

THE MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

27 April 1989

Present: David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect, Independence
National Historical Park
David DeLong, Architect, University of Pennsylvania,
Preservation Program
John Dickey, A.I.A.
Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A.

Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation
Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Maria Petrillo, Chief Assistant City Solicitor, Law
Department.

Also Don Stevenson, Architect, to observe the work of the
Committee.

Sandra Gross Bressler, Executive Director, Philadelphia
Art Commission.

William J. Burke, Center City Planner, Philadelphia City
Planning Commission.

Robert G. Lyon, Architect and Dan Evans, Hartmax, regarding
1610 Chestnut Street.

Mark Bower of KKFS, Jeff Glass representing Boyd's and
Michael Malone of Charles E. Brody, Architects regarding
1818-20 Chestnut Street.

Marty Dorf of Dorf Associates and Avra Gold and Bruce
Greiff of Bourse Mall Associates regarding the Bourse
Building at 13-21 South 5th Street.

Christine Broda, Architect, regarding 318 South Fawn Street

Leslie Deis, Architect and David Spina, Owner, regarding
135 Carpenter Street.

Linda Bantel of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
and Michael Pearson and Tony Atkin of Tony Atkin and
Associates regarding the Pennsylvania Academy of the
Fine Arts.

Perry J. Stutman, Engineer and David J. Stern, Owner,
regarding 317 South 18th Street.

Paul Vinicoff, Architect, regarding 19~~45~~ Pine Street

Paul Vaivoda of Curtis Cox Kennerly and David Villela and
Wayne Tomlinson of the Department of Public Property
regarding Philadelphia City Hall Tower.

William Jorden of the Center City Residents Association.

CENTER CITY COMMERCIAL CONTROLS, Sandra Gross Bressler, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Art Commission and William J. Burke, Center City Planner, Philadelphia City Planning Commission. Prior to the review of submissions, Ms. Bressler and Mr. Burke addressed the Committee with regard to the Center City Commercial Controls and other areas of Art Commission and Planning Commission jurisdiction. In many instances, the jurisdictions of the Historical Commission, Art Commission and Planning Commission overlap, particularly in the center city area, requiring a coordination of reviews and an understanding of the particular concerns of each reviewing agency.

In 1981, Philadelphia City Council passed an ordinance setting aside Chestnut Street and Walnut Street as a special controls district requiring review of facade modifications by the City Planning Commission and a review of sign proposals by the Art Commission. In 1983, City Council extended this special controls district to include South Broad Street. In addition, the Art Commission under the City Charter is charged with the review of any projection into the public right of way throughout the City. Projections include awnings, canopies, projecting signs, etc.

Numerous historic buildings stand within the boundaries of the special controls district and, as a result, many applicants must present their submission for a facade modification or sign proposal to all three agencies. Ms. Bressler noted that over the past several months staff representatives of three Commissions have begun working together in an attempt to understand the concerns of each agency and to reach decisions consistent with these concerns.

Ms. Bressler explained the Art Commission's concern for the visual clutter which has occurred as a result of competition among owners and tenants for larger, louder, bolder awnings. This proliferation of awnings in the center city commercial zone has resulted from a Code provision that prohibits projecting signs in the special controls district but allows awnings with type on the front face. Ms. Bressler pointed out that although projecting signs are prohibited by ordinance in this district, the three reviewing agencies would agree that a projecting sign may be totally appropriate on certain types and styles of buildings. The assumption, at the time, was that a prohibition on projecting signs would clean up the clutter which existed in this area. The result, however, has been counter-productive.

In an attempt to resolve this problem, the Art Commission has undertaken a revision of the sign guidelines for the downtown to encourage more creative and interesting signage. Members of the business and graphic arts community as well as staff members of the Planning and Historical Commissions are working with the Art Commission in the development on this project.

In reviewing proposed signage on an historic building, the Art Commission generally defers to the Historical Commission to determine the appropriateness of the sign to the building and the effect of the sign on the historic fabric of the building. The Art Commission's concern, however, goes beyond the particular building under review to the effect of the proposal on the streetscape.

