

THE MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE MEETING

OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

26 July 1989

Present: David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman of the Committee
Donald Stevenson, Architect
John Dickey, A.I.A.

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation
Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner

Also: David Marohn of Venturi, Rauch, Scott Brown to present plans
for the restoration of the interior of the Furness Library
at the University of Pennsylvania
Bill Gregg and Craig Klofach of Dagit Saylor Architects to
present plans for a rehabilitation of the out buildings at
Bartram's Gardens at 54th Street and Lindbergh Boulevard
Hyman Myers, Simon Langberg and Nan Guttermann of Vitetta Group,
Kenneth J. Bryson, C. Andrew McLean and Thomas Ventulett, III
of TVS & Associates, Inc. and Ted Garrison of the
Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority to present design
development plans for the Pennsylvania Convention Center and
the Reading Terminal Trainshed
Charles Evers and Tony Atkin of Tony Atkin Associates to
present a proposal for alterations to One Mellon Bank
Center at Broad and Chestnut Streets
Mark A. Bower and Todd Cleveland of KFS and Arthur Jones of
Bower Lewis Thrower Architects to present a proposal for
brownstone restoration at the Union League, 140 South
Broad Street
Cynthia Cardonick of Atlas Signs, Inc., Glen Strafeld,
Attorney, and Paul DelBorrello of United Check Cashing to
present their proposal for the placement of a sign on the
facade of 303 Market Street
Suzanna Barelllo of Martin Jay Rosenblum & Associates to present
plans for renovation work to the Friendship Baptist Church at
18th and Wharton Streets

Frank Weise, Architect, to present his plans for the construction of a one story link building at 225 South 8th Street
William Kingsley of the Old City Civic Association
Howard Kittel of the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia

SUBMISSION FOR ALTERATIONS

Furness Library, University of Pennsylvania, David Marohn of Venturi, Rauch, Scott Brown. Mr. Marohn presented to the Committee plans for the restoration of the interior of the Furness Library on the University of Pennsylvania campus. Mr. Marohn discussed in detail the proposed restoration of the main reading room which includes the removal of the Furness & Evans Co. 1922 concrete and steel floor addition. The proposed restoration of light fixtures, the reconstruction of the library circulation desk, the replacement of wooden grilles in the Reading Room and the reproduction of other missing features will be based on 1890 photographic evidence.

Following some discussion, the Committee voted enthusiastically to recommend a final approval of this project.

RECOMMENDATION: Final Approval.

Bartram's Gardens, 54th Street and Lindbergh Boulevard, Craig Klofach and Bill Gregg of Dagit Saylor Architects. Messrs. Klofach and Gregg presented to the Committee final plans for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the several out-buildings at Bartram's Gardens. These buildings include the barn, stable, root cellar/ice pit/seed house complex, the carriage house, dovecote and courtyard. At its meeting held in November of 1988, the Architectural Committee reviewed and recommended an approval, in concept, of preliminary plans for this project and asked the architects to return with final construction documents.

The Committee discussed, at length, with the architects the masonry conservation report prepared by Dale Frens, A.I.A. In particular, the members questioned Mr. Frens' recommendation to repoint and whitewash the east gable end of the stable where neither photographic evidence nor discovered physical evidence exists for whitewashing the wall. The Committee agreed that this wall should be patch pointed only and not parged or whitewashed. On the north, south and west walls, the Committee urged caution in the removal of the existing Portland cement based pointing/parging so as not to damage the stone.

Mr. Frens noted in his report that the existing Portland cement composition has caused severe decay of the stone on these three walls and should be removed and the walls flush pointed and whitewashed. Exceptions to this include the north wall where an area of original parging survives in poor condition.

Following considerable discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend a final approval of this project with the proviso that the east gable end of the stable not be parged and whitewashed.

RECOMMENDATION: Final approval.

