

THE MINUTES OF THE 313th STATED MEETING
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

29 July 1987

Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman

Present: Jason Nathan, Acting Chairman
David Brownlee
Joan C. Ferriera
Caroline Golab
David Hollenberg
William D. Thompson
David Dambly, Commissioner, Department of Public
Property
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning
Commission
Rebecca Northrop, Director of Policy and Planning,
Office of Housing
John Street, Esq., Councilman, Fifth District

Mark MacQueen, Esq., Chief Assistant City Solicitor,
Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic
Preservation Officer
Kandal Baron, Preservation Planner
Merrie Winston, Historical Architect
Maureen Heaney, Clerk Stenographer I

Also: Sandra Garz, Peter Deintz, Gihan Jordan, Bruce
Wiggins and David Baldinger, City Planning
Commission
Edna M. Irving, Councilman Street's office
Kenneth W. Clark and John Lee of Girard College
Jason W. Stump, Jr., Office of Housing and Community
Development
MaryLou McFarland, Preservation Coalition of
Greater Philadelphia
Martin McNamara, Foundation for Architecture
Donna Harris, Philadelphia Historic Preservation
Corporation
Robert James, Irene James, Rose Clark and Margaret
Gilbert, Francisville

Unless otherwise noted, actions taken herein are the results of
motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES of the 312th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held on 31 July 1987, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman. A motion was made to correct an error reported under The Report of the Committee on Historic Designation Meeting for the United Gas Improvement Building. The correct statement should indicate that the designation of the U.G.I. Building was deferred "at the 305th Stated Meeting on 24 September 1986" not "24 September 1987."

The Commission unanimously agreed to approve and file the Minutes of the 312th Stated Meeting, as ammended.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 9 July 1987, David Hollenberg, Chairman. Mr. Hollenberg stated that he was not present for this meeting and Mr. Tyler conducted the meeting in his absence. Mr. Hollenberg stated that the additional information requested for 239 N. 10th Street has not yet been received and that the additional information for 30th Street Station has been received but has not yet been reviewed.

Barbara Kaplan stated that an addendum should be added to the Architectural Committee Minutes giving more details on the discussion that took place on the proposed alterations to 1912-1914 Rittenhouse Square, for McIlhenny Houses. This addendum is attached to these Minutes.

Mr. Tyler addressed the issue of the proposed demolition at Girard College of the garages, a smokestack, toilet building, Carpentry Shop and the Gatehouse. The Gatehouse was included on the original application but was not mentioned at the Architectural Committee Meeting. Mr. Tyler informed the Commission that a site inspection was conducted by Randal Baron, Merrie Winston and himself. This visit provided ample evidence of trespass and vandalism.

Kenneth W. Clarke of Girard College addressed the Commission and stated that the buildings proposed for demolition are all small buildings that have been vandalized and abandoned. Mr. Clarke also stated that there are no reuses for these buildings in the foreseeable future.

Mr. Tyler presented photographs of the buildings and the Commission members discussed the historical importance of these buildings along with the reasons why these buildings should be preserved.

Dr. Brownlee stated that since there is no institutional need for open space on the grounds and there is no documentation for the hazardous condition of the buildings, the College should preserve them. Although the Gatehouse was found to be an early twentieth century building, Dr. Brownlee thought that it too should be preserved owing to the fact that it is a sympathetic part of the complex. Dr. Brownlee also stated that if the

College should need the space on which any of the buildings stand in the future, it should then appear before the Commission again with its plans.

After considerable discussion, the Commission unanimously agreed to accept the Committee's recommendation that demolition be allowed for the garages, smokestack and toilet building. However, the Carpentry Shop, the Foundry and the Gatehouse are not to be demolished.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the Report of the Architectural Committee meeting held on 9 July 1987, with the exception of the two projects for which additional information was requested and subject to amplification of the discussion on 1912-1914 Rittenhouse Square.

THE REPORT on the Activities of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff for 15 June 1987 - 15 July 1987, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer. Jason Nathan noted the inclusion in the Report of a letter from Toll Brothers to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in response to the Council's letter to the General Services Administration of 12 June 1987 concerning the Naval Home and suggested that any in-depth discussion on the Naval Home be deferred to a future meeting.

Barbara Kaplan stated that she thinks the Commission staff should respond to the Council with regard to the letter from Toll Brothers concerning the Naval Home. Toll Brothers' letter was written in response to the General Services Administration's letter of 12 June 1987. The Commission response to this letter should clarify the record and point out the inaccuracies of Toll Brothers statements and emphasize the efforts of the City to facilitate the development of the Naval Home property.

Richard Tyler introduced Merrie Winston as the Historical Architect who joined the Historical Commission staff on 7 July 1987.

Richard Tyler also stated that Mark MacQueen, counsel for the Historical Commission, will be leaving City employment on 14 August 1987.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve for filing the Report of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff Activities for 15 June 1987 - 15 July 1987.

NEW BUSINESS

1923-1925 Brandywine Street

Richard Tyler stated that the Commission had received a proposal several months ago for the substantial rehabilitation of this building, which was in somewhat deteriorated condition.

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Mr. Tyler informed the Commission that a letter had recently been received from Keast and Hood that suggested that the front wall should be taken down. In addition, to this letter a dangerous building report from the Department of Licenses and Inspections has cited the structure as a dangerous building. In view of these circumstances the Historical Commission staff permitted the removal of the front wall following consultation with the Chairman of the Commission and of the Architectural Committee. Since the principal character of the building and its historical facade are now gone, Mr. Tyler suggested that the property at 1923-1925 Brandywine Street be removed from the list of designated buildings.

The Commission unanimously agreed to remove the building from the list of certified buildings.

Eastern State Penitentiary

Mr. Tyler informed the Commission that the City had received responses to its offering of Eastern State Penitentiary for development and had found that four preliminarily satisfied the selection criteria. The Technical Evaluation Committee now has the four under review. Although no permit applications are now before the Commission, Mr. Tyler thought it advisable to present the four proposals to the Commission to get a sense of the Commission on them to convey to the Technical Evaluation Committee. Mr. Tyler presented the proposals to the Commission. Jason Stump from the Office of Housing and Community Development provided additional comment. Although a formal vote was not taken on the matter, a consensus did emerge.

The Commission agreed that none of the four submissions adequately addresses preservation. The reason for this in three of the proposals is obvious: they entail the complete obliteration of the radial plan with the retention of but a small section of a cell block in two of the schemes. The fourth proposal maintains five of Haviland's seven original radials, but it seriously compromises the integrity of their plan and architecture. None complies with even a very liberal interpretation of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The inclination of the Commission was that the building be taken off the market. However, the members expressed a willingness consult with the other agencies in an effort to secure a development proposal more sensitive to the preservation of this National Historic Landmark.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Heaney
Clerk Stenographer I