

THE MINUTES OF THE 527TH STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

14 JULY 2006
1515 ARCH STREET, ROOM 18029
MICHAEL SKLAROFF, ESQ., CHAIR

PRESENT

Michael Sklaroff, Esq., Chair
Thomas Sugrue, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Joseph James, Department of Public Property
Kathleen Murray, Office of the Council President
David Perri, Department of Licenses & Inspections
Vincent Rivera, AIA
David Schaaf, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Denise Smyler, Esq.
Harris Steinberg, FAIA
Norman Tissian
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing & Community Development

Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Specialist
Jorge Danta, Historic Preservation Planner
Jonathan Farnham, Acting Historic Preservation Director
Erin Coté, Historic Preservation Planner
Karen Gonski, Administrative Technician
Leonard Reuter, Assistant City Solicitor, Law Department

ALSO PRESENT

John Leggette, Leggette Development Group
Michael Skolnick, Polatnick Zacharjasz Architects
David Polatnick, Polatnick Zacharjasz Architects
Patricia Dobkin, Corporate Facilities Inc.
Robert Chevalier, Corporate Facilities Inc.
Jan Chevalier, Corporate Facilities Inc.
Breen Mahoney, Robert A.M. Stern Architects
Robert Freedman, Washington Square Associates
Edward Bell, Edward Bell Architect
Ted Zeitzer
Liz Blazeovich, Preservation Alliance
John Gallery, Preservation Alliance
Neil Sklaroff, Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP
Phillip Geeter
Judy Robinson, Continuum
David Horlacher
Randolph Lewis
Charles Ellis
Edwin Rivera, Queen Village Neighborhood Association Preservation Committee

527TH STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Michael Sklaroff, Chair, recognized the presence of a quorum and called the 527th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission to order at 9:03 a.m. The Commissioners in attendance were Mr. Sklaroff, Ms. Murray, and Messrs. Perri, Schaaf, Steinberg, Sugrue, Tissian, and Wilds.

MINUTES OF THE 526TH STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ACTION: Upon a motion proffered by Mr. Tissian and seconded by Ms. Murray, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the 526th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission as corrected, held 9 June 2006.

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 27 JUNE 2006, VINCENT RIVERA, CHAIR

501 PINE STREET

Owner: Robert Volpe

Applicant: Edward Bell

History: Built c. 1809 for William Jones. Individually designated, Significant in Society Hill Historic District

Project: Construct side and rear addition

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the proposal provided the original rear wall at the second and third floors and the paired windows are retained; the doors to the deck are located in the area exposed by the demolition of the stair tower; the skylights are flat and located on the north face of the gable roof; and the roof joists at the skylights are retained; with the staff to review details.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish the rear façade of the main block, three-story rear ell, and one-story rear addition of this “significant” late Federal rowhouse. The rear is partially visible from Fifth Street. The application proposes a contemporary rear wall to be built in place of the rear wall. The new façade would have a one-story projection with a roof deck. This projection would be the full width of the main block. The second floor would have a set of French doors with transom to access the deck. The third floor would have a full-width balcony and would be accentuated with a window and door. The new rear façade and addition would be finished in stucco.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the proposal to the Commission. Architect Edward Bell represented the application.

Mr. Sklaroff asked if the revised drawings in the Commission’s packet complied with the Architectural Committee’s recommendation. Mr. Baron stated that they did not. Mr. Bell distributed a revised rear elevation to the Commission. Mr. Baron agreed that the revised version distributed at the Commission meeting reflected the changes the Architectural Committee had recommended.

Paul Boni of the Society Hill Civic Association noted that the applicant had not met with the Civic Association to present his project. He stated that the neighbors have not approved or disapproved the project. He asked that the Association be included in the process. Mr. Tissian

noted that Rebecca Stoloff, a representative of the Association, attended the Architectural Committee meeting and voiced her approval of the project. Mr. Bell stated that he will meet with the Association before any zoning review. Mr. Boni requested that the Commission not approve this proposal until the Association has an opportunity to review it. Mr. Wilds stated that the Commission bases its decisions on historic preservation law and science and not necessarily on the opinions of the community.