Friendship Baptist Church, 18th and Wharton Streets, Suzanna Barucco of Martin Jay Rosenblum & Associates. The Committee reviewed the proposed restoration and repair of the Friendship Baptist Church to include masonry spot-repointing; cleaning; repair and painting of wooden doors and window sash; restoration of pressed sheet metal pinnacles and balustrades on each of the towers; and restoration of decorative finishes in the sanctuary.

The Committee agreed to recommend an approval of the proposed work subject to staff review of a test patch for cleaning and repointing.

RECOMMENDATION: Final approval.

One Mellon Bank Center, Broad and Chestnut Streets, Tony Atkin & Associates. The Committee reviewed the architect's proposal to cut and convert an existing window opening on the Chestnut Street elevation into a wheel chair accessible entrance. This door will also provide access to a new fire stair and an ATM lobby on the ground floor. On the interior, several openings will be infilled between the One Mellon Bank Center (Broad and Chestnut Streets), Four Mellon Bank Center (1411-21 Chestnut Street and Two Mellon Bank Center (1400 South Penn Square) to convert the complex into three independent structures.

The Committee discussed this project and voted to recommend an approval, in concept, of the proposed work.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval in concept.

Pennsylvania Convention Center, Reading Terminal Trainshed, Hyman Myers, Studio Four, Vitetta Group. Mr. Myers reviewed with the committee members the status of design development for the Pennsylvania Convention Center and, in particular, its impact upon the Reading Terminal Trainshed.

Mr. Myers presented the concept behind the treatment of the trainshed. This concept involves the preservation of a large space,

a grand court, as a forecourt to the convention facility, and the introduction of a two level structure into the north end of the shed. This two level structure will contain meeting rooms and banquet facilities on the first floor and a great ballroom space on the second floor.

Mr. Myers further described various details of the proposed rehabilitation of the trainshed and the design of the new infill structure. Beginning at the south end, the glass wall between the link structure and the shed will be restored as will the catwalks and the spiral stairs. The grand court will occupy the first section of the former train area of the shed. Beyond the court will rise a zigurat shaped structure housing meeting and banquet rooms on the first floor and the ballroom on the second floor. At the south end of the court, a series of large pylons, approximately eighteen feet tall, stretch across the floor and recall the form of railroad bumpers which existed in these locations. These pylons will distribute air throughout the structure and will possibly provide some lighting. The pylons also begin to define the scale of the vast space contained in the shed. The architects are also considering designing a floor pattern which simulates the placement of railroad tracks within the shed. The architects propose marble and stainless steel as floor materials. Stairs, escalators, waterfalls, and landscape treatment will embellish the facade of the new infill structure. The architects have elected to use interior materials for the facade design rather than materials commonly used on the exteriors of buildings. A glass vertical division between the top of the ballroom and the underside of the shed will provide an air and sound barrier between the forecourt and the rear service functions. The ceiling of the shed will be the ceiling of the ballroom. A system of shields has been designed to control light entering from the restored central skylight; the clerestories will be glazed with opaque glass. The board sheathing and truss work on the interior of the shed will be reused and restored.

Following Mr. Myers presentation, Mr. Hollenberg reviewed the five items approved, in concept, by the Historical Commission at its December 1988 meeting. These included the following:

1. the introduction of a ballroom and function rooms within the north end of the trainshed and access to the exhibition hall;
2. 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.
3. the introduction of four fire stairs and a service area within the market area north of Filbert Street;

4. the reconstruction of the central skylight and clerestories with a maximization of the skylight area;
5. the rehabilitation of the exterior of the trainshed and the structural stabilization of deteriorated building fabric.

Mr. Hollenberg noted that the architects have continued design development along the lines of the conceptual approval granted by the Historical Commission. The Committee expressed its support for the direction in which the architects have moved with this project. The only reservation expressed by the Committee involved the circular form taken by the facade of the infill structure within the trainshed and the floor pattern which continues that form. Mr. Hollenberg encouraged the architects to find a way to diffuse the circular form of this space and develop a less centrally focused design. The architects agreed to reconsider this theme in the design and suggested the possibility of turning the design of the floor pattern over to an artist.

