

**REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**Robert Thomas, Chair
Commission Conference Room, One Parkway, 13th Fl., 1515 Arch St.
28 September 1999**

Present

Robert Thomas, Chair
Penelope Batcheler
Herbert Levy
Suzanne Pentz

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

Also

Norman R. Tissian, Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA)
Lynette Wells, Frens and Frens, LLC
Aliko Strakes, Preservation Alliance
Benjamin Johnson
Susan Mackey Tunnicliffe
Massimo Spatola
Francis Peltier, HLM Design
Edward Jereb, Pennsylvania Hospital
John Cooper
Todd Waskowitz
Edward Lowry, Philadelphia Veterans Multi Services and Education Center
Linda Berman
Joseph Serratore
Neil Sklaroff, Esq.
Judith Eden, Center City Residents Association
Melissa Hanlon, Motorola
Karl Zimmer, Motorola
John Cluver, Voith and Mactavish Architects
Jack Noonan
Vibeka Lichten
Vincent Costello, Department of Public Property
John Conroy, Conroy Catering
Christina Romano, Conroy Catering
Anthony Marfia
Francis McKibbin
Rebecca Stoloff, SHCA
Edward Scholl, Department of Public Property

3900 Woodland Avenue, The Woodlands Mansion

The Woodlands Cemetery Company, Owner
Dale Frens, Architect/Applicant
DATE: c. 1742; expanded/embellished c. 1770 - 1810
PROPOSAL: Demolish and rebuild (non-historic) steps; safety railing on porch

This proposal calls for demolishing a set of non-historic brick steps leading onto the center of the colonnaded porch on the river side of the mansion and replacing them with a set of wood steps off to one side of the porch. An 1809 plan and accompanying letter depict steps at both ends of the porch. Late 18th century and early 19th century illustrations show steps surrounding the porch on three sides. The material of these early steps is unknown, but the lack of archeological evidence of any stone bases suggest that they were wooden. The building at one time had central wood steps as evidenced in photographs of c.1860 and c.1935.

Lynette Welles, architect for the project, explained that the existing brick steps cannot be used in conjunction with the necessary second means of egress, as the treads are too narrow and deteriorated. Mr. Baron explained that the staff recommends approval of either a full width stair on the side of the porch with the intention of installing a matching stair on the opposite end of the porch or a central wooden stair. The Committee preferred placing the steps at the center location, to retain the symmetry of the building, which constitutes an integral design element, and at the same width as the existing steps.

The proposal also calls for new railings in between the columns of the porch to satisfy the life safety code. The plans offer a wood or a metal alternative. The Committee thought a simple metal rail could be placed behind the column line and painted to minimize its visibility. Ms. Batcheler noted that the railing should attach to the back of the wooden columns, as they are easier to repair than the stone of the porch floor. Committee members thought staff could determine which color would render the railing least visible. The Committee also recommended using a metal rail on the stair to match the new porch rail, with the end of the rail redesigned to appear more compatible with the historic building.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal as submitted, and approval of:

- 1. a simple metal rail placed behind the column line painted to minimize its visibility,*
- 2. placing the steps at the center location, the same width as the existing steps, with a metal rail to match the new porch rail, with the end of the rail redesigned to appear more compatible with the historic building, and with staff to review and approve details of the railing design and color.*

609 Rear Lombard Street

PRMM, Inc., Owner

Susan Mackey Tunnicliffe, Prospective Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1830

PROPOSAL: Remove cinder block wall and replace with brick and iron fence

The applicant seeks to demolish a cinder block wall in the courtyard surrounding her house. She would like to rebuild a fence with a brick base and open metal pickets. The applicant showed the Committee an ornamental finial she would like to use on the metal pickets. The Committee did not object to the proposal or the finial.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

260-262 East Girard Avenue, The Greentree Tavern

Quarennta Terenos y un Boro/Benjamin Johnson, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1844

PROPOSAL: New vinyl windows

This proposal calls for alterations to the former Greentree Tavern, considered one of the oldest hostelrys in Philadelphia. The building is also individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The new owner seeks to remove the six-over-six wood windows, sash and frames and install vinyl windows with sandwiched grids. Benjamin Johnson, the owner, explained that this building has recently housed drug dealers and prostitutes, and sustained much vandalism. He wants to fix up the building, but claims that the appropriate historic windows will cost too much.