ACTION: Mr. Wilds moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee to approve the proposal provided the original rear wall at the second and third floors and the paired windows are retained; the door to the deck is located in the area exposed by the demolition of the stair tower; the skylights are flat and located on the north face of the gable roof; and the roof joists at the skylights are retained; with the staff to review details. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Smyler and Messrs. James and Rivera joined the Commission.

38-44 N. FRONT STREET

Owner: 38 N. Front Street Associates, LP

Applicant: Judy Robinson

History: c. 1830

Individually designated 01/06/1977; Significant in Old City Historic District

Project: New window openings along side façade.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the proposal, provided that, on the Cuthbert Street façade, former door openings be reopened to their original sizes; that windows in historic door openings appear as glazed wood doors; that historic window openings not be moved; that the new openings not include historic-looking stone lintels; and that historic brick from newly cut window openings be salvaged and toothed in to infill non-historic openings; with the staff to review details.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to alter existing window openings and cut new ones along a side façade that faces Cuthbert Street. The building has minimal openings along this façade and reads mostly as a solid brick wall. The applicant proposes to create new windows along the entire length of the wall and close three historic openings to align them with the proposed windows. In addition, the application proposes to cut new openings on the rear of the property and install balconies with French doors. This area of the building faces a private parking area.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the proposal to the Commission; he stated that the revised drawing complies with the Architectural Committee's recommendation. In addition, the applicants have reduced the number of new window cuts by removing the proposed register of windows closest to Front Street. Developer Poe Leggette and architect Judy Robinson represented the application.

ACTION: Mr. Wilds moved to approve the revised proposal as documented in the architectural drawings submitted at the Commission meeting of 14 July 2006, with the staff to review details. Mr. Steinberg seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1126-1136 ARCH STREET, READING TERMINAL MARKET

Owners: RDA & PCCA

Applicant: Paul Steinke, Reading Terminal Market

History: Wilson Brothers & Company, 1891-1893

Project: Install restored historic sign

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the sign is mounted in the mortar joints or existing holes and it is lowered to expose the top course of the stone, pursuant to Restoration Standard 7.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes installing an historic sign for the Reading Terminal Market on the Reading Terminal Railroad shed. The enameled metal and neon sign originally hung at the corner of 12th and Market Streets. It was removed without the Commission's approval in 1999, when the headhouse was rehabilitated for the Marriot hotel. The sign was stored in an RDA garage and then returned to the Market last year for a complete restoration.

The Market would like to hang the sign at the corner of 12th and Filbert Streets on the west façade of the trainshed. It cannot be rehung in its original position at the corner of 12th and Market Streets. A neon sign very similar to the restored sign once hung at the corner of 12th and Filbert Streets, as an included historic photograph evidences. However, that sign projected; the Market would like to hang the restored sign flat against the façade.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the proposal to the Commission. Paul Steinke, the manager of the market, represented the application.

Mr. Schaaf asked the applicant if he had received the approval of the Art Commission. Mr. Steinke responded he had not yet, but assured the Commission that he would comply with the Art Commission.

ACTION: Mr. Tissian moved to approve the proposal as submitted, provided the sign is mounted in mortar joints or existing holes. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Sklaroff passed the gavel to Mr. Sugrue.

1811-1813 WALNUT STREET, 126-132 S. 18TH STREET

Owner: Philadelphia Rittenhouse Investors

Applicant: David Polatnick, Polatnick Zacharjasz Architects

History: front façade by Newman, Woodman & Harris, 1900

Project: Modify approved design; add one story at courtyard

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal, pursuant to Standard 9.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes a revision to a design approved by the Commission in February 2004. Known as 10 Rittenhouse, the overall project includes the demolition of several buildings on S. 18th and Sansom Streets, the partial demolition and rehabilitation of the former Rittenhouse Club at 1811-1813 Walnut Street, and the construction of a high-rise condominium tower with retail and parking space.