In particular, Mr. Myers asked for committee comment on the facade of the infill structure. The Committee agreed that the new design was clearly preferable to the first submission presented to the Commission last year. The sense of the committee was to recommend a continuing conceptual approval and to ask for periodic updates on design development.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval in concept.

Union League, 140 South Broad Street, Mark Bower, KFS. Mr. Bower reviewed with the Committee the proposed restoration/rehabilitation of the facades of the Broad Street Building. He noted that the Union League's proposal for the restoration/rehabilitation of the facades offers several alternative treatments. These alternative treatments allow for prioritizing of the work depending on budget restrictions. If the costs of the project exceed the available funds, the scope of work will be altered to address the most immediate concerns without jeopardizing the historic appearance and integrity of the structure.

The work, as proposed, will include the restoration/rehabilitation of all granite, brick and brownstone fabric as well as decorative elements such as window frames and sash, cornices, balustrades and roof details. Original light standards will be restored and other lighting improvements on Broad Street will be studied.

The Committee discussed the issue of attempting to achieve a uniform appearance of the brownstone on the Broad Street facade. It was agreed that the variety of color and texture of the brownstone and later coatings does not detract significantly from the integrity of the building and should not be changed.

The Committee, after some discussion, agreed to recommend a final approval of this project subject to the submission of record drawings identifying specifically the masonry areas to be treated and the particular method of repair/rehabilitation/restoration to be used on those areas. Also, the applicant agreed to prepare test patches for committee and staff review and approval.

RECOMMENDATION: Final Approval subject to submission of record drawings and review of test patches.

303 Market Street, Atlas Sign Company, Cynthia Cardonick, Applicant.

Ms. Cardonick presented to the Committee her request for permission to place a large sign on the front facade of 303 Market Street. The proposed plastic, back-lit sign measures approximately 8' x 12'.

Mr. DelBorello, the first floor tenant, explained to the Committee his need to identify his check cashing operation. He further noted that his proposed check cashing sign is smaller in size than many others which currently exist in the 300 block of Market Street. The Committee explained that the larger signs on Market Street were either illegal or hung on non-designated buildings.

The Committee members found the size, scale, materials and placement of the sign proposed for 303 Market Street to be inappropriate to the historic character of this building. Mr. Hollenberg suggested placement of a sign behind the glass storefront rather than on the exterior face of the building. Other possibilities include placement of a sign on the fascia of the storefront cornice or painting the sign on the glass of the storefront. The Committee also suggested the possible use of a projecting sign provided such a sign is allowed under the Code.

The applicant's attorney expressed his opinion that sign control in this case may be considered by a court as a possible abridgement of free speech since it limits the mode of advertisement available to the applicant.

William Kingsley of the Old City Civic Association supported the Architectural Committee in its rejection of the proposed sign. Mr. Kingsley further reported on his Civic Association's interest in the Market Street area between 5th and Front Streets. A group called the Historic East Market Street Committee was recently formed to improve the east end of Market Street. One of this committee's goals, according to Mr. Kingsley, is the removal of the illegal signs which currently exist on the street. Mr. Kingsley welcomed the applicant to the Old City area and offered to assist in developing ways to promote this new business.

Following considerable discussion, the Committee voted to recommend that the Commission deny approval of the application as presented and suggest that the applicant explore other signage alternatives.

RECOMMENDATION: Denial.

225 South 8th Street, Frank Weise, Architect. The Committee reviewed the applicant's plans for the construction of a link addition within the garden area between 225 South 8th Street and the adjoining property. This proposal calls for a one story stucco addition set back approximately 8' from the property line.

The Committee voted to recommend an approval of the proposed addition provided a red brick color stucco color is used.

RECOMMENDATION: Final Approval.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer