

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

**Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street
31 January 1995**

Present

**Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson, Architectural Committee
Penelope Batcheler
J. William Cornell
David Hollenberg
Herbert W. Levy
Suzanne Pentz**

**Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Lori Plavin Salganicoff, Historic Preservation Specialist**

Also

**Ray Grenald, Grenald/Waldron Associates
Rebecca Stoloff
Philip A. Sabatino II, Reading Terminal Market
Jack McDavid, Down Home Diner
Gerry Murphy, Reading Terminal Market
Gerald Cope, Cope Linder Associates
David F. Ertz, Cope Linder Associates
Peter Shaw, P & A Associates
Daniel Rubin, Philadelphia Inquirer
Henry Magaziner, Architect
John Souether, Architect
A. Philip Auerbach, P & A Associates
Roger Prichard, Preservation Coalition
Morris Hershman, RRR Management Co.
Lorn Katz, Society Hill Civic Association
Roger Moss, The Athenaeum
Milton Marks, Preservation Coalition
William Dupont, Philadelphia AIA
Sam Fadullon, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Warren Huff, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Dick Ostrander, Society Hill Civic Association
Jim Burke, FPBNA
Jon Mufal, 269 South 21st Street
Richard W. Thom, Old City Civic Association
Nilo Regojo, Kise Franks & Straw
James Straw, Kise Franks & Straw
Anthony Bier, School District of Philadelphia
David Sonnenthal, School District of Philadelphia
Leanne Atherton, 1801 Vine Street
Walter Weir, Jr. 100 South Broad Street
Leonard J. Ciccotello, 111 South Independence Mall East
D. Kirk Harman, Cayley, Harman, Pleadly, Structural Engineers**

1115-1141 MARKET STREET, READING TERMINAL MARKET

Nan Gutterman, Vitetta Group

Ray Grenald, Grenald Associates, Ltd.

PROPOSAL: Market Lights

The Applicants propose to install a combination of round and square down lights and hanging pendant globes within the Filbert Street tunnel of the Reading Terminal Market building and decorative, 50-watt wall sconces on each brick pier at the 12th Street facade. Although lights were installed in the 1960s, none existed historically on the building. Some of the work proposed has already been performed without benefit of a permit, including installation of some Filbert Street lights and the drilling of holes through the brick of the 12th Street facade for the proposed sconces. The sconces for the 12th Street facade have already been ordered and manufactured. This is the first time the Committee has seen this project.

Committee members agreed to visit the Market to look at and render an opinion on the Filbert Street lights. The fixtures for the 12th Street facade were thought by Committee members to be too ornate for the character of the building, and noted that the top and bottom of the fixture appear to be of different styles. Mr. Grenald mentioned that he had designed the top and someone else had designed the bottom of the fixture. Mr. Tyler noted that the character of the 1960s fixture had been more in keeping with the building, and Mr. Grenald restated that the fixtures have already been manufactured. Ms. Batchelor and several other Committee members stated their preference for black fixtures over bright reflective metal.

Committee members opted to visit the site before rendering an opinion on the Filbert Street lights. They also requested drawings of 12th Street fixtures which are more in keeping with the character of the Terminal building, and which show where and how connections would be made to the building.

1115-1141 MARKET STREET, READING TERMINAL MARKET

Gerald Murphy, Manager, Reading Terminal Market

PROPOSAL: Market Signage

This proposal calls for installing the large "Down Home Diner" sign at the corner of 12th and Filbert Streets. The sign, formerly located on Arch Street, would point to the diner's new location on Filbert Street. Currently there are no signs present on the 12th Street facade, although the bracket for the proposed sign was illegally attached to the corner with connections directly into the stone.

Mr. Tyler stated that the placement of an individual proprietor's sign at this corner would set a precedent and that others on 12th Street would likely soon follow suit. He recommended that the neon sign be allowed, but that it be placed closer to the diner itself on the Filbert Street facade. Mr. Tyler contended that the more prominent locations should be left for general "Reading Terminal Market" signage.

