

CLP
3/3/72

MINUTES OF THE 163rd STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

3 February 1972

Present: Charles R. Tyson, Chairman of the Commission
Richmond P. Miller, Vice Chairman of the Commission
Edward Pinkowski
Robert Silver, Deputy Commissioner of Public Property
James L. Ferguson, Deputy Director of Finance
Henry J. Magaziner, A.I.A., Architectural Advisor to the Commission
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian
Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Executive Assistant to the Chairman
Isador Kranzel, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor
Mrs. Joseph Segal, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Secretary

Also: H. Robert Cathcart, President of Pennsylvania Hospital and his
associate, John McMeekin.
Samuel Gransback, Washington Square West, Philadelphia Redevelopment
Authority.

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

THE MINUTES for the Stated Meeting, 6 January 1972, were approved and
directed to be filed.

REPORTS

The Report of the Architectural Committee for 11 January 1972 was
approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the
Minutes.

Staff Recommendations for Certifying Buildings. There were no
buildings to be recommended for certification this month.

The Commission's Activities, Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian.
Various activities of the staff were reported to the Commission
members by the Historian. Dr. Tinkcom's Report was approved
and directed to be filed with the Minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

706-12 Spruce Street. The Redevelopment Authority's proposal to transfer the buildings at 706-12 Spruce Street, as well as the ground on which they stand, to the Pennsylvania Hospital was explained to the Commission by Mrs. Segal. The Authority's concern lies in the fact that this plot of land when cleared and transferred to the hospital could remain empty and unused for a number of years, a situation which would lead to innumerable criticisms. The Authority's proposal would allow the hospital to keep and use the buildings on Spruce Street, at no cost, until construction for the planned new facilities is ready to begin. Mr. Cathcart thought that the proposal could be taken under consideration if a use for these old buildings could be found. Mr. Magaziner, as a member of the Board of the Mid-City House Agency, suggested using the buildings as a day care center for children whose mothers are undergoing psychiatric treatment at the hospital. The center was ousted from one of the Pennsylvania Hospital's buildings last year and is presently looking for space in another structure. It was Mr. Cathcart's opinion, however, that these old houses would not be a safe place in which to care for a large group of children and thought that, for this reason, the hospital would not approve of such a set up. Mr. Tyson asked those present for any alternative proposals. Mr. Cathcart suggested that if the land were cleared now, landscaping could be begun and the ground used to beautify the area until the time comes for new construction to begin. The hospital could, within ten days, provide the Commission with a plan showing how the land in that area will be used. The Commission agreed to view these plans as suggested. The visitors were thanked for coming to the Stated Meeting and excused.

In Executive Session the Commission unanimously agreed that the Architectural Committee review the plans to be presented by the Pennsylvania Hospital and advise the Philadelphia Historical Commission of their opinion. Action will subsequently be taken by the Commission on the Committee's recommendations, and, if approved, will be retroactive to 3 February 1972.

1117-19 Spruce Street. Samuel Gransback of the Washington Square West site office of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority reported to the Historical Commission that many historically certified properties in his area were being improperly altered, the work being done either without building permits or in excess of what the permit allows. A case in point is 1117-19 Spruce Street where the owner removed the original cornice and installed a piece of plywood in its place. Although a permit was obtained after a report had been made to the Department of Licenses and Inspections, and, in fact, after the work was completed, it did not conform to the terms of the permit. The Department of Licenses and Inspections, when the situation was reported, would not take any action against

OLD BUSINESS (Cont'd)

the owner since in that agency's estimation the work which had been done was now legal. Mrs. Maurer suggested that the Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections or one of his deputies be invited to the next Commission meeting at which time Philadelphia Historical Commission regulations can be discussed and mutually satisfactory procedures agreed upon. It was unanimously agreed that an invitation be sent to the appropriate person to attend the Commission's next scheduled Stated Meeting.

2032 Walnut Street. The Wanamaker House is presently vacant, unheated, unlighted, and will most likely be demolished when the remaining months of the withholding period are ended.

At this time, Mr. Pinkowski suggested that perhaps the Commission's proposal to extend the demolition withholding period from the present six months to one year could be reintroduced into City Council. Dr. Tinkcom will ask the City Planning Commission's opinion of this and report her findings to the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Girard College. A copy of the report on the College buildings made for the President by Edward Kirkbride, of the firm of Magaziner, DiGiorgio & Kirkbride, was sent to the Philadelphia Historical Commission. It was the feeling of Mr. Kirkbride that the College should be encouraged to develop a comprehensive plan for the use of the land and the buildings on the campus. At the present time they work only in a haphazard way. It was agreed that a letter be sent to Dr. Lawrence, President of Girard College, reminding him that the buildings on the campus are under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission and have been so since 1956 and offering Commission support should the College decide to apply for any of the federal money available through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, or the Model Cities Program to be used in modernizing, and restoring these buildings. It should also be requested in this letter that the Commission be supplied with a list of buildings in existence on the grounds and with a list of those which have already been lost.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Secretary