

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
COMMITTEE ON CERTIFICATION
MINUTES

17 July 1981

Present: Edward Pinkowski, Chairman of the Committee on Certification and
Member, Philadelphia Historical Commission
Janet S. Klein, Vice-Chairman, Philadelphia Historical Commission
Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Chairman, Architectural Committee
James E. Mooney, Director, Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Bruce Wiggins, Area Planning Division, City Planning Commission

The eighth meeting of the Committee on Certification met at 2:30 p.m. on
Friday, 17 July 1981, in Room 1313, City Hall Annex.

2000 Arch Street

A small 1-story gas station erected in 1930 by the Gulf Refining Company, this building remains one of the few unaltered structures from the early years of the automobile age. Although recently abandoned, a new owner of the building proposes to reuse it as a car rental office with little exterior alterations.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend certification of 2000 Arch Street.

129 Bethlehem Pike - The Piper-Price House

This house is a two-story building with a three-story campanile erected 1854 in a Italian Villa style. Samuel Sloan may have designed the building: certainly it follows closely a design published in his Model Architect three years before. It stands as one of the finest examples of the Italian Villa within the city of Philadelphia. The Price family owned the house from 1898 to 1977. Eli Kirk Price, II, exerted great influence in the creation of the Parkway and relocation of the various institutions now bordering it.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 129 Bethlehem Pike.

1618-1622 Chestnut Street - WCAU Studio Building

Erected in 1931 from the designs of Gabriel Roth, Harry Sternfeld & Robert Heller, the WCAU Building stands as an excellent example of the Art Deco architecture often associated with the glory days of radios and movies. The building has suffered alteration, especially after a fire in the mid 1950s but its appearance, unlike any other piece of architecture in Philadelphia, dominates the south side of Chestnut Street.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 1618-1622 Chestnut Street - the WCAU Studio Building.

1818-1820 Chestnut Street - Oliver H. Bair Funeral Home

The Bair Funeral Home has served as a landmark on Chestnut Street since its erection in 1907 from the designs of John T. Windrim. Although only four floors are apparent in its Renaissance Revival facade, the building actually contains five floors and a mezzanine level. Oliver Bair founded the establishment in 1876 which eventually grew to four business locations. The new building on Chestnut Street served to combine these four locations into one building. It has recently been acquired by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts which is relocating its Peale House from across the street.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 1818-1820 Chestnut Street, the Oliver Bair Funeral Home.

4501 Fishers Lane - the Harvey Rowland House

Erected c. 1840, this house served as the residence of Harvey Rowland, one of four brothers who operated a saw works on the Tacony Creek near the intersection of Fishers Lane and Wyoming Avenue. Harvey and his brother William eventually left this concern and opened the Oxford Iron & Steel Works in Frankford. This house, standing $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories high, was part of a small village along Fishers Lane, one of the old country roads in the northeast part of the city. Most of the buildings along Fishers Lane have been demolished: the survivors, except 4501, have been certified by the Commission.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 4501 Fishers Lane, the Harvey Rowland House.

7900-7906 Lincoln Drive, a.k.a. 225 W. Springfield Avenue

This building was erected in 1843 as an ice house to service the Chestnut Hill area. The ice house closed down c. 1910 and Dr. George Woodward hired H. Louis Duhring, of Duhring, Okie & Ziegler, to renovate the building in 1913 into a residence and studio for Willet's Stained Glass Studios. It represents not only one of Woodward's finest examples of adaptive reuses of early buildings but also was part of his dream of turning Chestnut Hill into a center for the arts along with the Violet Oakley Studio. Further alterations occurred in 1925 when Willet's outgrew the building.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 7900-7906 Lincoln Drive, a.k.a. 225 W. Springfield Avenue.