The owner of the diner stated that his lease allowed for signage and described the difficulties he experienced with the Convention Center construction crews when the sign was on the building's Arch Street facade. The neon sign was recently restored, partly necessary as a result of these crews repeatedly removing the sign without permission. Mr. Murphy explained that he did not understand

the need to come to the Commission for review of moving a sign.

Mr. Grenald of Grenald Associates, the lighting engineers hired to light the exterior of the building, was in the audience owing to the related project just heard by the Committee. He recommended that the 12th Street facade be left without signage and the diner's sign be placed as Mr. Tyler recommended.

Mr. Hollenberg stated his belief that the placement of a sign was the issue at hand, and that whether its content is general or individual is a management issue. Several Committee members agreed that the diner's sign is attractive. All recognized that the signage for the Market should be investigated and Ms. Batchelor suggested that this issue should be studied.

Mr. Tyler reiterated his objection to the location of the diner's sign at the corner of 12th and Filbert Streets.

A majority of the Committee voted to recommend accepting the placement of the "Down Home Diner" sign and to request that a study be undertaken to address exterior Market signage. Ms. Batchelor voted against allowing the sign to be placed at the corner of 12th and Filbert Streets.

700 AND 712, 714, 716 WALNUT STREETS, PSFS AND YORK ROW

Peter Shaw, P & A Associates

Gerald Cope, Cope Linder Architects

PROPOSAL: Demolition

The Applicant has placed under Agreement of Sale the entire city block surrounded by Washington Square (7th Street), Walnut Street, 8th Street, and St. James Street. In order to construct a 30-story luxury condominium building, the Applicant seeks to demolish all three buildings comprising the c.1807 York Row and a portion of the Frank Furness addition to the PSFS building. The remaining "L"-shaped portion of the currently "U"-shaped bank would be renovated for use as a lobby and offices and a 240-car parking garage would be located underground and in a new structure on Walnut Street. St. James Street would remain a through street and be slightly widened and covered with cobblestones, but would also lead from 8th Street to the circular entrance courtyard at the south (rear) edge of the complex. The tower would be set back from Washington Square by the width of the PSFS building.

The Applicant distributed interior photographs of the 42" high open hall that would be demolished, explaining that the interior of this addition has been altered from the original Furness plan.

Mr. Cope presented the project and stated that they first sought a design that incorporates both the York Row houses and the PSFS building, but found it infeasible to use all of the historic architecture in their development. In order to take advantage of this window of opportunity to save and revitalize the bulk of the PSFS building, the sacrifice of other architectural fabric which is not currently being used was deemed necessary by the developers. He explained that the Walnut Street area currently holding York Row would be used for retail, but that steps such as those now on this Row have been shown to discourage retail activity.

The developer, Mr. Shaw, stated that he has been contacted by people who believe the York Row houses to be more significant than the PSFS building. From his developer's point of view, he explained, the houses are unusable: he asserted that no one will live in a single family home on Walnut Street, and he reported that study of rental units along the length of Walnut revealed uniformly low rents. He later added that office buildings are not currently a commodity in the City. In addition to the cost of their renovation, the buildings would have to be underpinned to accommodate the underground parking.

Commission staff noted that a tall tower had been developed at the Wanamaker House, where residential buildings were retained and new townhouses built on a block of Walnut Street that is even more commercial than the 700 block. Mr. Shaw responded that the developers of that project had only to preserve one building on an otherwise cleared site and were asked by the community to step the high-rise building back from the street. He stated that his firm has an interest in historic preservation, and listed among its projects the Wallace Building, the Corn Exchange Bank Building, and loft-style factory building conversions to office space.

Mr. Cope stated that the earlier schemes for the 7th and Chestnut Street site included an elderly retirement home.

Ms. Matzkin asked for public comment, but requested that each speaker observe a five-minute limit.

John McFadden noted the importance of streetscape and asked whether just the facades of the York Row buildings could be saved.