The current application proposes swapping the second and third floors of the complex and

adding one floor of retail space to the already approved two-story retail space in the courtyard area north of the remaining section of the Rittenhouse Club and south of the tower. The proposed revision would require minor alterations to the designs of the base of the tower and the new rear façade of the Rittenhouse Club. The revisions would not involve historic fabric, but would slightly adjust the 18th Street and Sansom Street facades. Because the ceiling heights and uses differ between the two floors, swapping them would result in slight adjustments to window opening locations and other façade details.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the proposal to the Commission. Architects Breen Mahoney and Michael Skolnick represented the application.

Mr. Mahoney presented the proposal to the Commission. He stressed that the design changes were very minor and restricted to the second and third floors.

Mr. Tissian asked the applicant about the retail space on S. 18th Street. Mr. Mahoney explained that the first and third floors had been dedicated to retail in the earlier, approved design. The retail on the third floor would now be relocated to the second floor.

Mr. Mahoney then explained the addition of one floor to the courtyard area. Mr. Sugrue asked if this area was visible from Walnut Street. Mr. Mahoney stated that it would not be. Mr. Steinberg asked the applicant if the retail behind the Rittenhouse Club was accessible from 18th Street. Mr. Mahoney stated it would not be, but would be accessible from Walnut Street.

Mr. Tissian asked the applicant when the construction would begin. Mr. Mahoney replied that it would begin as soon as possible. Mr. Mahoney stated that the complex problem of reinforcing the façade of the historical Rittenhouse Club had delayed the project. He cited the necessity of underpinning. Mr. Skolnick added that utilities under the sidewalk had complicated the problem.

ACTION: Mr. Wilds moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and approve the proposal, pursuant to Standard 9. Ms. Murray seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1805-1809 WALNUT STREET

Owner: Philadelphia Alison LP

Applicant: Michael Skolnick, Polatnick Zacharjasz Architects

History: Presbyterian Ministries Fund for Life Insurance, Davis, Dunlap & Barney, 1924
significantly enlarged in 1951

Project: Add penthouse; cut window openings; replace windows

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the revised proposal with the retention of the cornice, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6, 9, and 10.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes several alterations to the Presbyterian Ministries Fund for Life Insurance building, also known as the Alison Building. It was erected in 1924 as a 5-bay, 4-story building. In 1951, three bays at the west and three stories were added.

The application proposes to modify and add to an existing mechanical penthouse to create both mechanical and residential spaces. The Commission approved the demolition of the rear section of the penthouse in February 2004, when it approved the tower. The application proposes expanding the penthouse to the east to allow outdoor mechanical equipment to be

moved inside and to create one residential unit. The new penthouse would be no taller than the existing penthouse and would extend only two feet south of the existing penthouse, toward Rittenhouse Square.

The application proposes to cut new window openings in the east and west party walls. The windows visible from the public right-of-way would be fenestrated with the historic six-over-six pane configuration. Those not visible to the public would be fenestrated like the tower. No details for the windows are provided.

The application proposes to replace existing windows on the front and east facades at floors 4 to 7. No details for the windows are provided.

The application originally proposed adding a new limestone cornice and coping on the main façade. This portion of the application has been withdrawn; the existing cornice and parapet will be retained and repaired.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the proposal to the Commission. Architects Breen Mahoney and Michael Skolnick and attorney Neil Sklaroff represented the application.

MOTION: Mr. Wilds moved to approve the proposal with the retention of the existing cornice, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6, 9, and 10. Mr. James seconded the motion.

At the request of Mr. Steinberg, Mr. Mahoney presented an overview of the project to the Commission. Mr. Mahoney stated that they intend to repair the existing cornice on the Alison Building, not replace or add to it.

Mr. Tissian asked about parking. Mr. Skolnick answered that the developer will provide parking. Mr. Sklaroff stated that parking would be provided either in the neighboring tower or in a nearby garage.

Mr. Wilds asked the applicant if the landscaped roof garden was visible from the street. Mr. Mahoney explained that the tops of the tree canopies will be seen. Mr. Steinberg commended the applicants on the use of the outdoor space and the improvement of the rooftops, which will be an integral part of the development. Mr. Steinberg asserted that the trees on the top of the penthouse look “silly.” He asked if the applicants provided an elevation that showed the trees. The applicants provided a rendering. Mr. Steinberg suggested that the applicant give the trees “a buzz cut.” Mr. Wilds concurred and suggested that any plantings be limited to six feet in height above the penthouse roofline. Messrs. Wilds and James agreed to amend their motion to limit the height of the trees.

