

**THE MINUTES OF THE 409th STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
11 September 1996**

**City Council Caucus, Room 401 City Hall
Wayne S. Spilove, Chair**

Present

Wayne S. Spilove, Chair
David Brownlee, Ph.D.
Frances Egan, Commissioner, Department of Licenses and
Inspections
Joseph James, Department of Public Property
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning Commission
Arlene Matzkin
Steven Mullin, Director, Department of Commerce
Michael Sklaroff, Esq.
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing and Community Development
Caroline Wischmann
Stephanie Wolf, Ph.D.

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Jeffrey R. Barr, Historic Preservation Technician
Laura M. Spina, Historic Preservation Specialist

Also, with affiliation and/or project

Stefan Metcaniuc
Raffaele Castelli, Howell Belanger Castelli Architects
Megan McCrea, Rittenhouse-Fitler District
Judith Eden, Center City Residents Association
Jeffery Hayes, Susan Maxman Architects
Michael Webb
Tom Ferrick, Philadelphia Inquirer
Milton Marks, Preservation Alliance

Wayne S. Spilove, Chair, recognized the presence of a quorum and called the 409th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission to order at 10:05 A.M.

MINUTES of the 408th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Mr. Sklaroff noted two misspellings and made a correction on page six, first paragraph by striking the word "merely". Upon a motion made by Mr. Wilds and duly seconded, the Commission unanimously approved the Minutes of the 408th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 14 August 1996, Wayne S. Spilove, Chair, as corrected.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE REPORT, 3 September 1996, Arlene Matzkin,

Chair

Ms. Matzkin read the Committee's recommendations before each proposal was discussed.

401 North Broad Street

Bell Atlantic-PA, Inc., Owner

Frank Radomski, Applicant

PROPOSAL: New door

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin explained that the owner was replacing the door with an exact copy. Mr. Tyler noted that this conforms to the Secretary of Interior's *Standards*.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Sklaroff abstained.

907-909 Clinton Street

Joseph Wharton Headley, Inc., Owner

Joseph Slota, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Facade restoration

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval with staff approval of cleaning sample.

Ms. Matzkin stated that the drawings submitted by the applicant were impressive. Mr. Tyler noted that the proposal conforms to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* which call for the gentlest cleaning method.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

408 South Iseminger Street

Wesley Parrot, Owner/Applicant

PROPOSAL: Cleaning, pointing

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval with staff to approve cleaning and pointing samples.

Mr. Tyler stated that the proposal conforms to the Interior's *Standards*.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. Wilds questioned the new reference to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines*. Mr. Tyler replied that the

reference to the Commission's guidelines is important for the record, especially in the case of a denial.

1918, 1920, 1922 Mount Vernon Street

Philadelphia Housing Authority, Owner

Thomas Kuhar, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Cleaning, new windows and door; 1922 also repair cornice and watertable, new lintels

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin explained that the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) has been making an effort to restore some of its properties to the historic appearance. PHA received a preservation award in the Spring from the Preservation Alliance and that has encouraged this effort.

Mr. Tyler stated that the proposal conforms to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2424 Pine Street

University of Pennsylvania, Owner

Willie Oliphant, Jr., Applicant

PROPOSAL: New door

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval

Mr. Tyler stated that the proposal, replacing a non-historic door with a new historic-looking door, is recommended by the *Standards*.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Sklaroff abstained.

2041-2043 Spruce Street

Florence Hanker, Owner/Applicant - 2041 Spruce Street

Mark Olinger, Owner/Applicant - 2043 Spruce Street

PROPOSAL: Brownstone Repair

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval with staff to approve details and a patch for a color match.

This proposal is for a new material for brownstone restoration which uses Portland cement. The contractor making the proposal has a very good reputation and the Committee and staff will monitor the progress of the project. The proposal is

recommended by the *Standards* because it should result in the correct appearance and strength. Mr. Baron stated that the material can match colors well and can be sculpted easily which is an advantage over the present materials on the market. However, the Portland cement base may make the product more hard than the brownstone and may eventually fall off the facade. The Commission was concerned with allowing the use of this product in too many projects in case it does not prove effective.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

127-129 Spruce Street, Man Full of Troubles Tavern

University of Pennsylvania, Owner

John Holland, Architect

PROPOSAL: Masonry repair, new roof

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin gave a brief description of the work which follows the recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Brownlee and Mr. Sklaroff abstained.

