

THE TWENTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

May 27, 1958

Present were: Mrs. Richardson Dilworth
Mr. Harry A. Batten
Mr. R. Norris Williams, II

Mr. George Lovatt, City Architect
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom
Mr. Grant M. Simon, Chairman

Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Executive Secretary

The Meeting came to order at 3:45 P. M. in Room 313, Courtesy of the Art Commission

The Minutes of the April 29th Meeting were approved.

PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL NURSES' HOME

The Chairman reported that the officials of the hospital agreed to the requirements of the Commission (See Minutes of Special Meeting, May 15, 1958) in every respect except that they considered it unwise to obligate the Hospital by agreeing never to involve the remaining buildings on Spruce Street now owned by the Hospital, in any future program of expansion. Mr. T. Truxtun Hare, Jr., stated in a letter that in case of further expansion, the Hospital would first consult the Commission before taking any steps toward that end.

It was decided that Mr. Cathcart, Managing Director of the Hospital, might be approached with the proposal that the interiors of the several Spruce Street houses about to be demolished, be photographed in order that a record of the interior details be preserved by the Commission.

THE MATTHEW NEWKIRK HOUSE

Mr. Bacon reported by letter that Mrs. Boden is not willing to pay the cost of moving the portico to Philadelphia. It was the opinion of the Members present, that Mr. Bacon has the matter well in hand and should find the place and the funds required to preserve the Newkirk Portico.

KIRKBRIDE'S

Mr. Williams reviewed the Commission's recommendation that Kirkbride's be used as a records' building by the City and reported that Mr. Hughes, City Archivist, is still interested in the possibility, as he is in need of additional storage space. It was the opinion of the Meeting that Kirkbride's might meet the requirements of useful and convenient storage space and since the building is slated for demolition unless proper use for it is found, it was Resolved that Mr. Batten talk to Mr. D. C. Wagner, Managing Director, about this and that he also get the opinion of Mr. H. H. Eddy in Harrisburg, who has charge of all Records in the State. The Schuylkill Arsenal was also mentioned as another suitable place for storing the City's Archives.

HISTORIC ZONING

A discussion of the twenty-story building proposed for the Yellow Cab Lot on 4th St. opposite the entrance to Old St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church followed. It was

reported that there are 218 historic buildings in the 36 acre area, which this proposed high-rise building would dominate and diminish. Mr. Batten reported that the plan to put up this building has at this date not had a reading before the Council.

After considerable discussion, it was unanimously resolved that the Chairman write to Mr. Wm. A. Day, President of the Old Philadelphia Corporation immediately, protesting high-rise buildings within the area bounded by Second Street and Sixth, Walnut and Pine, pointing out that this ground is valuable chiefly because of the old houses and the atmosphere they create, in the area called Society Hill. A copy of this letter is to be sent to Dean G. Homes Perkins, Chairman of the City Planning Commission. Public protest against the plans to "develop" this area by incorporating high-rise buildings in it, has been mentioned and the Commission is of the opinion that this protest cannot and should not be ignored. It was agreed that the Commission go on record with Mr. Day and the City Planning Commission, approving high-rise buildings in the perimeter of this area, but under no condition within the area itself, as in accord with recommendations to the Department of Public Property in January.

SPRUCE STREET

All houses as noted on Spruce Street from 9th to 12th Streets are recommended for certification. All the lists of buildings heretofore certified by the Commission have been revised and arranged in one master list for easy handling. This list includes additions to the Society Hill area, of buildings formerly omitted from the list for one reason or another. It was agreed that this master list be multi-graphed for distribution.

THE BUDGET

The Historian requested contracts not to exceed \$750 for each of three assistants, Miss June Frankland, Mr. Robert Corrigan and Mr. Richard Fuller, to do research during the summer. The rate of pay for these assistants will be \$2.00 per hour. This was approved. The increasing of Mrs. Kirkbride's contract by \$1500 to cover the cost of her services from June to December 1958 was also approved.

SOUTHWARK

It was decided to circulate photographs of Southwark among the members so that a certified list of Southwark buildings can be prepared as soon as possible.

HISTORIC PLAQUES

These will be of aluminum painted black. The owner of a certified house may buy one from the Commission for about \$10.00. The plaque will contain the number of the house as it appears on the Commission's list. It was Mr. Batten's opinion that the movement to affix these plaques will gather momentum and add to the prestige of the owner's house and his neighborhood.

220, 222 SPRUCE STREET

Mr. John Lewis wants permission to paint the brickwork, replace the pentave, remove one door substituting a window and tear down the backbuilding on Philip St. It was the opinion of the Members that Mr. Lewis be complimented for the way in which he presented his submission; that he be encouraged in every possible way.

THE HEAD HOUSE, SECOND STREET MARKET

Mr. Batten reported that the Insurance Company of North America has asked for two more weeks to clarify their position in regard to the Head House.

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:50 P. M.

Charles E. Peterson, Secretary