

FINAL APPROVAL

April 28, 1959
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE THIRTY-FIRST STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Held on March 31, 1959 in the Commission's office, 634 City Hall, at 3:30 P. M.

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

Mr. Grant M. Simon, Chairman

Also present: Mr. George I. Lovatt, City Architect
Mr. William J. Schwabe, representing Mr. Gennetti
Mr. Harry G. McDowell, representing Mr. McConnell
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian
Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Executive Secretary

THE MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 24th MEETING were approved as distributed.

A motion was made by Mr. Williams and seconded by Mr. Batten, that hereafter the Minutes shall contain the following statement:

"Unless otherwise stated, all actions reported herein were taken after motions properly presented, seconded and carried."

The Chairman suggested a motion to thank Mr. William J. Schwabe for the work on the Commission which he has done so well in the past several months. The Chairman commented that this is the last meeting Mr. Schwabe will attend, before he leaves for Baltimore to become Assistant Director (in charge of personnel) of the Johns Hopkins University Hospital. The members warmly agreed that Mr. Schwabe will be missed.

DR. TINKCOM'S REPORT

The report on the eighty-four buildings in Washington Square East, Unit #1 Redevelopment Area, proposed for rehabilitation has been completed. The Redevelopment Authority has seen this report. During the coming summer, these buildings will be described on the HABI Forms. If the Commission may have the help of the office of the Commissioner of Public Property in typing them, as was the case last year, it should be possible to file another hundred forms with the Library of Congress by the end of the year. Mr. Schwabe agreed that this might be done.

Fifty-three slides suitable to the Commission's use have been copied from those in the collections of the National Park Service, Mr. Simon's, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. These cost \$17.40. Miss Rudolph will take photographs for the Commission of important buildings not presently recorded and have slides made for the Philadelphia Historical Commission; each slide will cost about twelve cents.

✓ FRANKFORD TOWN HALL. Mr. Peterson brought with him a photograph of the town hall. In view of the area in which the building stands and the condition it is in now, the members agreed that the Mater Dolorosa Roman Catholic Church should have the ground for their proposed building.

✓ THE BENJAMIN RUSH HOUSE AND THE RAPHAEL PEALE HOUSE. Photographs of these can be ordered from the National Park Service for thirty cents a piece. Mr. Peterson reported that the Peale house is remarkably complete and in good condition.

Dunelm ✓ SECOND STREET HOUSES; Dr. Tinkcom reported that the first list of the Society Hill area which she compiled in December, 1956, has 112 houses on it east of Second Street. The Commission did not then consider that it would be feasible to certify these. However they should be photographed.

The Chairman commented on the number of buildings on Front Street, which years from now will be considered as good examples of commercial properties of the early and middle nineteenth century and this area should be photographed.

A REPRODUCING/COPYING MACHINE. Dr. Tinkcom reported that the Commission's office is understaffed and the work increasing. A machine to make copies of important papers would do the work of another person with substantial economies. An approved machine can be rented until it is possible to allocate funds for its purchase.

Mr. Schwabe has not yet found a filing cabinet; he will explore this at once.

Mr. Simon asked if Commissioner Mauyerman had been able to obtain an air conditioner

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for the office. The secretary was instructed to remind the Commissioner at the first opportunity of the necessity for this equipment.

Standards
DRAFT OF STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, WASHINGTON SQUARE East, UNIT #1.

THE CHAIR REPORTED that Mr. Williams attended an informal meeting with him, at which Messrs Andrade, Martin, Alhart and Gane were also present, to discuss these standards. This invitation was accepted only after Mr. Simon had written to Mr. Andrade to say that final approval of these standards would require Commission action.

Mr. Williams and Mr. Simon indicated to the group that a provision should be incorporated in any set of "standards" guaranteeing the preservation of the "historic buildings as certified" in the area, without any qualification excepting only of those "certified" buildings which the Commission might agree should be demolished. Mr. Andrade agreed to place these matters before Mr. Lamm. X

✓ 238 DELANCEY STREET.

The Chairman read a copy of a letter written to Mr. Nicholson saying the Board of Building Standards will agree to let him use the building as planned, if he will observe two requirements: (1) not to use the third floors for sleeping quarters and (2) to install fusible links on the doors at the foot of each winding stair, so that in the event of fire, these will close to prevent drafts and passage of smoke to the upper floors.

✓ SECOND STREET MARKET

Mr. Lovatt reported that bids will be received by April 2. The restored cornices will be wooden, as will the cupola. The works of the clock have been located and will be put in place at the proper time.

✓ MARSHALL'S COURT.

The Secretary of the Commission read a letter from Mr. M. O. Anderson saying that the National Park Service is grateful for the comments of the Commission, but that,

after due consideration, the plan to demolish the houses in question will be carried out. Mr. Peterson reported that this has in fact already been accomplished.