2017 Locust Street

George Gay, Realtor

Jennifer Carpenter, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Sign

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin described the sign which is compatible to the building and conforms to the Secretary's *Standards*.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

230 Market Street

J. & M. Neubauer, Owners

Margot Berg, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Sign

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

The sign will be installed in the sign-band created in the historic storefront.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion which carried with a unanimous vote.

401 South Iseminger Street

Park Huntington, Owner

Chris Huntington, Applicant

PROPOSAL: New windows, stucco, paint

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval with staff to approve pointing.

The proposal follows the recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior.

Ms. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

410 South Iseminger Street

Randal Baron, Owner/Applicant

PROPOSAL: Facade restoration

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin stated that the original wood lintels had rotted and a previous owner had replaced them with brick coursing. The proposal calls for cast-stone lintels, painted to appear as wood.

Mr. Sklaroff questioned the use of a different material other than wood. Mr. Baron explained that wood lintels would not be as permanent as the cast-stone. Since the cast-stone will be painted, the appearance will mimic exactly the appearance of painted wood. The Secretary of Interior's *Standards* approve the use of a replacement material as long as the look of the original material is copied. Ms. Wolf noted that the original wood is now missing so an alternate material can be used. The Commission discussed the use of an alternate material, emphasizing the retention of the look of the original material. The proposal also included cleaning and pointing the masonry.

Mr. Sklaroff made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

414 South Iseminger Street

James & Mona Gallo, Owners/Applicants

PROPOSAL: Rebuild bulkhead

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Mr. Tyler stated that the work is replacement in kind and conforms to the *Standards*.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Sklaroff seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

1428-1430 Locust Street AKA 235 South 15th Street

Philadelphia Management, Owner

Joseph Alteari, Architect

PROPOSAL: Sign

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin explained that the Commission had approved a two-faced projecting sign for this building. The Art Commission did not approve the sign; now the proposal is for two flat-wall signs. One sign will be on the Locust Street facade and one on the 15th Street facade. The proposal meets the *Standards* set by the Secretary of the Interior.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

Ms. Matzkin noted that in the discussion and vote for 410 South Iseminger Street, the replacement of the bulkhead was omitted. Mr. Brownlee made a motion to amend the original motion to include an approval of the bulkhead. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2123 Locust Street

Sarah DuBois, Owner

Stefan Metcaniuc, Contractor

PROPOSAL: Reconstruction

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval subject to several plan changes: enlarge the projecting bay and install north and south windows; all of the windows to match the originals in number of panes, and the rear bay to have a cornice and covered with wood clapboards. Staff is to review the new plans for accuracy.

The changes requested by the Committee have been made. Mr. Tyler noted that this proposal is for a reconstruction and conforms to the *Standards*.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

216 Monroe Street

Laura Feldman, Owner

Robert Virgin, Applicant

PROPOSAL: New windows & door

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval, with the third story windows as three-over-six.

Ms. Matzkin described this building as a part of a courtyard behind Monroe Street. Mr. Tyler stated that the proposal has an historic basis and conforms to the *Standards*.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

1219 Panama Street

Frank & Joan Ordiway, Owners/Applicants

PROPOSAL: Replace stucco wall

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval of a natural or grey stucco coating with a sand finish.

The cement wall will be prepped and covered with stucco.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion which carried by a unanimous vote.

1735 Addison Street

Mae Jones, Owner

Thomas McNichol, Contractor

PROPOSAL: New facade

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

The Permastone was removed without a permit. The cornice installed is not historically correct, but acceptable since an historic cornice does not exist to serve as a reference. The removal of the Permastone is approved by the *Standards* because it is an unsympathetic change. Mr. Sklaroff questioned the historic value of the Permastone.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Mullin seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

1907 Spruce Street AKA 1906 Manning Street

George Sfedu, Owner/Applicant

PROPOSAL: Partial demolition, new addition

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin described the proposal for the removal of the first floor of the rear extension and replace it with a two-car garage with a deck. Mr. Brownlee questioned the solid parapet wall for the deck. Ms. Matzkin stated that it is similar to a parapet wall on a neighboring house dating from the 1920s.

Mr. Sklaroff made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

2051 Walnut Street

Vladimir Tamarkin, Owner

Sheldon Kauffman, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Exposed ductwork

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval of the exterior fan flush to the wall, at ten feet above the ground as required by code.

The Committee reviewed the proposal again. There should be space underneath the fire-stairs which can be utilized for the ductwork. Mr. Baron noted that if the space is not available for the ductwork, then the proposal should return to the Committee for review. Mr. Tyler stated that while the fan will be visible, the proposal is for the least intrusive option.

Mr. Sklaroff made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

1700 Spruce Street, Tenth Presbyterian Church

Matthew Weeks White, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Exposed ductwork

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval conditioned upon building a screen wall. The Committee asked the applicant to come back after installation of the ductwork and before the installation of a screen to give the Committee a chance to see the ductwork and discuss whether the screen could be omitted.

The ductwork may not be as noticeable as the architect has anticipated and eliminate the need for a screen. Mr. Tyler noted that this conforms to the *Standards* as the least intrusive option for the new air conditioning system.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Sklaroff seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

1736 Spruce Street

Theodore Tsiouris, Owner/Applicant

PROPOSAL: Paint masonry, awning

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval of a tan color with the cornice and trim to be off-white or cream.

Ms. Matzkin stated that the owner wanted to repaint the brick building a Colonial Gold color which the Committee did not find appropriate. Instead, a tan color will be used. Ms. Wolf explained that the building is not Colonial; a term designated by a paint company is not necessarily historically accurate, and Colonial Gold would not have been used on the exterior of a masonry building anyway.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

227 South 20th Street

Irv Sacks & Irv Gesoff, Owners

Philip Gursky, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Paint masonry

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin stated that the proposal is for repainting the building a red color with green trim and installation of a green awning.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

Ms. Wolf asked the staff to note the date of each building to aid in the discussion of each proposal.

2215 Walnut Street and 135 South 23rd Street

Office Pavilion/Spectrum, Owner

Jeffery Hayes, Architect

PROPOSAL: Mural

Architectural Committee Recommendation: The Committee did not reach a consensus. Tony Atkin, Arlene Matzkin and Suzanne Pentz would consider the idea of painted embellishments although all of them thought that this design of horizontal bands fought with the direction of the existing facade and should be revised. Herb Levy thought the idea of a mural on a finished facade was totally inappropriate. Bill Cornell said that in general he opposed the idea of murals painted around the City but that he didn't think it was a preservation issue. The Committee requested that the owners make an application for the illegally installed windows.

Ms. Matzkin explained that during the review of the application for the mural, Mr. Baron discovered that all of the windows had been replaced with vinyl windows without the Commission's approval.

Jeffery Hayes, the architect, and Michael Webb, the artist, described the proposal. Mr. Hayes explained that the owner of the building, Spectrum Office Furniture, saw the murals on the opposite corner of the block at the Sunoco station and wanted to do a unique painting on his building. Mr. Webb circulated photographs of examples of sgraffito in Northern Italy and Switzerland. He explained that the idea for the painting came from the subtle decoration that is found in Europe. Instead of true sgraffito, which is etched into the stucco, the proposal involves only painted ornamentation. The theme of modern office furniture will reflect the purpose of the store, with chairs and other furniture abstracted into decorative bands. The colors will be subtle creams and greys.

Mr. Wilds stated that the building is highly visible and has been a problem in the area. It has needed work for some time and the new windows are clearly inappropriate. The proposal for painting is a radical change for an elaborate and interesting facade. Mr. Hayes stated that the windows should be a separate issue. The owner had said that he did not know the building was in the district, but is willing to correct the windows.

Ms. Wolf questioned the jurisdiction of the Commission because the facade is already painted and was before designation.

Mr. Mullin asked the outcome if the Commission decided the proposal was not in its jurisdiction. He believed that a determination of "no jurisdiction" should not result in a denial of the proposal. It was determined that the proposal to paint the facade is an issue that the Commission can and should regulate.

Mr. Sklaroff stated that the buildings have changed over time and this proposal is simply another change. Also, the buildings are not an unblemished historic treasure. Mr. Wilds countered that the late nineteenth-century facade is intact and should not be compromised.

Mr. Sklaroff stated that the proposal is commercial speech, an artistic opportunity for the city, and a change that should be encouraged. Mr. Tyler noted that buildings change in Philadelphia within a Philadelphia vernacular and historical context with a Philadelphia vocabulary. The present proposal draws upon a different tradition than Philadelphia's. It also gives an architectural impression that never existed on that building. Mr. Sklaroff stated that Philadelphia has often used European influence in architecture, such as City Hall. He

restated that the proposal is for a building that is not an important historic treasure.