Roger Prichard, Chair of the Preservation Advocacy Committee of the Preservation Coalition, commended Gerry Cope on the quality of his firm's past work. Mr. Prichard expressed concern, however, about the design solution chosen for the 700 block of Walnut which destroys buildings built when Thomas Jefferson was President. He stated his disappointment in the lack of defense of York Row. Ms. Matzkin reminded Mr. Prichard that Committee members have yet to offer comments or opinions on the subject. Mr. Prichard offered the Preservation Coalition's help in finding a reuse to save York Row and stated that the Coalition's Board may be persuaded to hire a consultant to assist.

William DuPont, Chair of the Preservation Committee of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), also offered the services of his organization to assist in studying the possibilities for reusing York Row within the scope of this development.

Roger Moss, Associate Professor of Architecture in the Historic Preservation Program of the University of Pennsylvania, Executive Director of the Athenaeum, and a Washington Square resident, declared his favor of the plan as proposed. He noted that the row is smaller than as originally built owing to the demolition of the easternmost buildings for the construction of the PSFS building. The PSFS building, in his opinion, offers more to the Square in terms of weight and context than the facades of York Row, and he expressed support for their sacrifice to save PSFS. He stated that the increase in the population density and tax base fostered by this tower condominium development would serve to bring more community funds and attention to the area.

Rebecca Stoloff, a member of the Preservation Committee of the Society Hill Civic Association and Chair of the Board of the Foundation for Architecture, expressed concern about the timetable in

which there is only one week before this matter comes before the Historical Commission. She explained that the matter is scheduled to be taken up by the Society Hill Civic Association. Acknowledging the offer of assistance from AIA, Ms. Stoloff added the services of the Foundation for Architecture toward any discussion of alternatives for York Row. She urged that if a motion is made to recommend allowing the demolition, that it be contingent upon and directly linked to guaranteed development of the site. Too many promised developments have ended up as open parking lots. As a resident of downtown Philadelphia, she praised efforts toward revitalization.

Henry Magaziner an historical architect and lifelong resident of the City praised some aspects of the design. He reiterated Ms. Stoloff's suggestion that any demolition be linked to a guarantee of development, pointing to The Rittenhouse as an example of parcels previously holding historic architecture laying empty for years waiting for development. Mr. Magaziner offered his assistance in working with the developer to develop alternatives which could save York Row.

Richard Thom of the Old City Civic Association spoke of several demolitions in the Old City area that were approved by the community owing to a promise of future development. These lots remain open and undeveloped although some projects went as far as construction documentation.

Mr. Shaw responded that his firm only wants a demolition permit if this project succeeds and has no intentions to sell cleared land. He stated the P & A is agreeable to the sort of linkage recommended by Ms. Stoloff, Mr. Magaziner, and Mr. Thom, but knows nothing of its legality. Mr. Tyler, using the University of Pennsylvania's Smith Hall as an example, stated that the execution of a demolition permit could be contingent upon the developer securing financing, having working drawings, and receiving a building permit. He added that this statement does not imply that he views demolition as a foregone conclusion.

Dr. Moss suggested that any Commission motion include this linkage, but also be flexible enough to include the possibility of development alternatives that would save York Row.

Richard Osterander, President of the Society Hill Civic Association, stated the purpose of his organization is the preservation of the architecture in the community, but that it is not opposed to development. He attended this meeting in order to report on the design proposal to the Association, and stressed that its members are keeping an open mind. He urged very careful consideration.

Mr. Shaw addressed the request for more time to consider the project, stating that P & A's Agreement of Sale is for a limited period of time and banks will not investigate financing for a deal that is so uncertain. Although it may be possible to delay action until the March meeting of the Historical Commission, Mr. Shaw could not be sure of this as he must check with other investors.

Ms. Batchelor noted that the condominium tower does not extend to Walnut Street as does the parking area and asked what that garage would do to Walnut Street. Mr. Shaw explained that the first floor of this structure would be devoted to retail.

Ms. Matzkin noted that if the proposal was just to demolish the rear portion of the west wing of the PSFS building, the project would likely be approved. The proposal to demolish York Row, however, is the sticking point as these are not just any rowhouses. Mr. Cope responded that saving these buildings was taken into consideration, but that they sit across the street from a parking garage. He

stated that having a new tower rising directly behind the row is another consideration.

Mr. Prichard asked what the legal basis is for this demolition request under the Historic Preservation Ordinance -- financial hardship, structural integrity, etc. Mr. Shaw stated that financial hardship is indeed part of the reason for this proposal to which Mr. Prichard responded that this is the wrong committee. Mr. Shaw explained that their presentation before this committee was the first step and that these arguments would be made before the Commission. He added that it was found to be economically infeasible to reuse the buildings of the Row. Mr. Prichard stated that the Rules and Regulations clearly specify the analyses necessary and the information that must be submitted before such a decision could be made.

Ms. Matzkin noted that the retail is a very small proportion of the site and asked again whether it is possible to work around these townhouses. Mr. Cope noted that square footage would be lost in the tower. Ms. Batchelor wondered if greater height could be allowed to accommodate more units and was told that that is a Zoning Board issue. Mr. Shaw stated that if the building was expanded into the courtyard area, the N.W. Ayer Building would block many views -- this is the reason for having the building at the western edge of the block. He noted that the 14,000 square foot floor plate, four 4,000 square foot units per floor, is of the utmost importance. Mr. Hollenberg asked whether, for instance, a plan with four 3,500 square foot units per floor was determined to be infeasible and expressed frustration that retail is shown in the exact area where the York Row houses now sit. He reiterated the interest in seeing more of the architectural and financial analyses behind the current proposal which has obviously been undertaken.

Mr. Hollenberg asked Mr. Shaw what is needed to proceed with this proposal. Mr. Shaw responded that they are before the Committee to find out if they can do what they require for the site, and that if the Committee says not to touch York Row, the investors will cancel the contract and forget the project. He claimed the investors do not see the project working with the York Row rowhouses. Mr. Hollenberg, reiterated the need for time and information to review the economic, architectural, and other issues, stating that he would like to see the reasoning behind the decision not to integrate the Row. He explained that everyone wants this project to happen, but that if the Committee votes to recommend approving the demolition of York Row, it has to do so based on an analysis of the most reasonable information possible.

Dr. Tyler explained the significance of the rowhouses which form a substantial piece of one of the earliest rows in the City and indeed is of arguably the finer Federal architectural detail than Sansom Row across the Street.

After additional discussion which generally repeated the previous arguments, it was decided to hold a special meeting of the Architectural Committee on Friday, 10 February 1995 at 2 pm in the Commission's Conference Room. This would be followed by a special Commission meeting. Planning and Zoning officials would be invited to this Committee meeting. Mr. Shaw offered to meet with the organizations which offered assistance in the interim.

901 SOUTH BROAD STREET, RIDGEWAY LIBRARY

Nilo Regojo, Kise, Franks and Straw

PROPOSAL: Fence, Sign, and Parking

This proposal addresses most of the issues remaining with the development of the Ridgeway Library into the High School for the Performing Arts. The Applicant seeks to create signage for the school, to convert the side yards into surface parking lots, to install graffiti fencing at the entrance facade, and to repair/replace the historic iron fence. The fence is to be repaired at the front, but 20 panels of the historic side fence are to be removed and replaced with new. Materials were also presented for final approval.

The original design for the school's sign was to be a free-standing sign masonry wall with carved letters. Owing to cost and the likelihood of vandalism, a different scheme was proposed where the sign would consist of brass letters attached to an armature pinned to joints on the west wall of the portico. Committee members were satisfied with this solution.

Several options were shown for placement of front facade metal graffiti fencing which offered various levels of protection to columns, grounds and entrances as well differing considerations for aesthetics. A majority of the Committee voted to accept Alternative "A", which features fence panels and entrance gates running between portico columns. Two Committee members voted in favor of a different design which included 8' high fence enclosures in front of but not attached to the building at either side of the entrance stairs. The Committee requested details of how the fence would be anchored to the building. This would preferably include stainless steel anchors to prevent cracking of the stone portico.

Committee members agreed that 19 panels of historic side fencing proposed for removal could be replaced with modern fencing, but asked that the Applicant reuse the historic transition piece near the north parking area. The Board of Education agreed to store any salvaged pieces of original fencing.

The grey-beige glazed concrete masonry units and associated materials were met with approval from most Committee members. One of the Committee members, however, questioned the color match of the glazed base to the proposed unglazed concrete masonry unit portion of the wall. The color of the unglazed concrete masonry unit was picked to match the existing granite.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of fencing Alternative "A," as well as a sign consisting of letters on a bracket pinned to mortar joints at the west portico wall. The 19 panels of historic side fencing may be replaced, but should be salvaged for future use where possible, and a transition piece should be reused at the northern parking area. The architect was asked to return to staff with details of the system to anchor the fence to the building and the armature for the sign.

1801 VINE STREET

Leanne Atherton, Interior Planning and Design

PROPOSAL: Front Gates

This proposal calls for the installation of eleven new metal fences/gates to enclose the portico on the

front of the Family Court building. There is currently a significant problem with homeless people sleeping here. The Applicant studied the remaining example of exterior metal work existing on the building and mimicked the rhythm and thickness of bars and decorative elements in that piece. Gate height, thickness of bars, and placement within openings were discussed at length with Commission Staff.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the project as drawn.

103-105 WALNUT STREET AND 107-109 WALNUT STREET

Leonard J. Ciccotello, Architect
D. Kirk Harman, Structural Engineer
Walter Weir, Jr., Legal Counsel
PROPOSAL: Demolition

This proposal calls for demolishing the majority of the buildings at 103-105 and 107-109 Walnut Street to integrate pieces of the facades into an undefined future development. Of 103-105 Walnut Street, only the cast iron ground floor would be retained for future use, along with enough structure to be attached to a temporary stabilizing metal framework. This block has been the subject of several demolitions of historic buildings in the recent past.

The Applicant currently holds a lease-purchase agreement on the buildings. The previous owner of 103-105 Walnut Street was issued a violation and ordered to repair the southeast corner of the building and responded by erecting pedestrian scaffolding on the sidewalk below as well as supporting scaffolding within the structure at that corner. Judge Nigro has suspended further action against the owner pending the outcome of this proposal.

Mr. Ciccotello stated that the Applicant called in a Mr. Harman's structural engineering firm when the workmen hired to stabilize the corner found no structure from which to tie it back.

Mr. Harman reported roof damage, and water infiltration, and brick damage along the entire southeastern edge at 103-105 Walnut Street. Other problems include a small amount of deteriorated and missing joists and areas of bearing wall. Ms. Pentz noted that at the site meeting, which she attended with Mr. Tyler and representatives for the Applicant, they visited all floors and that she and Mr. Harman agreed that most of the conditions seemed repairable. She asked whether their current proposal indicates a decision that those repairs are not economically feasible.

Mr. Ciccotello explained that the original concept for the development of the parcel was to restore the facades of the buildings and ask for demolition of the structures behind. Given the condition of this corner, the amount of brick and structural repair and brick repointing viewed as necessary, however, the proposal is now to demolish all but the first floor of 103-105. He reiterated that the entire facade of 107-109 Walnut Street would be retained.

Mr. Hollenberg asked about plans for replacing the structures, questioning whether this is a stabilization measure or part of a larger development scheme. Mr. Levy commented that this proposal is similar to the proposal for the 700 block of Walnut Street in that linkage to a guaranteed

development is of paramount importance to any decision made.

Mr. Tyler noted that the entire parcel is not yet fully assembled, not even a schematic design has been developed, financing is not yet in place. The site inspection with structural engineers for the City and the Applicant revealed that the masonry envelopes of both buildings are basically sound, except for the southeast corner, and that most of the structure is also relatively sound. Mr. Tyler stated his concern for the stability of free-standing facade walls, and suggested to allow 107-109 to be stabilized and mothballed and 103-105 taken down to its first floor and stabilized there. Mr. Levy objected that it is this sort of demolition without linkage that Committee members agree is undesirable.

Mr. Levy asked the Applicants whether a Commission requirement to remove and rebuild the easternmost corner of 103-105 and stabilize elsewhere would affect the purchase of the property. The Applicant stated that the final appearance of the buildings are of concern to the developer, and that a rebuilt edge may not be acceptable.

Mr. Harman stated that stabilization and mothballing do not completely address the problem of liability. Mr. Tyler responded that he would support stabilizing the buildings and having them masonry sealed with block infill, which would address the liability issue now, until the development is ready to take place. Stabilization of the roof, for instance, could mean a temporary roof of plywood and tarpaper.

Mr. Baron pointed out that the Commission has been criticized at times about the buildings that are being allowed to be demolished by neglect in Old City. The violation on 103-105 Walnut Street was issued at the Commission's request so that the owner would be forced to fix the building, not demolish it by neglect or otherwise.

Mr. Ciccotello asked if the facade could be removed and rebuilt at a later time. Ms. Matzkin described that the proposal for the 700 block of Walnut Street came down to an analysis of options, some part of which is a financial hardship argument. Milton Marks of the Preservation Coalition stated that he sympathized with what the new owners walked into, but that this scenario is played out much too often in Center City: a building is allowed to decay and the City is unable to force that repairs be made. Instead the violation that is issued results in the demolition of the building. He pointed to the demolition of 110-112 South Front Street as an example; it is now a lot, empty but for small piles of the architectural elements from the first story facade. He reminded the Committee that the Old City Civic Association requested over a year ago that the Rules and Regulations be altered to allow the Commission to proceed with confidence in ordering repairs. He suggested that the Committee recommend ordering immediate repairs to rectify the dangerous structural conditions, with an immediate rebuilding in kind, and to eliminate the sources of water infiltration. He added that the development of the site is welcome.

Mr. Ciccotello stated he saw no disagreement except with saving the upper floors of 103-105 Walnut Street. Ms. Batchelor noted that repairing the facades in place would save money.

Mr. Hollenberg asked about the time limit on the Agreement of Sale, stating that perhaps both parties could be thinking that the other will be assuming responsibility. Mr. Tyler answered that the original owner has a personal property interest while the Applicant, who has an Agreement of Sale, has a real property interest and is therefore responsible. Mr. Weir responded that, although he is new to the

project and not completely familiar with the issues in this situation, he could report that there have been ongoing negotiations with the Department of Licenses and Inspections for a consent decree concerning the problem with the corner. He explained that the draft of the stipulation that he saw talks about taking all reasonable steps to get the Commission to allow them to demolish the building in order to cure the overall problem. Mr. Tyler stated that this is the first time this stipulation has been discussed or revealed.

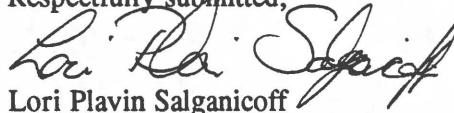
Ms. Matzkin stated that the Committee's recommendation is to stabilize and mothball the buildings while the Applicant is pursuing a plan for redevelopment. Mr. Tyler added that when there is a development proposal on the table that would incorporate these facades into a larger development, there would be a lot of latitude behind the facades. The facades would then be a screen with unusable windows.

Mr. Sam Fadullon of the City Planning Commission informed the Applicant that if the Historical Commission votes to allow demolition, that the Planning Commission would require proof of future development of the site to allow it.

Mr. Tyler asked if the Applicants had any idea when their client would be able to go forward with a development. The lawyer remarked that one of the reasons for coming before the Committee at this point was to establish what would be required from the City and plan accordingly.

The Committee voted to recommend denying the proposal to demolish any part of the buildings and to instead repair the roof and brick facade and cornice, and stabilize and mothball the buildings until a clear and probable development proposal is presented. When this proposal comes before the Committee in the future, the Committee may vote to allow some demolition of structure behind 103-105 and 107-109 Walnut Street if the facade is retained.

Respectfully submitted,


Lori Plavin Salganicoff