At this time, Ms. Bressler and Mr. Burke discussed with the Committee various peculiar aspects of the sign guidelines. In addition, they asked in particular for some guidance with regard to the establishment of a review procedure that the three agencies might employ.

The Committee endorsed the proposed revision of the sign guidelines for the downtown area. The members further suggested that some checklist of reviewing agencies be developed for distribution to an applicant at the time a sign application is made to the Department of Licenses and Inspections. Such a checklist would notify an applicant of the various approvals required before a permit is issued.

Since the first three submissions on the Committee's agenda involved buildings under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission and the Art Commission, the Chairman invited Mr. Bressler to remain and to participate in the review of these applications.

SUBMISSIONS

① 1610 Chestnut Street, Robert G. Lyon, Architect and Dan Evans of Hartmarx. Mr. Lyon presented to the members of the Architectural Committee his proposal for the interior remodeling and exterior rehabilitation of the former Jackson and Moyer Store located at 1610 Chestnut Street. The applicant submitted to the Committee two alternate front elevations. Elevation A, the one preferred by the applicant, calls for the replacement of the existing entrance wall with a new tempered glass wall and tempered doors. Elevation B proposes the retention of the entrance wall and calls for the replacement of the existing doors with new narrow frame glass doors.

The Committee members unanimously found the existing entrance wall to be a significant and character defining feature of this building and agreed to require its retention. Moreover, the Committee strongly recommended that the existing bronze doors be retained and restored. If the doors cannot be salvaged, they must be replaced with a reasonable facsimile and the original handle bars reused.

Owing to the fragile nature of the historic storefront, the architect asked if a highly polished metal could be used in lieu of the proposed dark green glass in the spandrel area of the storefront. The Committee discouraged the use of metal but agreed that if the architect and his client decided to use a polished metal instead of glass in this area, the Committee would need to review and approve a sample of the proposed replacement material.

Ms. Bressler commented upon the proposed signage for this building. She advised the applicant that the Art Commission expressed concern over the light fixtures proposed for placement on the front facade and asked that they be reduced in size. She further suggested washing the entire facade with light to highlight the unique architectural character of this fine building. The applicant agreed to meet with the Art Commission to resolve any concerns regarding these matters.

RECOMMENDATION: Final Approval of Scheme B with the retention of the existing doors.

1818-20 Chestnut Street, Michael Malone of Charles E. Brody, Jeff Glass of Boyd's and Mark Bower of KKFS. Mr. Malone presented to the Committee his proposal for the rehabilitation of the building at 1818-20 Chestnut Street for use by Boyd's Men's Store.

The Committee found the proposed treatment of the historic fabric of the building facade on Chestnut Street to be acceptable and recommends its approval.

The Committee next expressed its concern over the proposed placement of window awnings and a canopy on the building facade. Mr. Malone explained his client's desire to establish an identity on Chestnut Street through the use of these awnings and a canopy.

The Committee found that the addition of an entrance canopy and the proliferation of window awnings at all floors would detract from the studied formalism of this finely ornamented facade. The Committee agreed that all awnings on the facade and the proposed entrance canopy should be eliminated. In place of an entrance canopy, the Committee recommended the installation of either two single or one double awning to mark the entrance to the building. In addition, the Committee supported the proposed placement of banners on the facade to be hung from the two existing flagpoles on the upper floors. The Committee also suggested the use of a color or colors for the entrance awning and banners more compatible with the color and tone of the facade materials.

The proposed treatment of the Sansom Street facade and of the interior spaces of this building were reviewed and, in general, determined to be acceptable. The Committee did ask that the finish on the window display cases be statuary bronze rather than a bright brass finish. The Committee also suggested the possibility of using the valance on the window display cases for signage. The Committee recommends an approval of the proposed work subject to this minor revision.

Ms. Bressler, speaking for the Art Commission, agreed with the members of the Architectural Committee concerning the elimination of window awnings and the entrance canopy. She recommended also that an entrance awning or awnings be employed in lieu of a canopy and that banners be hung from the existing flagpoles. Ms. Bressler also suggested illuminating the building facade to highlight its architectural features.