Mr. Brownlee emphasized that the building is the gateway to the district and is prominent because of its position. In reaching the boundaries of the district, strong buildings were chosen to be on the edges and the robust 1870's facade of this building is well preserved. Since the building is already painted, the issue is not to paint but the pattern of the paint.

Mr. Webb has created a handsome work of art that is at odds with the historic character of the building. The Historical Commission is concerned specifically with protecting the historic character of the buildings on the register. The examples from Europe are from the Baroque period and on buildings that are sheer plaster facades with almost no three-dimensional decoration. The sgraffito created a picture of design elements that the owner could not afford to build. The building on Walnut street has strong, three-dimensional elements of the late nineteenth century. The painting would be a beautiful, but distracting, pattern on the building. Mr. Brownlee emphasized that the discussion is not about new design, but for a building that already exists. Mr. Sklaroff stated that the proposal is embellishment. The building is not a historic treasure and the proposal is a good design that is expressive and respectful. Mr. Brownlee countered that the design does not respect the existing architecture of the building and is at odds with its historic character.

Mr. Tyler noted that the proposal sets a precedent. Any facade that is already painted can then be painted with any type of mural. Mr. Sklaroff stated that the Commission had already approved murals. Mr. Tyler replied that the one mural project previously approved had been on former party walls, never on a major facade. Mr. Brownlee emphasized that the painting, regardless of the content, is disruptive of and antagonistic to the historic character of the building. Any theme of the painting, office chairs, flowers, or any object, would be at odds with the historic facade.

Megan McCrea, on behalf of the Rittenhouse-Fitler District Historic Preservation Committee, testified that the building is a gateway to the district and highly visible. The proposal is tasteful but inconsistent with the Victorian facade of the building. The approval of this proposal would set a dangerous precedent for future murals on major facades of any building. Last, a building that has experienced some changes should be monitored and protected even more to ensure the preservation of its architectural integrity.

The Commission members, during the discussion for the painting, decided that the windows should be addressed and

brought into compliance regardless of the decision on the painting. The Commission decided that they would entertain the idea of painting the four-story building, but the architect and artist must submit a formal proposal for consideration.

Mr. Sklaroff made a motion to approve the proposal as submitted on the condition that the existing window conditions must be brought into compliance. Mr. Mullin seconded the motion. The vote, two in favor of the motion and seven against, disapproved the proposal.

Mr. Tyler questioned the need for a vote to reject the proposal.

The Commission decided that the rejection of the previous motion was sufficient. The Department of Licenses and Inspections will be notified about the illegal windows.

1805-1809 Walnut Street, Alison Building

Hal Wheeler, Developer

Raffaele Castelli, Architect

PROPOSAL: Louvered air intake on rear, signage

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval for the rear vents but insisted that the sign boxes in front not project. They suggested that technologies exist, such as fiber optics, which allow for smaller signs. In case this is not possible, they recommend that the sign should be non-illuminated.

The proposal involves two issues. First, air in-take louvers will be installed on the rear of the building. Second, the proposal calls for five-inch illuminated sign boxes in front of the stone lintels, which would project three inches. The Committee approved the signage only if it lies flush to the surface, in the two-inch recess at the lintels. If the sign box cannot be flush, then the signage cannot be illuminated.

Judith Eden, Executive Vice-President of the Center City Residents Association, with a membership area bounded by Broad Street and the Schuylkill River, South and Market Streets, objects to the illuminated sign. The Secretary of Interior's *Standards* do not recommend new illuminated signage. Also, contrary to what the Committee and Commission believe, the proposal for illuminated signage had not been approved previously. The store will have other means of signage, such as the four approved banners. No legal illuminated sign exists on Rittenhouse Square and no history of illuminated signage exists for this building.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion which passed with a vote of seven to one.

The Report of the Activities of the Historical Commission Staff,
August 1996, Richard Tyler. Mr. Tyler noted that the minutes for the Rules and Regulations Committee were enclosed in the Commission members' packets. The adoption of the new rules and regulations should make the Commission meetings simpler and shorter. Second, the Naval Home site plan has been submitted for a change in zoning. The Architectural Committee will review the plan at a meeting on Tuesday, 17 September at 7:00 in the City Council Caucus Room. Commission members are urged to attend. Mr. Spilove stated that a tour of the complex will be arranged for Commission members.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura M. Spina