ACTION: Mr. Wilds moved to approve the proposal with the retention of the existing cornice, provided the height of the vegetation at the penthouse roof garden is limited to six feet above the penthouse roofline, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6, 9, and 10. Mr. James seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Sugrue returned the gavel to Mr. Sklaroff.

210 W. WASHINGTON SQUARE (THE AYER BUILDING)

Owner: Washington West Associates, LP

Applicant: Washington West Associates, LP

History: Built 1928 by Ralph Bencker, architect

Individually designated 09/12/1974; Significant in Society Hill Historic District

Project: Side deck, canopy over main entrance and new sidewalk.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the canopy and planters; approval of the deck with doors provided the railing is mounting inside, not on, the parapet; and approval of the sidewalk, with the staff to review details.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a roof deck on the roof of a side one-story portion of the building. This area of the building sits adjacent to the Washington Square restaurant and it is visible at an oblique angle from Washington Square and Locust Street. The roof currently supports mechanical equipment, which would be moved to the main roof of the building. The Historical Commission already approved the location for the equipment during a previous review.

The roof currently has a 1.6' parapet. The applicant proposes to install the same aluminum and glass railing; previously approved by the Commission for the upper floors above this roof. The deck would be separated into three separate spaces, two private decks and a common room terrace, by an aluminum panel privacy screen. This screen would be stepped as it meets the railing of the deck and topped by planters. A total of six windows would be cut down into doors for access.

In addition the application proposes to install a small canopy over the main entrance. The canopy would be constructed out of metal and glass and would extend six feet from the plane of the doors. The sidewalk would be relayed with patterned concrete. Freestanding planters would accentuate the piers.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the proposal to the Commission. Developer Robert Freedman and architect Michael Skolnick represented the application.

Mr. Skolnick explained that the developers would like to add a terrace at the second-floor level at the south of the building. It would be accessed by two apartments and a common room on the second floor. He noted that the Commission already approved 22 balconies above this location in the same light well. Mr. Skolnick stated that air conditioning equipment now on the roof would be relocated to an approved interior location. He reported that the owners' association for the neighboring condominium building had issued a letter of support. Mr. Steinberg asked about the railing and parapet at the proposed terrace. Mr. Skolnick stated that the railing would be mounted inside the parapet as the Architectural Committee had advised.

Mr. Sklaroff asked Mr. Rivera about the Architectural Committee's opinion of the canopy. Mr. Rivera replied that the Committee objected to the canopy's disruption of the verticality of the space at the front doorway. Mr. Baron explained that the Commission had denied the previous canopy application because of its disruption of the verticality. Mr. Skolnick recalled that the original application proposed a larger freestanding four-post canopy. At that time, the Committee recommended approval of the proposal, but the Commission denied it with a vote of 8 to 2. Mr. Skolnick stated that the canopy currently proposed is smaller, more transparent, and cantilevered. He claimed that it would provide minimal protection from the weather with the least disruption and visual impairment. Mr. Wilds opined that this proposal offered a great solution. It

is subtle and simple. He stated that he would vote to approve it. Mr. Rivera stated that this proposed canopy would not disrupt the verticality as the earlier canopy would have. Mr. Sklaroff stated that this canopy would not be confused for an historic feature. Mr. Steinberg stated that this building is one of the finest Art Deco buildings in the City. He suggested that this proposal be scrutinized very carefully. He labeled this canopy "a spindly little thing" that contrasts negatively with the very strong portal. Mr. Freedman asserted that the canopy is a necessity. Mr. Schaaf stated that he supported Mr. Steinberg's comments on the canopy. He stated that the proposed canopy is delicate, but the building is robust. He suggested a larger canopy and different lettering.

Mr. Skolnick summarized the developers' plans to improve the streetscape along the front of the building with a new sidewalk and a series of planters.

Mr. Steinberg asserted that adding the planters would be "like putting baby booties on the Eiffel Tower." He also suggested that the planters were unnecessary; they were like the "parsley" used to decorate a plate of food. He contended that the building is powerful and does not need any additional decoration. Mr. Skolnick again stated that the developers sought to create an elegant streetscape. Mr. Wilds remarked that the applicant had responded to the Commission's earlier suggestions.

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance stated that the proposed terrace would not be easily seen from the street. He supported the canopy, which he described as subtle, not "heavy-handed." He voiced his opposition to the planters and noted the building's unique and important relationship to the ground.

ACTION: Mr. Tissian moved to approve the deck, canopy, and sidewalk and to delegate the review of the planters to the staff. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion, which passed with a vote of 8 to 2. Ms. Smyler and Mr. Steinberg dissented.

302-304 GASKILL STREET

Owner: Randolph Lewis

Applicant: Steven Shapiro

History: Built c. 1798.

Individually designated 01/22/1963; Significant in Society Hill Historic District

Project: Construct side and rear addition.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

OVERVIEW: The Historical Commission reviewed and denied an application for this property at its May 2006 meeting. The applicant now proposes a revised plan that accounts for the Committee's and Commission's many criticisms.

The application again proposes to construct rear and side additions. The side addition would be constructed on a vacant parcel adjacent to the property. The addition would be four stories and would be faced with brick and would be articulated with recessed stone panels and contemporary casement windows. Previously the addition was designed to complement the historic building, but was deemed too historicist. The revised plans show a completely contemporary design. Furthermore, the new addition retains a greater percentage of the party wall, which had been previously proposed to be demolished.

The application also retains a stairwell addition on the rear of the historic building. This addition would again require the demolition of the one-story rear ell and the selective demolition of the rear façade and the rear gable. The current plan shows a small cut into the rear gable, which connects the stairwell with the fourth floor of the new addition. The previous application proposed the total demolition of the rear portion of the gable.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Danta presented the proposal to the Commission. Architect Kevin Rasmussen and owners Randolph and Kathleen Lewis represented the application.

Mr. Steinberg commended the proposal. Mr. Wilds remarked that the modern addition contrasts well with the historic building. The Commissioners agreed that the architect had successfully integrated their recommendations into the revised plan.

ACTION: Mr. Sugrue moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and approve the proposal, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

228 SPRUCE STREET

Owner: Sheila and Ted Zeitzer

Applicant: Jason Thompson

History: Built c. 1770 by Issac Lobdell, house carpenter

Individually designated on 04/30/1957; Significant in Society Hill Historic District

Project: Roof deck over rear ell and balcony at second floor rear.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a roof deck and alter the rear wall on the ell of this house. The main block of the property dates from 1770. However, map and insurance research has proven that the rear ell is a nineteenth-century addition postdating 1859.

The applicant proposes to introduce a small balcony in the rear wall of the ell. This portion of the rear ell is obliquely visible from American Street. The balcony would protrude one foot from the face of the wall and would be about five feet in width. A set of wood French doors would be placed in the opening.

The application also proposes to construct a roof deck over the roof of the ell. The rear dormer of the main block is already altered into a door and provides access to this roof. The deck would be set back four feet from the edge of the rear ell and would have a five and a half feet screen wall to block the noise and view of the HVAC equipment. The deck and screen wall would not be visible from any public right-of-way.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Danta presented the proposal to the Commission. Ted Zeitzer, the owner, represented the application.

ACTION: Ms. Murray moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and approve the proposal, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

730 S. AMERICAN STREET

Owner/Applicant: Peter and Susan Boni

History: Designated 6/24/1958

Project: Rear alterations and second-floor addition. Proposed

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, with staff to review details, pursuant Standards 9 and 10.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a one-story addition over an existing one-story non-historic rear addition. The addition would be the same width as the existing and would face an interior courtyard. The addition would be accentuated by a wood-clad bay window and would have a deck on top. This deck would require the alteration of an existing window into a door for access. The deck would have a wood railing throughout.

The application also proposes changes to three non-historic openings in the existing one-story rear addition. Currently three arched French doors open onto the inner courtyard. The applicant proposes to convert these openings into a single bay window that would extend two floors. The ground floor would have French doors with sidelights. The second floor would have nine-over-six double hung windows.

