

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Brownlee, Chair
Commission Conference Room, One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 18th Floor
12 July 2001

Present

David Brownlee, Ph.D, Chair,
Warren Huff, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Janet Klein, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Chair
Bruce Lavery, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia
Stephanie G. Wolf, Ph.D.

Julianne Brennan, Historic Preservation Planner
Diane M. Hughes, Executive Secretary
Laura M. Spina, Historic Preservation Planner
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Also

Penny B. Bach, Fairmount Park Art Association
Sarah Katz, Fairmount Park Art Association

David Brownlee, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

The Eagle

1300 Market Street, Grand Court
Date: 1904
Sculptor: August Gaul

Julianne Brennan made an illustrated presentation of the *Eagle* nomination, which she had written, to the Committee. Designed by German sculptor August Gaul, the *Eagle* serves as a quintessential example of the artist's work as a bronze animal sculpture. Commissioned for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis of 1904, the sculpture was fabricated by Armbruster Brothers who formed the sculpture out of individual wrought an embossed plates and handcrafted each feather by hand with hammer, chisel and file while hot. John Wanamaker, Philadelphia's famous retail merchant, purchased the *Eagle* from the Exposition and placed it in storage until it was installed in the Grand Court of his new store in 1911. Wanamaker collected art and exhibited it in his stores as public art for his customers' enjoyment. Over the years, the *Eagle* has become a cultural icon in Philadelphia. Owing to the popularity of Wanamaker's store, the sculpture became a common meeting place among citizens. The phrase "meet me at the *Eagle*" a recognized part of the social vocabulary of Philadelphians and the piece itself has become a symbol for the store.

Ms. Brennan concluded that the *Eagle* meets four of the criteria for listing on the Philadelphia Register in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, §14-2007(5):

- (a) has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- (c) is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth

- or Nation;
- (h) represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City, and
- (j) exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Ms. Klein recommended some minor alterations to the language in the nomination. Penny Balkin Bach, Fairmount Park Art Association, spoke on behalf of the *Eagle* nomination. She stated that the fabrication of the sculpture by hand serves as an early example of this type of art craftsmanship. In this sense, she emphasized that the *Eagle* should be considered a work of art. Ms. Bach further stated that this sculpture is of great public importance owing to its accessibility to the public on a daily basis. Finally, she commented that Wanamaker purchased the sculpture for the express purpose of displaying it as public art—a cause supported strongly by the Fairmount Park Art Association.

Ms. Spina and Mr. Brownlee concurred with Ms. Bach’s observations and reiterated the importance of the *Eagle*’s location in the Grand Court.

Ms. Klein moved to recommend the listing of the Eagle sculpture on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, with the nomination to include the changes cited by the Committee. Mr. Huff seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

JLB

Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial

2901-51 Market Street, 30th Street Station Concourse

DATE: 1946-52

Sculpted by Walker Hancock

Ms. Spina made an illustrated presentation of the nomination. Hancock preferred sculpture that was linked to architecture. During the Second World War, 150,000 Pennsylvania Railroad workers served in the armed forces. The Railroad’s President, Martin W. Clement, wanted a memorial for the 1,300 workers who died in battle. Mr. Clement provided the basic design, an image lifting the body of a soldier with the names of the fallen listed on the base of the piece. The Railroad also chose the site at the 29th Street entrance for the work. This location dictated that the statue would be seen in the round, contributed to its overall height and vertical orientation, but Hancock wanted to keep the figures close to human scale. Hancock tried to make the angel’s face represent all of humanity, not just one race or gender. He observed that the stylized hair almost duplicated the foliation on the capitals of the columns framing the statue.

30th Street Station, designed by the Chicago firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White was built between 1929 and 1934 for the Pennsylvania Railroad, and serves as the principal passenger railroad station in Philadelphia. The memorial stands for all passengers to see as a testament to the sacrifice made by the railroad workers. On all four sides of the base the names of the fallen appear in alphabetical order.

Ms. Spina concluded that the Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial meets four of the criteria for listing on the Philadelphia Register in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, § 14-2007(5):

- (a) has significant character, interest and value as part of the cultural characteristic of the City;

- (e) work of Walker Hancock;
- (g) relates to the railroad station's concourse, a distinctive area, and
- (h) represents an established and familiar visual feature of the City.

The Committee members discussed and commented on the nomination and made a few small changes. It also suggested the possible nominating for designation of objects collectively in the future.

Penny Bach, Fairmount Park Art Association, said that she met with Walker Hancock, and he believed this his most important and favorite work. She also said that regarding the public interest, site specific artwork needs designation for protection against removal. Ms. Bach questioned the whole concept of designation, its sequence, method and criteria for determining what should be designated. In addition, she drew attention to two categories of sculpture namely: those works of art, privately commissioned and housed on private property but accessible to the public, have no protection and works, owned by the city, which have a certain amount of protection. Ms. Bach reiterated the numerous sculptures around the city which are not designated.

Ms. Klein thought that if a list of citywide sculptures were available, the Committee could then establish criteria for the consideration of their designation. Ms. Bach was receptive and expressed interest in helping where possible. Mr. Brownlee said that the Committee had deferred discussions about priorities of designation pending the appointment of a new Commission. However, he believes that the Committee should work towards a plan that includes sculpture, architecture and districts. Ms. Spina stated corporate-commissioned art's purpose was as well for the public to see it and connect it to the corporation. Mr. Huff stated sentimentally that the railroad is so much a part of the life and times of the generation involved in the war that he believes the railroad's memorial is more significant than any one thing. The railroad impacted a vast number of families, including his, moving across the country at this important time in history.

Mr. Laverty made a recommendation to list the Pennsylvania Railroad War Memorial on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Klein seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Jefferson's Old Main Hospital

120 South 10th Street

DATE: 1903-07

Designed by James and John Windrim

Ms. Spina presented an illustrated presentation of this building designed by James and John Windrim. This steel-framed building with concrete inner walls has a polychromed and rusticated appearance. The Beaux-Arts Style of architecture was established after the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and became the de facto style for governmental and institutional buildings in the United States. The skyscraper design reflected changes in building technology, such as the elevator, and a steel frame with masonry cladding, but also the Jefferson Medical College's advances in medical care and the changing role of the hospital itself. Old Main hospital is the oldest building in existence. In 1989, Jefferson Medical University altered Old Main so that it could continue functioning as a hospital. A six-story addition was inserted between the middle and western wings along Moravian Street. The first three easternmost bays were transformed into a vehicular drive for loading and unloading patients. All of the windows along

the first floor of the east façade and the first three bays on the Sansom Street façade were removed, turning that portion of the building into an open areaway.

Ms. Spina concluded that the Jefferson's Old Main Hospital meets four of the criteria for listing on the Philadelphia Register in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, § 14-2007(5):

- (a) outstanding example of Beaux-Arts style;
- (d) work of James and John Windrim;
- (e) excellent example of "skyscraper" hospital type, and
- (j) oldest existing building belonging to Jefferson Medical College (now University).

The Committee discussed the nomination and recommended a few minor changes.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to recommend the listing of Jefferson's Old Main Hospital on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Huff seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Ms. Spina expressed the staff's concern about the designations of statues and art, when important and significant properties still remain undesignated and thought that priorities should be established. Mr. Brownlee thought a simple catalogue giving the name, location and date of artwork could be done by the Fairmount Park Art Association. A discussion ensued about art and its significance and its being tied to its setting. Ms. Klein suggested that possibly the Fairmount Park Art Association could write its own nominations or receive grants to help with the process. Mr. Brownlee recommended that at the next meeting the Committee should discuss the three types of designations namely individual buildings, districts and objects.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Hughes
Executive Secretary