RECOMMENDATION: Final Approval subject to the elimination of window awnings and the use of a square entrance awning(s) in lieu of a canopy. Valance of the window display cases should be executed in a matt finish metal.

① The Bourse, 21 South 5th Street, Marty Dorf of Dorf Associates and Avra Gold and Bruce Greiff of Bourse Mall Associates. Mr. Dorf presented to the members of the Architectural Committee his final submission for renovations to the Bourse Building located at 13-21 South 5th Street. At prior meetings, the Committee and the Commission reviewed and approved, in concept, improvements to the 5th Street plaza and facade as well as to the interior retail space on the main, street and mezzazine levels. The scope of the proposed work includes the following items:

- 1) a glass and steel canopy and two curved glass and steel greenhouse-type structure in the entrance portico;
- 2) signage, trash containers and trees;
- 3) an informational directory;
- 4) a raised platform for seating and sculpture;
- 5) a kiosk at the south end of the plaza;
- 6) flagpoles with signage and banners;
- 7) light standards;
- 8) a sign sculpture at the north end of the plaza;
- 9) new paving;
- 10) awnings and window boxes on the building facade;
- 11) interior renovations to retail space including a floor cut at the street level.

In general, the Committee found the final submission to be in conformance with all preliminary approvals and to reflect the recommendations of the Committee made at earlier meetings. Following considerable discussion, the members agreed that a final approval of this project subject to certain minor revisions would be recommended to the Commission. These revisions are as follows:

- 1) removal of all awnings and window boxes from the building facade;
- 2) correction of the signage on the drawing so that it matches more precisely the character of the signage on the model;
- 3) clarification of the floor cut at the street level to reflect a straight cut rather than an irregular cut.

RECOMMENDATION: Final Approval subject to minor revisions.

318 South Fawn Street, Christine Broda, Architect. Ms. Broda appeared before the Architectural Committee to present a resubmission of her proposal for the construction of a one story addition atop an existing two story brick house at 318 South Fawn Street.

- ② On 29 December 1988, the Committee and Commission reviewed two possible designs for the proposed one story addition. The first proposal called for raising the height of the building one story in the plane of the front wall using a half gable roof. The second proposal added a story in the plane of the front wall using a flat roof. The Committee and Commission rejected both designs and advised Ms. Broda to restudy the issue and return with a revision if she so desired. It was explained at that time, however, that the concept of an addition atop 318 South Fawn Street was not necessarily approvable.

Ms. Broda returned to the Committee with two new design schemes for the addition. Both designs proposed pulling the front wall of the addition back four feet behind the front facade. The schemes differ in that one proposes a half gable roof while the other uses a flat roof.

Following considerable discussion, the Committee voted to reject both proposals. Unlike the enlarged dormer projects approved in the past, the proposed addition in this case significantly impacts upon the front facade of the building. Any rooftop addition would be highly visible from directly in front of the house. Also, because of the shallow pitch of the roof, the addition would require that all four walls be raised approximately eight feet to create the necessary headroom. The Committee agreed that such an addition would ruin the main character defining feature of this highly unusual building, i.e., its roofline. It was further noted that this half gable house type, which was common in Philadelphia in the 18th and early 19th century, has now become extremely rare, particularly in regard to the positioning of its gable end to the street.

RECOMMENDATION: Denial.

135 Carpenter Street, Leslie Deis, Architect and David Spina, Owner.

- ① This application came to the Historical Commission as a result of a violation issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections. Construction on a rear addition to the building had begun without a building permit and without the review and approval of this office. A stop work order was issued and the applicant was advised to engage an architect for the preparation of drawings showing the proposed rear addition and any other proposed changes to the building. Following an inspection of the illegal work, the staff met with the owner and architect and assisted in the development of a revised design for the rear addition which preserves the original roofline of the main building.

The Committee reviewed the submission presented by the architect and, following some discussion, agreed to recommend a legalization of the proposed rear addition as shown on the revised drawings. In addition, the Committee directed the staff to work with the applicant and architect on the proper rehabilitation of the front facade.

RECOMMENDATION: Final Approval.