Finally, the applicant proposes to replace all the windows throughout the property with wood true-divided six-over-six windows.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Danta presented the proposal to the Commission. The applicant had notified the staff that she would be unable to attend the Commission meeting.

Mr. Sklaroff requested a definition of the term "row-lock." Mr. Steinberg explained with eloquence and aplomb that the term "row-lock" refers to a group of bricks set on end to create a lintel or sill. Mr. Schaaf noted that the design lacked a receiving board at the side of the bay. He stated that it should be added to complete the plan. Mr. Danta assured the Commission that he would relay the information to the applicant.

ACTION: Mr. Wilds moved to approve the revised proposal as documented in the architectural drawings submitted at the Commission meeting of 14 July 2006. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

311 S. CAMAC STREET

Owner: Charles I. Ellis

Applicant: David Horlacher

History: designated 02/28/1961

Project: Demolition of a two-story rear ell, new construction of two-story addition and roof deck.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish a non-historic two-story rear ell with a roof deck. A new two-story addition with a roof deck would be constructed in its place. The new addition would be larger than the current ell, spanning the entire width of the building and extending approximately two to three feet further back on the lot. The new addition would be stucco with a sand finish. On the rear façade, at the second-floor level, there would be a two-foot by six-foot porch with a metal railing. The roof deck would measure ten feet by twelve feet.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cote presented the proposal to the Commission. Charles Ellis, the owner, and David Horlacher, the contractor, represented the application.

ACTION: Ms. Smyler moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and to approve the proposal, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

244 S. WARNOCK STREET

Owner/Applicant: Philip Geetter

History: Designated 01/31/1961

Project: Legalize vinyl windows, cornice and dormer, and chimney stucco.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the legalization, pursuant to Standards 5 and 6.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to legalize undertaken at this building by the previous owner. This work included installing vinyl windows, cladding the dormer with vinyl siding, installing aluminum capping around the entire house, and applying stucco to the chimney.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cote presented the proposal to the Commission. Philip Geeter, the owner, represented the application.

Mr. Geeter explained his situation to the Commission. He purchased the property for his daughter. Prior to the sale, the previous owner modified the property without his knowledge. Mr. Geeter stated that he did not request the alterations. Mr. Geeter stated that he was unaware that the property was designated historic. He noted that he received a violation from the Department of Licenses & Inspections after the sale for the illegal work undertaken before the sale.

Mr. Sklaroff asked Mr. Geeter if the title report stated that he was subject to the local laws. Mr. Geeter responded that he had a clear title with no mention of designation. Mr. Perri stated that the installation of the siding and the application of the stucco required a building permit regardless of the building's designation as historic. If the owner had applied for the requisite permit, he would have been informed of the historic designation. Mr. Geeter stated that the previous owners were Joseph and Frances Mullaney of Washington Crossing. Mr. Geeter stated that he was scheduled to appear in Municipal Court as a result of the violations. He added that he may have to take legal action against the former owner. He noted that the realtor was associated with Prudential Fox-Roach. Mr. James asked the applicant if any of the modifications were a condition of the sale; Mr. Geeter responded that they were not.

Ms. Murray noted that the photographs show that the neighboring property was altered in a similar manner. Mr. Baron stated that the Department of Licenses & Inspections had issued violations to several property owners on that street for work without permits; several owners are now curing the violations. In response, Ms. Murray replied that every property owner has the right to seek legalization through the Commission, as Mr. Geeter is now doing.

Mr. Steinberg stated that the current owner should not be held responsible for the actions of the previous owner. Mr. Sklaroff posited that, if the owner is not held responsible for his property, then the Commission will repeatedly confront legalization requests from new owners. Mr. James suggested that any legalization would create a slippery slope; it would set the bad precedent to legalize the illegal alterations merely because the current owner did not undertake the work. Mr.

James stated that the Commission must hold property owners accountable. Mr. Sklaroff reminded everyone that the Commission's mission is to protect historic resources. If owners are not held accountable, illegal work will continue. Mr. Geeter asked how a permit was issued for this work without the Commission's approval. Mr. Sklaroff replied that no permit had been issued for the work. Mr. Perri concurred with Mr. James and stated that the current owner must be held responsible. He noted that Mr. Geeter's home inspector was not licensed by the City. He remarked that knowledgeable local inspectors check for historic designation. Mr. Perri suggested that Mr. Geeter may have some recourse against the home inspector as well as the previous owner. Mr. Schaaf noted that the home inspection describes the 175-year-old house as new construction at several points in the report. Mr. Schaaf opined that the report was poorly executed. Mr. Rivera stated that Mr. Geeter may be able to seek compensation from the home inspector.

Mr. Geeter asked that the record reflect his submission of paperwork regarding the violations against his property.

ACTION: Mr. James moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and deny the legalization, pursuant to Standards 5 and 6. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion, which passed with a vote of 9 to 1. Ms. Murray dissented. Mr. Steinberg abstained.

2047 RITTENHOUSE SQUARE STREET

Owner/Applicant: William Cheeseman

History: early nineteenth century rowhouse converted to a garage
Contributing to the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District.

Project: Replacement of windows, lintels and sills, door, and cornice, add entry steps

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee recommended denial of the proposal as submitted. The Committee offered recommendations on each aspect of the proposal, with staff to review details:

1. Denial of the enlargement of the second-floor windows;
2. Approval of marble lintels and sills;
3. Approval of gray granite steps;
4. Approval of stained, seven-foot, five-panel door matching the extant door with the transom to occupy the remaining space in the opening;
5. Approval of a painted garage door with six panels across and four down;
6. Approval of painted one-over-one windows.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes alterations to the front façade of the building. The alterations would include replacing the wood cornice, replacing the wood lintels and sills with stone, installing six-over-six double hung sash windows, applying a stone trim to the base of the building, and installing a new wood overhead garage door. The main entrance door would be replaced with a new wood door and placed higher than it is currently by adding stone steps to the entrance and installing a smaller transom that would be the same size and configuration of the existing transoms over the garage door.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cote presented the proposal to the Commission. William Cheeseman, the owner and applicant, represented the application.

Mr. Cheeseman distributed an updated drawing. Mr. Wilds asked if it complied with the Architectural Committee's recommendation. Mr. Cheeseman replied that it did not; it is identical

to that submitted to the Committee.

MOTION: Mr. Wilds moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee. Mr. James seconded the motion.

Mr. Sklaroff asked the applicant to summarize his disagreements with the motion.

Mr. Cheeseman requested approval of six-over-six windows and the garage door with groups of three panels.

Mr. Wilds stated that the window enlargement was troubling. Mr. Cheeseman pressed for the enlargement of the second-floor, front windows because they are his living room windows. Mr. Sklaroff advised Mr. Cheeseman that the Commission would not accept the enlargement of the historic windows. Mr. Rivera opined that the proposed changes are not in keeping with the historic character of building.

Mr. Baron noted that the pedestrian door is historic fabric. Mr. Wilds stated that the garage door and the pedestrian door should be treated separately. He remarked that the pedestrian door and transom are historic fabric. He asserted that, if they need to be replaced, they should be replaced in kind. He stated that he accepted the proposed garage door because the extant door is not historic.

Mr. Cheeseman stated that he sought to unify the appearance of his house. He desired to divide the doors and windows into groups of threes. Three was the unifying number for the façade, he asserted. He also noted his desire to add steps at the door and add a stone base along the sidewalk. Mr. Wilds asserted that the doorway height should not be raised because the historic configuration has survived.

ACTION: Mr. Wilds moved to deny the enlargement of the second-floor windows; deny the alteration of the historic entryway including the addition of steps; approve the replacement of the existing step with a granite step of the same size, shape, and location; approve a five-panel door to match the existing door, either painted or stained; approve the lintels and sills; approve the garage door as submitted, either painted or stained; and approve the six-over-six true-divided-light windows; with staff to review details. Ms. Murray seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Sklaroff recused and passed the gavel to Mr. Sugrue.

2129 CHESTNUT STREET

Owner: Robert Chevalier

Applicant: Corporate Facilities Inc.

