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MINUTES OF THE 164th STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

2 March 1972

Present: Charles R. Tyson, Chairman of the Commission
Richmond P. Miller, Vice Chairman of the Commission
Edward Pinkowski
William A. Costello, Commissioner of Public Property
Robert Silver, Deputy Commissioner of Public Property
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian
Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Executive Assistant to the Chairman
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Secretary

Also: Herman A. Hassinger, Architect; Paul L. Jaffe, Esq.; and Herbert Goldstein to present their proposal for the development of the area adjacent to the John Wanamaker Mansion and including it.

Ira Winarsky, Architect for the Redevelopment Authority and Sam Gransback of the Washington Square West site office of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority.

Deputy Commissioner Robert Taylor of the Department of Licenses and Inspections to discuss with the Philadelphia Historical Commission policies and procedures leading to continued inter-agency cooperation between Licenses and Inspections and the Historical Commission.

Unless otherwise noted, all actions taken herein are the result of motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES for the Stated Meeting 3 February 1972 were approved and directed to be filed.

REPORTS

The Report of the Architectural Committee for 15 February 1972 was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

Staff Recommendations for Certifying Buildings. The following buildings were certified by the Commission as being worthy of preservation:

28 West Walnut Lane
9315 State Road of this contemporary building. (Mr. Pinkowski objected to the certification. His objection, however, did not carry.)
1121 Spruce Street
243 East Wister Street

A decision on the certification of the Ralston School at 225 Bainbridge Street was withheld at the request of Commissioner Costello and Mr. Pinkowski in view of the recent renewed interest in the Crosstown Expressway.

REPORTS (Cont'd)

The Commission's Activities, Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian.

Dr. Tinkcom's report on February's activities was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

2032 Walnut Street, John Wanamaker House. Herman Hassinger, architect for the developer, Herbert Goldstein, presented to the board members his proposal for the development of the parcel of land on Walnut Street which includes the Wanamaker Mansion. Mr. Hassinger's plan is to retain the Wanamaker house on its site cutting off only the servants' quarters on the rear. The grand staircase will remain intact and be restored along with the front of the house. On the adjoining property the high rise, planned to reach as high as thirty stories, will be set back from the building line and be designed in harmony with the mansion carrying out similar cornice lines of the old structure, etc. The cruciform tower is to be constructed of reinforced concrete and provide the area with an open plaza and a private street leading to a carport and parking ramps in the rear.

Paul Jaffe, Mr. Goldstein's attorney, advised the Commission of the Bankers Securities Corporation's concern that the Commission's six month stay of demolition not be extended by these negotiations should they prove abortive. The Commission assured Mr. Jaffe that the Philadelphia Historical Commission's demolition stay would not be extended beyond the present May 30, 1972 date.

The visitors were thanked for coming to the Commission with their proposal and were excused.

The Board, acting in Executive Session, enthusiastically approved of the concept of Mr. Hassinger's proposal. It was also noted that Mr. Magaziner, not present, had met with the architect earlier in the week and had advised the staff of his approval. The Board unanimously agreed that the Commission's legal advisor, Isador Kranzel, Esq., should be consulted with regard to the precise wording of the letter informing Mr. Jaffe of the Commission's approval of the concept for the use of this property as outlined in Mr. Hassinger's plan.

Cooperation between the Department of Licenses and Inspections and the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Mrs. Maurer reported on a number of early contacts with the Department of Licenses and Inspections, dating as far back as 1960, where the two agencies agreed to work closely with each other on matters relating to historically certified properties. This cooperation, however, in the advent of a new administration does need to be reinforced as a series of recent problems showing a lack of understanding of Philadelphia Historical Commission requirements among the plan readers and other staff make clear. Deputy Commissioner Taylor expressed the hope that this climate of understanding between the two agencies could continue although occasional

OLD BUSINESS (Cont'd)

problems will arise. Mr. Taylor guaranteed his help and cooperation toward strengthening this good relationship and agreed to do whatever he personally could when a problem presents itself.

A sheet describing Historical Commission organization and activities prepared by Mrs. Maurer was passed out to each member. It was requested that all persons present review the sheet and make any and all recommendations which they feel are necessary.

706-12 Spruce Street. Mr. Cathcart's letter to the Commission's Chairman expressed the Hospital's adamant opinion that these historically certified buildings must come down. The area will be landscaped until such time when construction is ready to begin. A motion was made to allow the Redevelopment Authority to demolish these houses and turn the vacant land over to the Pennsylvania Hospital if this action is consistent with a report now pending from the Old Philadelphia Development Corporation. This was seconded, and carried.

305-07 Chestnut Street. Dr. Tinkcom reported that the Historical Commission had informed the Keystone Corporation that permission to demolish the Old Bank of North America Building is granted, but suggested that Mr. Kurz talk with an interested architect about the possibility of saving the facade of the structure. Mr. Kurz followed this suggestion and seemed to be very receptive to the proposal. It now appears that the structure will be demolished and component parts of the facade stored until they may be reerected in conjunction with a new facility. The Commission is checking with both the National Trust and the Department of Housing and Urban Development for possible financial assistance for this project. Mr. Tyson strongly urged that another letter be sent to Mr. Kurz commending him for his patience and interest and wishing him well in his endeavors.

NEW BUSINESS

Centennial Bank, Thirty-second and Market Streets. This building, designed by Frank Furness and recently placed on the National Register of Historic Places, is now occupied by the First Pennsylvania Bank. It has been reported to the Commission staff, however, that Drexel University is planning to demolish the structure as part of their expansion program. Dr. Tinkcom suggested asking Drexel to reconsider their thinking on this project especially in light of the fact that the First Pennsylvania Company is reported to be willing to remain in the building and restore it.

530 North Seventh Street, Edgar Allen Poe House. After a meeting with several members of the staff of the Free Library, Dr. Tinkcom and Dr. Nelligan of the Regional Office of the National Park Service proposed that the Library ask the National Trust for a planning grant designed

NEW BUSINESS (Cont'd)

to set up priorities for the restoration of this building. The National Trust has expressed a willingness to cooperate in this regard. Mr. Beach of the Free Library has forwarded to the Department of Public Property a Project Services Request to rebuild the second floor porch of the adjoining property, to replace shutters on the Poe House, as well as restore the brick pavement. At Dr. Tinkcom's request, Commissioner Costello will check on this requisition and withhold action until the Historical Commission is consulted. The Commission will be glad to supply details for the shutters and refer Mr. Beach to the Redevelopment Authority for specifications on the installation of brick sidewalks.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Secretary