- ③ 1945 Pine Street, Paul Vinicoff, Architect. Mr. Vinicoff presented to the Committee his preliminary plans for the proposed construction of a fourth floor addition atop 1945 Pine Street. This building, built c. 1960, stands within the boundaries of the proposed Rittenhouse/Fitler Historic District and has been identified in the inventory for that district as a building contributing in scale and material to the character of the district.

The Committee reviewed Mr. Vinicoff's proposal for the construction of a fourth floor addition atop 1945 Pine Street and agreed to recommend its approval in concept. The proposed fourth floor addition will be held back from the front facade of the building and will be primarily of glass and steel construction. The Committee determined that the proposed addition would not compromise the integrity of the building or the historic district. Before any final approval of this project can be granted, however, the architect must submit a complete set of final working drawings and specifications for review by the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval in concept.

- ② Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Broad and Cherry Streets, Linda Bantel and Stephen Klein of the Pennsylvania Academy and Tony Atkin and Michael Pearson of Tony Atkin and Associates. Representatives of the Pennsylvania Academy appeared before the Architectural Committee to request a conceptual approval for preliminary expansion plans which include the construction of an enclosed bridge over Cherry Street to connect the west end of the Academy with proposed new construction.

Ms. Bantel described in detail to the Committee members the immediate and long term space requirements of the Pennsylvania Academy. In response to these needs, a study was undertaken to develop an expansion plan for the Academy. Mr. Klein explained to the Committee that, as of this time, land acquisition for expansion has not been secured and detailed and that in-depth programming for new spaces has not yet commenced. In January of this year, however, the Academy put under agreement of sale the north site. The Academy hopes to settle on this parcel of land by October of this year. The north site is bounded by Burns, Carlisle and Cherry Streets. Also under consideration is the acquisition of a west site directly behind the Academy and across Burns Street. Acquisition of this site, however, may be difficult.

In the proposed development of either the north site or the west site, the Academy would like to connect the gallery level of the historic building to the new museum building or buildings. This connection, in the form of a bridge, would occur on the rear wall (west elevation) of the Furness building. The proposed bridge would rise approximately twenty-five (25) feet above the street. The Academy explained that the Academy did consider the construction of a tunnel rather than a bridge but that owing to the presence of City steam lines and other factors, this alternative was abandoned.

Following considerable discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend an approval in concept of the proposed connection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with any proposed development of either the north or west sites. The design of the proposed bridge should be sympathetic to the architectural character of the historic building in terms of scale, proportion, color, construction materials, etc. The bridge should also be contemporary in design and not attempt to replicate precisely the style and detail of the Furness building. Before any final approval can be granted, a complete set of working drawings and specifications must be presented for review.

Mr. Hollenberg abstained from voting on this matter.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval in concept

317 South 18th Street, Perry J. Stutman, P.E. and David J. Stern, Owner.

Mr. Stutman presented to the Committee his plans for the expansion of an existing kitchen at the rear of this property and for the addition of skylights and the construction of a roof deck atop the existing Mansard roof on the main building.

- ① Mr. Stutman explained to the Committee his intention to remove an existing stair enclosure on the roof but to keep the existing chimneys. The proposed deck railing will be visible from the street; the skylights will not be visible. To hide the floor of the deck structure, Mr. Stutman proposes to add four courses of brick along the sides of the existing party walls. Brick at the rear of the property will be salvaged and reused for this purpose.

The Committee discussed at length with Mr. Stutman various design alternatives that would allow the deck to be pulled back substantially away from the front of the building. It was agreed that a deck may be permitted but that it must be pushed back to a line approximately at the mid-point of the roof. The Committee welcomed the removal of the existing stair enclosure but recommended against the proposed addition of brick coursing along the sides of the party walls.

RECOMMENDATION: Final Approval of kitchen expansion. Approval in concept of a roof deck.

26-28-30 South 21st Street, Joseph Berenholtz & Associates, P.C. On 14 September 1988, the Philadelphia Historical Commission considered an application for permission to demolish the three historically designated buildings located at 26-28-30 South 21st Street. At that time, the Commission voted to postpone action for a period not to exceed six months on the demolition permit application for these buildings and to require compliance with Section 7(f)(.1) - (.7) of the city's historic preservation ordinance. At the request of the applicant, a 90 day extension was granted to allow for the completion of the applicant's report on the 21st Street building and their potential for reuse. With this 90 day extension, the six-month period will end on 14 June 1989.