History: Built 1883, Theophilus Parsons Chandler, architect

individually designated 09/01/1983 and in Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District

Project: Remove historic fence, install taller fence

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial as submitted, but approval if a horizontal member is added to recall the height of the historic fence.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to install a six-foot cast-iron fence in the place of an

existing three-foot metal fence. The ornate brownstone base would remain. The existing fence runs along the sidewalk and delineates a corner garden. The proposed fence would have the same design as the existing fence, but would be taller.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cote presented the proposal to the Commission. Office furniture salesman Robert Chevalier, his wife Jan Chevalier, and Patricia Dobkin, an employee of their company, Corporate Facilities Inc., represented the application.

MOTION: Mr. Rivera moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and deny the proposal as submitted, but approve a fence if a horizontal member is added to recall the height of the historic fence. Ms. Smyler seconded the motion.

Mr. Steinberg stated that the proposed fence is not appropriate for the site. Mr. Wilds agreed and remarked that the proposed fence would turn the historic church into a fortress. Ms. Chevalier stated that the fence was not historic, but was installed in the 1940s. She also stated that it had been struck by a car recently. She expressed great concern for the safety of the employees, who arrive at the building at 6:00 a.m. and encounter homeless people in the garden area. She stated that they began replace the existing fence without knowing about the designation or seeking an approval from the Commission. They suspended the replacement when they learned of the designation.

Mr. Steinberg asked the applicants if they had security personnel on the grounds, to which they responded that they did not. Ms. Chevalier stated that the proposed fence is like the College of Physicians fence to the north. Mr. Steinberg responded that the fences are very different and that the College of Physicians fence was designed for and with the building. Mr. Wilds opined that a six-foot fence would overwhelm the historic site. He suggested that five feet may be more suitable. He also asked if fencing specific areas, not the entire garden, might not solve the problem more effectively.

Ms. Smyler stated that she works in the area and acknowledged the large homeless population.

Mr. Schaaf stated that the middle rail, which the Architectural Committee recommended, would actually assist people to climb over the fence. Mr. Schaaf suggested that clever landscaping might solve the problem. Mr. Steinberg reiterated his belief that the area should remain open and available to the public. Ms. Smyler responded that the public would be able to see through the fence.

Mr. Chevalier noted that Preservation Pennsylvania holds an easement and had approved the proposal. He stated that he has 50 employees, 40 of whom are women. Many have been accosted. The tall fence will provide safety. He claimed that the pickets would only be $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. Mr. Rivera responded that that dimension would be impossible. He looked at the plans and determined that they would be $\frac{5}{8}$ " by $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Mr. Wilds questioned the veracity of the plan, which stated that the fence would be cast iron.

Mr. Steinberg asked Mr. Chevalier if he had notified either the police or the Center City District of his security problem. He stated that he had not. Mr. Wilds stated that he was attempting to solve a social problem in the wrong way. He asserted that this type of problem is fleeting, but the fence will not be. He cited an example on Spruce Street.

Mr. Sugrue suggested limiting the height of the fence. Other Commissioners agreed, suggesting that the overall height be measured from the sidewalk.

Mr. James asked about the design of the gate. Mr. Chevalier stated that it would match the fence.

Mr. Chevalier criticized the staff, claiming that it had told him that it had denied his fence application. He asked how the staff could have denied the application if the Commission was now reviewing it. Several Commissioners answered that the staff could not and did not deny his application.

Mr. Rivera and Ms. Smyler agreed to amend their motion.

ACTION: Mr. Rivera moved to approve a taller version of the existing fence, provided its height is limited to six feet measured from the surface of the sidewalk, with the staff to review details. Ms. Smyler seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Sugrue returned the gavel to Mr. Sklaroff.

THE REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF

Jonathan E. Farnham, Acting Historic Preservation Director

Mr. Farnham presented the report to the Commission. When asked if they had questions about the report, the Commissioners replied that they had none.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Mr. Tissian moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 a.m. Ms. Murray seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES CITED

Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinct materials or alterations of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Standard 5: Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportions, and massing, to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Building Site Guidelines: Recommended: Designing new onsite parking ... when required by the new use so that they are as unobtrusive as possible and assure the preservation of the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape; and Recommended: Designing ... adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserves the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape.

Roofs Guideline: Recommended: Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Farnham, Randal Baron, Erin Coté, Jorge Danta, Karen Gonski