BANK BUILDINGS, NORTH SIDE OF CHESTNUT STREET BETWEEN FOURTH AND FIFTH STREETS.

A part of a letter from Mr. Massey of the National Park Service was read, in which he asked that the Commission certify these buildings. Mr. Batten asked what would be done with the buildings if they were preserved? He agreed to talk with Mr. Potts, President of the Philadelphia National Bank about this. It was suggested that a copy of Mr. Massey's letter be sent to Mr. Bacon. Mr. Batten further suggested that since the interest in the buildings is principally architectural, the matter be referred to Mr. Briton Martin, President of the Philadelphia Chapter of the AIA.

✓ **KIRKBRIDE'S**

Several letters written to Mr. Lourie, Dr. Stevens, Mr. Alessandrini on this subject during the past month/ were reviewed. The last noted informed the Commission that the contracts for demolishing the building have been let and that the matter is settled. The Chairman pointed out that as yet no report has come from Mr. Lourie of the Department of Welfare in Harrisburg, commenting on his inspection of the building as a possible location for a Youth Study Center.

✓ **HISTORICAL AREA**

Historic Zoning
A meeting is scheduled in Mr. Rafsky's office on April 9 to discuss the work of the Historical Commission in relation to City Planning.

The Chairman reported that Mr. Berger had told him that, at this time, it would be difficult to set up an historic area in Philadelphia, but suggested that the Redevelopment Authority might include such an area in its plans for Washington Square East. The commission did not agree that this is the only way to solve the matter. The Chairman read a letter from Mr. Frank W. Melvin's secretary answering his query as to the status of a proposed Ordinance for Historic Zoning.

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The Bill, No. 579, is presently an Administration Measure, and has not yet emerged from the Committee on Municipal Corporations. From there it goes to the State Senate. Further discussion of the problem of historic district for Society Hill was deferred.

✓ PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL NURSES' HOME.

A letter from Mr. T. Truxtun Hare, Jr., informs the Commission that they intend to extend the new nurses' home and, therefore, are obliged to ask approval for the demolition of 716, 718 Spruce Street. It was the consensus that the Commission has no choice but to give its approval at once. Mr. Peterson did not concur.

✓ 208 SOUTH FOURTH STREET

A letter from Mr. Solo, Realtor, asking the Commission's approval of a plaque for his client's property was read. The Chairman was requested to inform him that if the front were to be restored in a manner the Commission approves, permission for a plaque could be granted.

✓ Mr. Batten reported that at a recent meeting of the Old Philadelphia Corporation, Messrs. Martin, Bacon and Gettes were designated as a board of design for Washington Square West. Mr. Batten said that he had ~~pre~~ protested that the agency principally concerned with this matter was not represented on the board and he insisted that the Chairman of the Historical Commission be appointed immediately.

✓ DOCK STREET

The Food Center will be finished on June 15, reported Mr. Batten. From that date onward, interest will grow in the redevelopment of the Dock Street area. Mr. Batten suggested that a series of talks be prepared and given around the city. The Chairman reported that the Commission has taken the initiative in this, that Dr. Tinkcom, after her talk at Fort Washington last month, had prepared material for a standard talk on all phases of work under the purview of this Commission.

The slides needed to illustrate this talk are being acquired.

The matter of papers and documents, discovered during demolition of Dock Street markets was discussed. Mr. Williams said that he had seen a report in the newspapers that a clause had been put in the contract for demolition that any papers found were to be turned over to a qualified historian who will evaluate them. Mr. Batten suggested that a letter be written to Mr. Bacon about this.

✓ 319 WASHINGTON AVENUE

It was determined to postpone this matter until another meeting.

SPARK'S SHOT TOWER

The Chairman read a letter from Mr. Bacon, which stated that the Shot Tower will be preserved if possible.

THE FIRST CITY TROOP

It has been brought to Mr. Simon's attention that this organization is seeking a building on the Mall or in the Society Hill Area. It was suggested that they buy some land in the area adjoining the National and State Parks and build. The question was asked: How did the Marine Corps obtain their site. Mrs. Dilworth reported that Mrs. Ephrem Zimbalist had built the museum.

SUBMISSIONS:

- ✓ 527 DeLancey Street, Mr. Michael Harnel owner. Drawings submitted and a letter, stating desired alterations were exhibited. The plans involving changes to the facade were not approved; interior plans were approved.
- ✓ 6226 Germantown Avenue. The Bechtel House. No alterations to the facade. Front rooms with store windows, to be used to exhibit historic costumes. Interior alterations extensive. These were approved.
- ✓ Grumblethorp. Intention to carry the penthouse to the rear of the building. Approved.

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:30 P. M.

Respectfully submitted, &c....