On 14 April 1989, the staff received copies of a report prepared by Joseph Berneholz, P.C. This report examines three possible scenarios for the 21st Street site - two involve rehabilitation and reuse of the existing buildings; the third, total demolition and new construction.

The Committee agreed with the staff evaluation of the report that found several items of information, listed under Section 7(f) in the preservation ordinance, to be missing. These include the following:

(.2) assessed value of the land and improvements thereon according to the most recent assessment;

(.3) financial information for the previous two (2) years which shall include, as a minimum, annual gross income from the property, itemized operating and maintenance expenses, real estate taxes, annual debt service, annual cash flow, the amount of depreciation taken for federal income tax purposes, and other federal income tax deductions produced;

(.4) all appraisals obtained by the owner in connection with his purchase or financing of the property, or during his ownership of the property;

(.5) all listings of the property for sale or rent, price asked, and offers received, if any.

In addition, a variation of Scheme B might be examined. Scheme B, as presented by the applicant, calls for the retention of the existing buildings with new low rise construction at the rear of the property. A variation of this scheme might consider preservation of the first 40 feet of the original buildings and new mid to high rise construction on the rear portion of the property.

Finally, a more specific breakdown of general construction costs should be provided as should the possible financial ramifications of the utilization of the federal tax incentives for historic preservation and of the donation of a facade easement.

RECOMMENDATION: Submission of the report, supplemented with the additional information as noted above, to a consultant for evaluation.

City Hall Tower, Observation Deck, David Villela and Wayne Tomlinson of the Department of Public Property and Paul Vaivoda of Curtis Cox Kennerly Architects. Mr. Villela presented to the Committee the City of Philadelphia's proposal for the construction of a new observation deck on City Hall tower. Until fairly recently, there existed a wire mesh-enclosed, open air, observation deck.

3 According to Mr. Villela, the City has established clear criteria for the construction of the observation deck. Providing a view of the City from atop the tower emerged as the first priority in the proposed construction of this observatory. Secondly, the City expressed special concern for the safety of those persons using the deck and for the safety of persons on the street below the deck. Mr. DeLong questioned the need for a observatory atop City Hall particularly since it is no longer the tallest structure in the city. However, it was agreed that sufficient unobstructed views remained to justify the construction of a new observation deck. The design of an observation deck sympathetic with the architectural style of the building constituted the third criterion. The structural element of the deck itself would have to be supported in an unobtrusive manner and one which would not affect the existing structural system. And, finally, the deck must be able to accommodate the installation of scaffolding for the continued maintenance of the tower and the statue of William Penn.

Following these criteria, the architectural office of Curtis Cox Kennerly developed various designs for a new observation deck. The Department of Public Property selected two of the several designs. The scheme preferred by the City proposes a fully glass enclosed system which provides visibility and maximum safety. The second scheme proposes an ornamental ironwork design with glass positioned on the eight points that correspond to the major axes and the eight points that correspond to the four major squares of the city. The ornamental ironwork was designed six inches on center - the maximum permitted by Code. But this design would reduce the safety factor since it allows a variety of objects to be thrown from the tower.

The Committee expressed concern for the reflectivity of the glass, the change in the tower's silhouette, ventilation of the deck, attachment of the structure to the tower and other related issues. The members suggested that wire mesh, or some other lower tech architectural solution, rather than glass be given serious consideration.

Ms. Bressler suggested that an observation deck should provide the experience of being out in the open air and not enclosed behind

glass. Mr. Villela expressed his opinion that this feeling can be achieved without sacrificing safety.

Mr. Hollenberg summarized the Committee's concerns particularly with regard to the change in the silhouette of the tower and the reflectivity of a glass enclosed structure. Although the Committee members agreed to recommend an approval, in concept, of the proposed reconstruction of an observation deck, they also agreed that a suitable architectural solution for the design of such a deck might not exist. Neither architectural solution presented at today's meeting was acceptable to the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval, in concept, for the reuse of the observation deck.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer