

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Robert Thomas, Chair
Commission Conference Room, One Parkway, 13th Fl., 1515 Arch St.
29 September 1998

Present

Robert Thomas, Chair
Penelope Batcheler
J. William Cornell
Herbert Levy
Daniel McCoubrey
Suzanne Pentz

Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
R. Scott Jacob, Executive Secretary
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Also

Alvin Holm, Historic Rittenhouse Town
Richard Thom, Old City Civic Association
Catherine Apothaker
Michael Fasone
Eli Gabay
Michael Medallo, East Coast Sign Co.
Joseph Otto
Melissa Moore, Sign Spec, Inc.
Dennis Di Donato
John Hunter, Venturi, Scott-Brown and Associates
Francis X. Sloan
Margaret MacLaren Ulrich, Center City Residents Association
Lance Wright

Mr. Thomas, Chair, recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

208 Lincoln Drive, Isaac Rittenhouse House

Fairmount Park, Owner
Alvin Holm, Architect/Applicant
DATE: c. 1845
PROPOSAL: New stair, door and pent on rear side

This proposal calls for creating a new entrance into the house for a caretaker's apartment at the rear of the property. Plans call for adding a wood stair, cutting a window down into a door and building a pent over that door on the rear side of the house. Other work on the house calls for restoring a roof, some stucco and trim replacement.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

220 Market Street

Michael Singer, Owner/ Michael Fasone, Tenant

Dennis DiDonatis, Applicant

DATE: c. 1840; c. 1930 - storefront

PROPOSAL: New storefront to correct violation

This proposal calls for making corrections to cure a violation for a storefront that the tenant altered without a permit. The storefront will now regain its former profile in plan. The new storefront elements in the violation include:

1. Two new doors that replace the former fixed shop window.
2. A stained glass transom above the new doors.
3. Tiles installed in the inner walls of the new storefront.

Michael Fasone, the present occupant, explained that he had replaced the shopfront with two doors to accommodate large pieces of furniture for his antique shop. He has now submitted a drawing showing corrections to the design as built. This building does not have a service entrance at the rear. Committee members agreed to recommend moving the new doors out to the plane of the original shopfront window, and asked for the removal of the visible exterior hardware on the two doors. Mr. Fasone agreed to comply with these recommendations.

Ms. Batcheler also voiced apprehensions over the new stained glass window that Mr. Fasone installed within the transom. She recommended installing clear glass and painting the address and name of the store in gold directly on the glass. Mr. Baron stated that the tenant could also work with Commission staff to develop a non-internally illuminated signage scheme.

The Committee also asked for the removal of the new tiles Mr. Fasone installed in the inner walls of the new storefront, and to replace them with beaded boards. Mr. Fasone and a representative of the owner agreed to comply. Committee members objected to the existing exterior roll-down grate, installed without Commission approval prior to the current storefront alterations. Mr. Fasone stated that he will remove the grate and reinstall it inside the new shopfront.

Richard Thom of the Old City Civic association expressed concerns that this section of the city has lost many of its historic storefronts; he asked the Committee to recommend denial of legalization of the new storefront, and to require a total restoration of the historic storefront.

Committee members noted that the front entrance constitutes the only access to the shop, a prior tenant altered the storefront before, and that the new use warrants the introduction of a more accessible entrance.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denying legalization of:

- 1. The new stained glass transom.*
- 2. The new tiles installed in the inner walls of the new storefront.*
- 3. The existing exterior roll-down grate.*

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approving:

- 1. The new wood storefront doors, moved to the plane of the original shopfront window and the removal of the visible exterior hardware on the usually non-operable of the two doors, with staff to review and approve details.*
- 2. A clear glass transom, with shop address and name painted on the glass, with staff to review and approve details.*
- 3. Beaded boards in place of the green tiles.*
- 4. Removing the exterior grate and installing one inside of the shopfront.*

2-8 Girard Avenue, Former Kensington Bank

First Union Bank, Owner

William Lockett, Applicant

DATE: 1877

PROPOSAL: Signage

This proposal, seen by the Committee two months ago, calls for refacing some existing backlit plastic box signs. Research revealed that a permit exists for that signage, although it never came to the Historical Commission for review. The applicant has reduced the package of proposed signage to delete the long sign at the roof and to cast in bronze the plaques to either side of the door.

Committee members inquired about any possible remnants of the earlier sign over the main entrance. They asked the applicant to submit photographs of that location after removing the current sign. Mr. Tyler showed the Committee a c. 1880 photograph of the bank from a book about Frank Furness, its architect. Committee members asked staff to inspect the original of the photograph, which might show more detail of the first transom. Mr. Levy suggested recommending approval of all the signage except for that over the main door, and awaiting further information concerning the original appearance and current conditions behind the existing sign.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of all the signage except for the one over the main door, awaiting further information concerning the original appearance and current conditions behind the existing sign.

209-211 Chestnut Street

MBM Group, Owner

Melissa Moore, Applicant

DATE: c. 1850

PROPOSAL: ATM installation

This proposal calls for installing a cash machine in an existing storefront window. Committee members objected to blocking up this opening. They also noted that the standpipe directly in front of the proposed site would impede access for patrons of the ATM and could cause injuries if unnoticed and interfere with Fire Department operations. The Committee asked the applicant to seek another location, such as an internal vestibule in the building.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial.

1535 Locust Street

Bank Philadelphia, Owner

Melissa Moore, Applicant

DATE: 1928

PROPOSAL: Illuminated sign

This proposal calls for installing a new box sign on the bank. The Committee requested better photos and a section drawing for this project when this proposal last came to the Committee meeting. The photos show the lack of historic fabric behind the existing sign and the plan drawing shows the box projecting only two inches beyond the face of the building. Committee members voiced no objections to the proposal owing to the absence of historic material left behind the sign.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

136 South Street, a.k.a. 600 South Hancock Street

George Evangelou, Owner

Lawrence Gilbert, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1834

PROPOSAL: Ramp; storefront alterations

This proposal calls for installing a ramp along the Hancock Street facade and removing two bay windows to accommodate the ramp and a new door. As this work will only modify a non-historic facade and complies with ADA requirements, the Committee did not object to the proposal.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

Note: Other visible alterations were discovered on the plans by Mr. Baron after the Committee meeting. These might need to come before the Committee for review prior to any Commission vote.

3417 Spruce Street, Houston Hall, University of Pennsylvania

University of Pennsylvania, Owner

John Hunter, Venturi, Scott-Brown Associates, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1894; 1937 - east and west wing additions

PROPOSAL: Accessibility alterations; rooftop systems

Mr. McCoubrey recused himself from the discussion and the vote owing to his architectural firm's association with the project. Ms. Pentz also recused herself.

Mr. Tyler stated that the University's Cultural Resources Committee reviewed and approved this proposal; Mr. Tyler and Mr. Brownlee of the Historical Commission sit on this Committee. This proposal calls for:

1. Alterations to doors and building entrances to accommodate the handicapped.
2. New rooftop penthouses for HVAC.

John Hunter, architect for the proposal, explained that he intends to raise the grade level of the terrace at the north side of Houston Hall for a new section of the building that will lie under the terrace. This will also allow for greater handicapped accessibility to the entrance to the original 1894 building as well as the east and west additions of 1937. This will necessitate shortening and replacing the sets of double doors there. The proposal will also entail heightening the terrace wall to accommodate the grade increase. Mr. Hunter explained that will use stones from the currently below-grade level of the terrace wall. Committee members did not object to this aspect of the proposal.

The proposal also entails replacing existing HVAC rooftop penthouses with new penthouses more compatible with the character of the building. Mr. Hunter explained that he designed the new mechanical rooms to allow for greater sensitivity to the roof lines and scale of the building. They will match the color of the historic slate roof. The Committee thought the new penthouse scheme appears more appropriate with the historic character of the building than the existing.

The remaining four members of the Committee voted to recommend approval of:

1. *Alterations to doors and building entrances to accommodate the handicapped.*
2. *New rooftop penthouses for HVAC.*
3. *Masonry and roof repair.*

8 North 3rd Street

Hyung Koo Kim, Owner

Michael Hauptman, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1835

PROPOSAL: Legalize tile covered storefront

This proposal calls for legalizing the facing of the storefront with tiles without a permit. The tiles have no historic basis and add a second layer that covers historic fabric. Upon examination of photographs of the current facade, Committee members and staff learned that the historic Greek Revival storefront may remain intact under the two layers of facing.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial.

8605 Germantown Avenue

Metropol, Owner

Joseph Alteari, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1995

PROPOSAL: Trellis

This proposal calls for building a trellis at the rear of the property facing a parking lot.

The Committee members voted to recommend approval.

2013 Walnut Street

Patrick Whelan, Owner

Joseph Alteari, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1928

PROPOSAL: Alter storefront, café doors

This proposal presents two alternatives to install operable "Café type" windows into this existing shopfront. The first option consists of three sets of operating storefront café windows that open inward, with transoms above that line up with the transom over the main door. The second option involves the replacement of the existing center panel of the shopfront window with a café type window, with applied wood trim. Committee members preferred option number two.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of replacing the existing center panel of the shopfront window with a café type window, with applied wood trim.

127 Kenilworth Street

Dominic and Sarah Ward, Owners/Applicants

DATE: c. 1850 - original building

PROPOSAL: New building on historic lot

This proposal calls for rebuilding a house on the location of an historic carriage house. The demolition of that carriage house occurred without Historical Commission approval. The Committee has viewed a proposal for this lot in the past and encouraged the rebuilding of the carriage house design to avoid rewarding an illegal demolition. The present application basically follows the original design, but omits the window on the first floor and adds a third floor with a slight setback above the cornice. Ms. Batcheler stated that she would like to see a total

reconstruction of the facade, and noted that this proposal resembles the demolished facade enough to do that. She cited several ways in which the applicant could effectively reconstruct the appearance of the old carriage house. The applicants stated that they agreed with many of Ms. Batcheler's comments, and explained that their architect had mis-drawn the proposal. Other Committee members contended that the applicants, who had nothing to do with the demolition of the historic building, should not have the restraints required for a total facade reconstruction. The Committee asked the applicants to consider working with Commission staff to redesign the second-floor windows, garage door appearance and height of the facade to resemble the corresponding elements seen in the designation photographs in the Commission file. The applicants affirmed their willingness to work with staff regarding these issues. The applicants wish to delete the window that existed between the garage door and front door, owing to internal spatial elements.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, with staff to review and approve details to match the historic photographs more closely.

135 South 18th Street, a.k.a. 1731-1737 Walnut Street

Rittenhouse Management, Owner

Lance Wright, Applicant

DATE: 1913

PROPOSAL: Legalize exterior roll-down grate

This proposal calls for legalizing an exterior roll down grate installed without a permit before the designation of the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District. The applicant explained that security considerations necessitate an unobstructed view into the interior space, and the proposed grate would conform to the design requirements of the Code for such grates and match those existing on other shopfront openings of this building. Photographs showed the interior elements that would make an interior installation of the grate difficult.

The committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

1612-1616 Locust Street, The Locust Club

Locust Club, Owner

Phillippe Chin, Applicant

DATE: 1960

PROPOSAL: Steel and glass entrance canopy

This proposal calls for installing a new metal and glass canopy to denote a new restaurant use at the front door of the Locust Club, a non-contributing building in the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District. Mr. Levy stated that he walked by the building and observed that the Locust Club already installed the canopy, cut down the windows and installed a new door, windows and metalwork. Committee members also objected to the highly ornamental appearance of the canopy, which they cited as inappropriate for the building and the neighborhood. The Committee decided to take no action until the Commission receives more information regarding the full scope of the proposed alterations.

The Committee voted unanimously to declare the application incomplete.

401 North Broad Street

401 North Broad Street Associates, Owner

Francis X. Sloan, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1929

PROPOSAL: De-glaze windows, install vents behind

This proposal calls for the removal of glass panels in one bay on the side of this building. The applicant will leave the existing frames in place, and install the vents behind. The Committee asked the applicant to paint the vents a dark, flat, charcoal color to mitigate their appearance. Several other bays at this location will receive internal walls directly behind the glass to help insulate the space.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, with the vents and internal walls painted a dark, flat, charcoal color to mitigate their appearance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "R. Scott Jacob". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

R. Scott Jacob
Executive Secretary