The Committee explained to the applicant that vinyl windows fail to meet *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in terms of design and material, and would drastically mar the appearance of this building. The Committee informed Mr. Johnson of the tax credits he could apply for owing to the National Register status of this building. Mr. Johnson was not interested in tax incentive options. The Committee also described the process and requirements for financial hardship consideration and explained that if he wishes to apply under that rubric he must supply the information required under the ordinance.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal, and, upon application, to refer the issue to the Committee on Financial Hardship.

18 South 3rd Street

Michael Hurwitz, Owner

Massimo Spatola, Tenant/Applicant

DATE: c. 1780; altered 1825 and c. 1865

PROPOSAL: Illuminated signage

Massimo Spatola, the tenant of this store, seeks to install a metal sign in the transom containing individually cut out letters, with opaque plastic inserted in the openings. A light source behind the sign will illuminate the letters. Mr. Spatola showed the Committee a sample of the sign.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

Pennsylvania Hospital - Hall Mercer Building, 241-59 South 8th Street; Farm Journal Building, 230 West Washington Square Street

Pennsylvania Hospital, Owner

Francis Peltier, Architect/Applicant

DATE: Hall Mercer Building - c. 1970; Farm Journal Building - 1912

PROPOSAL: Illuminated signage

The proposal calls for the installation of internally illuminated signage, some of it projecting ten feet over the sidewalk. The signage will attach to very recent construction. Mr. Tyler suggested that the applicant reduce the size of the projecting on South 8th Street sign from ten to eight feet, and perhaps shift it to a vertical orientation. Norman Tissian of the Society Hill Civic Association objected to illuminating the signage as the building is closed at night. Edward Jereb of Pennsylvania Hospital agreed to eliminate the lighting aspect of the signage. The

Committee did not object to the discrete illumination of the signage, but did want the projecting sign reduced to eight feet.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, with the projecting sign reduced to eight feet.

213 -217 North 4th Street

Philadelphia Veterans Multi Services and Education Center, Owner

Timothy Donahue, Contractor/Applicant

DATE: c. 1840; facade - c. 1920

PROPOSAL: New aluminum windows

This proposal calls for installing new aluminum eight-over-eight and six-over-six muntin grid windows in place of the existing true muntin wood windows. The Committee viewed an aluminum clad window alternative but preferred the original submission.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, with staff to review and approve details of the brick mold.

416 Spruce Street

Elwin Coyle, Owner

Brett Webber, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1825

PROPOSAL: Alterations to west and south facades

This proposal calls for reestablishing a window on the west facade of the building and creating a new window and deck on the rear facade. The Committee did not object to the proposal.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

1702 Walnut Street

1702 Walnut Street Associates, Owner

Linda Berman, Tenant/Applicant

DATE: c. 1928

PROPOSAL: Storefront alteration, awning and banner

This proposal calls for building a new aluminum and glass storefront for this Art Deco style commercial building. The building will also receive banners, an awning and new second floor windows with white frames.

Linda Berman, the tenant of this store, wishes to echo the design of her former storefront to retain the identity of her business. The Committee objected to the Georgian appearance of the proposed storefront, and asked for a revised design more compatible with this Art Deco building. Upon reviewing a photo of Ms. Berman's former storefront, the Committee agreed that its design suits the new location much better than the proposed storefront.

The Committee agreed that the storefront and second floor windows should use minimal stainless steel mullions to complement the Art Deco character of the building, instead of the

thicker mullions painted white. The Committee also reviewed an alternate scheme showing a three-part window configuration on the upper floors, and slightly set back. The Committee preferred the revised configuration.

The proposed awning has signage on the front and sides. The two proposed banners will match the awning in color and lettering. The Committee recommends approval of the awning but not the banners. Judith Eden of the Center City Residents Association noted that signage on the sides of awnings is not permitted in this location.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend:

Denial of:

- 1. the proposed storefront;*
- 2. mullions painted white; and*
- 3. banners.*

Approval of:

- 1. a simplified storefront, and possibly one similar to Ms. Berman 's storefront at her former location;*
- 2. the awning;*
- 3. minimal mullions with silver colored metal on the storefront and second floor windows; and*
- 4. the three part window configurations on the upper floors, with the windows slightly set back from the building face.*

With staff to review and approve details.

1906-1908 Spruce Street

1906 Spruce Street Associates, Owner

Albert Taus, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1870; altered c. 1960

PROPOSAL: Fence and roll-down grate on Delancey Street parking area

The proposal involves building a fence with electric roll down grate on the Delancey Street parking area of this apartment building. Committee members expressed concern about the structural feasibility of the proposed grate, and recommended using heavier metal piers to support the grate housing. Judith Eden of the Center City Residents Association suggested incorporating brick piers into the design, to add a solid dimension to the fence. The applicant also would like to curve the tops of the fence out toward the street for security reasons.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, with heavier metal piers to support the grate housing, and the top of the fence curved out toward the street for added security.

City Hall Tower

City of Philadelphia, Owner

Vincent Costello, Department of Public Property, Applicant

DATE: 1893-94 - Tower construction

PROPOSAL: Install antennas at portal windows on tower

This proposal calls for installing antennas within the portal windows on four sides of City Hall tower to provide radio communication service for the Police Department. The applicant has installed a mockup of the proposed antennas. The Committee examined photographs showing the mockup and decided not to recommend approval of the proposal as submitted. Committee members objected to the square mounting apparatus, discussed alternatives, and resolved to recommend approval of a new mounting scheme that involves hanging the antennae below the portals on an upturned crescent or half-circle shaped bracket, with staff to review and approve details.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal as submitted and approval of a new mounting scheme that involves hanging the antennae below the portals on an upturned crescent or half-circle shaped bracket, with staff to review and approve details.

3142 Market Street, Centennial National Bank (Peck Alumni Hall - Drexel University)

Drexel University, Owner

John Cluver, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1876

PROPOSAL: Roof hatch and ladder; materials change; restoration of finial/weathervane

Ms. Pentz recused herself from the discussion and the vote owing to her firm's association with the rehabilitation of this building.

This proposal involves placing a roof hatch and access ladder on the rear portion of the roof. The applicant explained that recent interior demolition uncovered an elaborately painted original ceiling designed by Frank Furness, which he plans to restore. The roof hatch will provide access to the attic without going through the restored ceiling. The applicant also provided details of an already approved finial/weathervane made to match the original.

The proposal also calls for a change in the material of the base of the previously approved new section of the building. The approved material was grayish brick to match the stone base of the historic portion, but the applicant could not locate an appropriate brick match. The applicant seeks approval to use cast stone or alternate material, dyed the correct color. The Committee did not object to any aspect of this proposal.

The three remaining Committee members voted to recommend approval of all aspects of the proposal, with staff to review and approve details of the new material for the new section's base.

8001-8101 Verree Road, Knowlton

John Conroy, Owner/Applicant

DATE: 1880

PROPOSAL: Visible mechanicals

Without the Commission's approval, the applicant installed mechanical systems along the eastern facade of the new addition, and two HVAC units in front of two porch piers on the western facade of the historic building. Mr. Baron noted that the east facade of the addition does not follow the plans approved by the Commission. The Committee did not object to the east facade of the addition as built. Mr. Levy suggested moving the HVAC units away from the porch piers, and

disguising them with shrubbery. The Applicant prefers to leave them close to the building, but offered to screen them with landscaping. The Committee thought the applicant could camouflage all the mechanicals with landscape screens or trellises.

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval the design of the new addition 's east facade, the mechanical equipment, and landscaping to conceal the equipment, provided that the applicant has the changes redrawn in elevation.

220 West Washington Square Street, W. B. Saunders Publishing Company

John Noonan (and partners), Owner

DATE: 1911

PROPOSAL: Three story rooftop addition - for comment only

Mr. Tyler explained that the owner seeks comment from the Committee regarding the possibility of building three stories on top of the seven story building, and emphasized that this does not even constitute a review in concept. Mr. Baron noted the staff recommendation that the original building should not receive the visible extra floors unless an economic argument is documented to show their necessity.

John Noonan, the owner, explained that he intends to develop this site as a residential property, and that the extra floors will help make the project more feasible economically. The Committee discussed the possibility of adding floors and offered suggestions. The Committee thought that even the first floor of the addition should be set back from the existing cornice to help differentiate the old from the new.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Scott Jacob
Executive Secretary