801-823 Market Street - Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store

Strawbridge's presently consists of two buildings: the West building, a four-story structure in 1903 from the designs of Addison Hutton, and the main building designed by Simon & Simon, which replaced the early buildings of the complex in 1929. Justus C. Strawbridge founded the store in 1862, taking Isaac Clothier on as a partner in 1868. It remains the last major independent department store in the United States.

The Committee discussed the problem of certifying the interior space. It was agreed to treat it like Wanamakers and control only that portion of the interior deemed important. The Committee asked the staff to survey the interior and report its findings directly to the Commission at the next meeting.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 801-823 Market Street - Strawbridge & Clothier's Department Store including both the Addison Hutton West Building and the Simon & Simon Main Building.

1713-1715 Rittenhouse Street - Alfred C. Harrison Stable

A 3-story building erected in 1902 in a Collegiate style by Cope & Stewardson, this building acted as a service building to the Harrison residence on Locust Street. The stable was later renovated into a residence in the 1920s and presently house a law office. The building stands as one of the last works of Walter Cope who died in the autumn of 1902 and contributes to the architectural character of the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 1713-1715 Rittenhouse Street, the Alfred C. Harrison Stable.

700, 730-732 Sansom Street - Carstairs Row

These three buildings are the survivors of a row of buildings erected c. 1799-1800 by William Sansom as one of the first speculative row house developments in the city. The plans for the row were done by Thomas Carstairs and the row itself has been cited by numerous authorities as important to the history of architecture in Philadelphia. These buildings have been listed by the Commission for many years with no prior recorded Commission action.

The Committee unanimously recommended ratification of 700, 730 & 732 Sansom Street.

5215-5239 Schuyler Street - the Wissahickon

This immense 4-story Georgian Revival structure dominates the area surrounding Queen Lane and Wissahickon Avenue. W. Frisbey Smith, architect of many of the houses in the area, designed the Wissahickon apartment building in 1911. It stands as one of the few surviving major early 20th-Century apartment buildings in the city. It is presently undergoing restoration.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 5215-5239 Schuyler Street, the Wissahickon.

104-106 S. 8th Street

The building at 104-106 S. 8th Street stands as a four-story, five-bay brick structure with a facade constructed c. 1880, possibly by Wilson Brothers & Company. This building contains one of the few High Victorian Gothic commercial facades remaining within the city. It also served as the home of the second Horn and Hardart restaurant to open in the city (1890-mid 1950s).

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 104-106 S. 8th Street.

115 N. 15th Street - YMCA Building

Louis E. Jallade, a New York architect, designed the Armed Services Division building of the YMCA in 1926 and construction was completed two years later. It stands as one of the first Art Deco skyscrapers constructed within the city. Jallade designed the structure to contain 2 three-bay wide towers, one rising 21 stories, the other 25 stories, connected by three bridge-like wind braces.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 115 N. 15th Street-the YMCA Armed Services Division Building.

411 N. 20th Street - the Granary

The Granary is a reinforced concrete former grain elevator erected in 1925 by the Reading Railroad. It stands as an increasingly rare example of a grain elevator near the city's central business district. It is both a relic of Philadelphia's historical role as a commercial and industrial center and evidence of Philadelphia's present activity in historic preservation through adaptive reuse. In 1978, Kenneth Parker converted the structure into a residence for himself and the architectural offices of Kenneth Parker Associates.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 411 N. 20th Street, the Granary.

229 S. 22nd Street - John C. Bell House

This structure was erected in 1906 from the designs of Horace Trumbauer as a single-family residence. It was converted to apartments in the 1940s. Its Neo-Georgian design contributes to the architectural richness of the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood. Its owners, John C. Bell and John C. Bell, Jr., both achieved political prominence in the state of Pennsylvania; the former serving as State Attorney General and Philadelphia District Attorney, the latter occupying the offices of Lt. Governor, Governor and Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 229 S. 22nd Street, the John C. Bell House.

Pennsylvania Railroad Stations - Chestnut Hill Branch

The Pennsylvania Railroad contributed heavily to the development of the western portions of Germantown, Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill. The remaining stations serve as a monument to the importance of the railroad to the region. Areas such as St. Martins, Pelham and the Tulpehocken-Wayne Avenue sections benefitted directly from the advent of the railroad. Other areas grew more slowly but the railroad served as the principal means of access from these areas to center city before the automobile.

Seven stations still exist: Chestnut Hill (West), St. Martins, Allen Lane, Carpenter, Upsal, Tulpehocken and Queen Lane. The last five are all similar in design, being variations on a theme. They were erected in c. 1884-1885 probably by Wilson Brothers & Company. The branch itself opened in 1884.

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The Committee unanimously recommended certification of the following seven railroad stations on the Chestnut Hill West line: Chestnut Hill West, St. Martins, Allen Lane, Carpenter, Upsal, Tulpehocken and Queen Lane.

4414 Ridge Avenue - Undine Barge Club, Castle Ringstettan

Castle Ringstettan, as the upper clubhouses of the Undine Barge Club is known, was the first boathouse built in the Falls of Schuylkill area as an upriver clubhouse for one of the barge clubs located along Boat House Row. Documents provided to the Commission prove that Furness & Hewitt designed the building in 1875.

The form was presented to the Committee on the day of the meeting. The Committee accepted the form in order to act upon it but requested the staff to rewrite it and distribute copies to the individual members.

The Committee unanimously recommended certification of 4414 Ridge Avenue, Castle Ringstettan of the Undine Barge Club.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Jefferson M. Moak
Research Historian

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

COMMITTEE ON CERTIFICATION

AGENDA

2000 Arch Street - Gulf Service Station

129 Bethlehem Pike - Piper-Price House

1618-1620 Chestnut Street - WCAU Studio Building

1818-1820 Chestnut Street - Oliver H. Bair Funeral Home

4501 Fishers Lane - Harvey Rowland House

7900-7906 Lincoln Drive, a.k.a. 225 W. Springfield Avenue - Ice House

801-823 Market Street - Strawbridge & Clothier's Department Store

1713-1715 Rittenhouse Street - Alfred C. Harrison Stable

700, 730-732 Sansom Street - Carstair's Row

5215-5239 Schuyler Street - The Wissahickon

104-106 S. 8th Street - Horn & Hardart Restaurant

115 N. 15th Street - YMCA Building

411 N. 20th Street - The Granary

229 S. 22nd Street - John C. Bell House

Pennsylvania Railroad Stations: Chestnut Hill West
St. Martins
Allens Lane
Carpenter
Upsal
Tulpehocken
Queen Lane

MEMORANDUM

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

TO : Members of the Committee on Certification

FROM : Jefferson M. Moak

SUBJECT: The 8th Meeting of the Committee

DATE 10 July 1981

The 8th Meeting of the Committee on Certification will meet on 17 July 1981 at 2:30 p.m. in 1313 City Hall Annex. The following building will be considered:

2000 Arch Street

129 Bethlehem Pike - The Piper-Price House

1618-1620 Chestnut Street - WCAU Studios Building

1818-1820 Chestnut Street - Oliver H. Bair Funeral Home

4501 Fishers Lane - Harvey Rowland House

7900-7906 Lincoln Drive, a.k.a. 299 W. Springfield Avenue

1713-1715 Rittenhouse Street - Alfred C. Harrison Stable

700, 730-732 Sansom Street

5217-5239 Schuyler Street - The Wissahickon

104-106 S. 8th Street

115 N. 15th Street - YMCA Building

411 N. 20th Street - The Granary

229 S. 22nd Street, a.k.a. 2145 Locust Street - John C. Bell House

Chestnut Hill West Railroad branch stations

Chestnut Hill West

St. Martins

Allens Lane

Carpenter

Upsal

Tulpehocken

Queen Lane

801 Market Street - Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store

P.S. There is no air conditioning in the Annex until August at the earliest so come dressed for rather warm conditions.