concern for the continued designation of local historic districts. She further suggested that the Commission look to its designated neighborhoods for assistance in the administration of these districts. Following considerable discussion, the Commission suggested a meeting of the Preservation Coalition, the chairs of the Architectural and Designation Committees, the Commission staff and any other interested persons to identify ways in which the Coalition and historically designated communities might assist the Commission staff in its work. Ms. Petrillo asked Ms. MacFarland to prepare and

submit in writing prior to this meeting any concrete suggestions for help from her or her board.

Next, Dr. Brownlee reported his Committee's decision not to consider the proposed designation of the building at 6040 Drexel Road known as Grey Arches. This decision was taken owing to the current owner's having already obtained both a demolition permit and zoning approval for a new dormitory to be built on the site.

Scott Wilds suggested recording the building prior to demolition. Mr. Baron reported that exterior photographs were taken as a part of the nomination. The Commission agreed to ask the current owner, the Talmudic Yeshiva of Philadelphia, for permission to enter and photograph the interior of the house for the Commission's files.

THE REPORT on the Activities of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff for December 1988, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer. The Commission voted unanimously to accept the December Activities Report.

THE REPORT on the Activities of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff for January 1989, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation. The Commission voted to accept the January Activities Report as well.

OLD BUSINESS

26-28-30 South 21st Street - Request for a 90-day Extension of the original six-month continuance. Mr. Tyler reviewed for the Commission the current status of 26-28-30 South 21st Street. On 14 September 1988, the Commission considered a demolition permit application for the three 21st Street buildings submitted by Joseph Berenholz & Associates. The Commission at that time voted to postpone action on this application for a period not to exceed six months and to require compliance with Section (7)(f)(.1) - (.7) of the city's historic preservation ordinance. This initial six-month period would have expired on 14 March 1989.

Steven D. Joblin, representing Joseph Berneholz & Associates, introduced himself to the Commission members and formally presented his request for a 90-day extension of the original six-month postponement of action. Mr. Joblin explained his firm's need for additional time to study the properties and its desire to evaluate recent changes in the city's economic climate owing to Rouse's abandonment of the Penn's Landing development.

As an indication of his firm's good faith effort to comply with the preservation ordinance, Mr. Joblin submitted a preliminary report on the 21st Street properties. He noted that additional time would be needed in particular to complete the financial analysis for the various development alternatives examined. David Baldinger stressed the importance of including in the report to the Commission

information on the current zoning of the site and of examining alternatives which meet that particular zoning designation.

Following some discussion of this matter, the Historical Commission voted to grant the 90-day extension requested by Mr. Joblin. With this extension, the six-month period will now end on 14 June 1989.

NEW BUSINESS

Certified Local Government (CLG) comment on the National Register nomination of the Wagner Free Institute, 17th Street and Montgomery Avenue. Mr. Tyler reviewed for the Commission the significance of the Wagner Free Institute and recommended that the Historical Commission endorse the nomination of this property to the National Register of Historic Places as part of our obligation as a Certified Local Government. A motion to this effect was made, seconded and carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer