

The second meeting of the Advisory Commission on Historic Buildings was held 26 April 1956 at 3:30 p.m., in the office of the Commissioner of Public Property. The following members were present:

Mr. Grant M. Simon, Chairman
Mr. Harry A. Batten
Mr. Richard J. McConnell, Director of Finance
Mr. Charles E. Peterson
Mr. Samuel B. Regalbuto, Commissioner
Mr. R. Norris Williams, 2nd

Also present were:

Mrs. Constance H. Dallas (The Daily News)
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Research Historian
Mr. L. Arnold Nicholson (The Saturday Evening Post)
Mr. William T. Gennetti, Deputy Commissioner

The meeting was informally opened by Mr. Simon who introduced Mrs. Dallas and Mr. Nicholson. Mr. Nicholson briefly reviewed a meeting held in his office on April 4th with representatives of the Philadelphia Society for Preservation of Landmarks, Independence Neighborhood Association, Colonial Philadelphia Historical Society, Mr. Simon, City Architect Lovatt and City Planner Bacon. The main concern of this group was the preservation of the older portion of the 2nd Street Market called the "New Market" when it was built two centuries ago. Mrs. Dallas and Mr. Nicholson suggested several possible uses of the market and the possibility of leasing the buildings to private groups. Some of the uses suggested were a food produce market, a dry goods market and a museum. After some further discussion on this subject, Mrs. Dallas and Mr. Nicholson were thanked for attending and then left.

The meeting was then officially called to order. The first order of business was a discussion as to whether or not demolition on the 2nd Street Market should be further delayed. Mr. Gennetti stated that the demolition contractor (Werner Bros.) was ordered to stop work on this project when the Mayor learned of the historical value of the building. Part of the structure had been taken down, starting at the south end near South Street. Mr. Peterson stated that he believed this was the oldest building owned by the City and used by the public and is likely the oldest market

house in the country. Views of the structure starting with that of 1787 were shown. The services of an architect were suggested to study the structure of the building. At this point, Mr. McConnell stressed the importance of adhering to the appropriation to be set aside for this purpose, as the budget is very tight this year.

A letter from the A.I.A. was submitted with a list of architects recommended for work on historic preservations as they may occur. Mr. Simon raised the question of public hearings; Mr. McConnell stated that such hearings would only be necessary if we received a protest from the public.

Dr. Tinkcom then presented a brief resume of the history of the old market building. She read a preliminary report showing that it began in two units at Lombard Street about 1746 and was extended both north and south, a few units at a time. A "head house" was built first at the south end and then, about 1803, the present one at Pine Street was added. Mr. Batten suggested that Dr. Tinkcom complete this research more thoroughly for presentation at the next meeting.

The Commissioner then suggested calling in the contractor to get a breakdown of expenses due to work stoppage. The contract for demolition is for \$5,000 and the only current expense is for watchmen. It was suggested that a fence be thrown across the open end to save this expense. It was unanimously agreed that Dr. Tinkcom should continue with her study.

It was decided that the Committee meetings would be held on the last Tuesday of every month.

Mr. Simon stated that he had compiled for review a preliminary list of five hundred structures to be considered as "historic" under the terms of the Ordinance.

The question of the preservation of "Shoomac Park", an old gambrel-roofed stone mansion on Ridge Avenue at the entrance to the Wissahickon Valley in Fairmount Park was discussed. This interesting house was recently purchased by the Park Commission and according to the newspapers may be demolished to make way for a long winding viaduct proposed to connect Wissahickon Drive with the new City Line Avenue bridges. The suggestion was made that a better alignment could be achieved by passing east of the

old house and tunnelling under the railroad tracks and thus saving the house. It was decided that Mr. Simon should write to Mr. Smallwood, Commissioner of Streets, in this connection.

The preservation of the fine old Kirkbridge Hospital on West Market Street at 46th was discussed. The institution is said to be a great landmark in the history of the care of mental illness and the oldest part of the structure is a handsome example of Greek Revival design by an architect named Holden. The future of the structure - as well as of an older country mansion on the grounds - is in question because of the intention of the owner (the Pennsylvania Hospital) to sell off the large tract on which it stands. Various uses, such as housing and recreation, are planned. Mr. Batten agreed to see if a sponsor could be found for its preservation.

Dr. Tinkcom was requested to prepare brief notes on the Pennsylvania Hospital and to review the list of historic buildings with the object of publishing the first group some time in June.

Charles E. Peterson,
Secretary