

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street
27 February 1996

Present

Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Tony Atkins
Penelope Batchelor
William Cornell
Herbert Levy

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Jeffrey Barr, Historical Research Technician

Also

Bobbie Burke, Center City Residents Association (CCRA)
Bernard Nearey, CCRA
Judith Eden, CCRA
George Schmidheiser, Temple University
Steven Dolores, Temple University
Peter Miller
William Burke, Art Commission
Cameron Lacy
M. Doran
Sam Olshin
Audrey Taichman
Rod Link
Marvin and Myra Galfand
Jeffery Hayes
Gary Place
Patrick Amaefuna
Reed Axelrod
John Teets
Van Strother, New Covenant Church
Claire Donato, Mark Thompson Associates
Renee Giustino
Benjmain Ellis

1608 WALNUT STREET
Cameron Lacy, Applicant
PROPOSAL: Banner

This proposal calls for installing a banner sixteen feet nine inches long and nine feet nine inches wide suspended from an existing flagpole. Committee members thought that the banner seemed too large by about half, but did not object to the idea of

a banner. In response to a question, William Burke explained that the Zoning Code does not allow projecting signs along this portion of Walnut Street, that the submission will require a variance, and that the Art Commission would oppose it as a matter of policy.

The Committee voted to recommend denial of the proposal at this size but would reconsider a banner of reduced size if approved by other City agencies.

258 SOUTH 4TH STREET

Mary Doran, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Garage door

At an earlier meeting, the Commission voted to approve inserting a garage into the newer rear section of this building. The applicant seeks approval for several possible alternate garage doors both panelled and smooth, wood and metal. After much discussion and difference of opinion, the Committee decided that on this particular alley which has no houses facing it, any of the presented designs is acceptable.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the alternate proposals.

276 S. 20TH STREET

Sam Olshin, Tony Atkin Architect

PROPOSAL: Storefront Rehabilitation

Last month the Commission granted approval to remove modern siding from the ground floor of this building in order to locate evidence to help determine a new design. Under the siding, the applicant found two original wood panels below the store windows and the scars of two sets of cornices from different eras of the building's history. In addition, the architect researched and found photographs of this building that show the design from both periods of the building's history. The architect submitted a plan showing a restoration to the circa 1935 front with a wrap around wood cornice and flush windows. For the purposes of creating an open air restaurant, he designed the windows as double casements. Upon pricing the full restoration, the applicant found the work prohibitively expensive and came to the meeting with a scaled back plan. The new plan retains the existing wood panels beneath the windows and restores the pilasters around the openings. It reduces the cornice in projection and detail, and postpones indefinitely a new panel under one of the Spruce Street windows. It also specifies new single leaf doors rather than the the historic rather than the historic double leaf doors. The brickwork will be cleaned and repointed.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of this application but asked the applicant to price building the cornice with greater definition of the planes and depth. They asked that staff review cleaning and repointing of the masonry.

1801 PINE STREET

Peter Miller, Architect

PROPOSAL: Windows, front door, lights

The applicant seeks to remove upper floor windows that do some violence to the historic character of the building and install new wood 1/1 sash and frames. In addition, he proposes a new door which would replace a clearly modern one and install lanterns to the side of two doors. Committee members questioned the historical basis of the design of the door and the windows. Mr. Baron noted that research at the City Archives, the Historical Society and the Free Library photo room uncovered no historic photograph of the building. Bernard Nearey said that he was seeking to contact the architect who had made earlier alterations to the building to see if he had photographs that could prove of assistance. The architect explained the need for lighting in that area, even though the building probably never had any lighting before.

By telephone before the meeting, Dr. Sheres, the owner of the building, asked that the minutes reflect his objection to the delay incurred for the combined six weeks of design review and building permit review at Licenses and Inspections when he is willing to install historically correct windows. He thought that the agencies could accomplish this review more quickly. Committee members responded that in the interest of speed, the staff had placed this application before the Committee even though it had not arrived in the office in time for listing on the agenda.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal as submitted with the proviso that if historic photos that show the correct historic windows and door are located within the next week, these changes would be incorporated into the proposal.

1917 Spruce Street

Richard Leonard, Owner/Applicant

PROPOSAL: Legalize Facade Painting

This proposal calls for legalizing the painting of the never before painted brick work of the second through fourth floors. The first floor was painted brick red with green trim in response to graffiti in the period just before the designation of the district. Mr. Leonard said he more recently painted the rest to harmonize the facade. In response to community complaints, a violation issued. The Committee faced the problem of the near impossibility of removing the paint from the upper floors without

disturbing the paint of the formerly painted ground floor. This resulted in a compromise proposal. Mr. Nearey suggested that if the Commission allowed the paint to remain, the Commission and Committee should characterize it as a red graffiti protection coating device in order to maintain control of the color.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of a compromise . This compromise entails permitting the dark red paint to remain on the entire brick facade. It also calls for the repainting of the now green masonry trim to match the color of the actual stone of this trim which photographs reveal as probably brown. In addition, it stipulates the examination of the cheek walls of the marble steps. If this uncovers marble, the paint should be removed from all the marble. If, however, a different material emerges, it should be painted a white to match the color of the steps. Committee members thought that upon any future repainting of the facade, the staff should review the proposal to assure the use of a darker red that more closely resembles the color of the brick.

TRINITY MEMORIAL CHURCH, 2200-14 SPRUCE STREET

Michael Shade, Architect

PROPOSAL: Reroof side aisles, install new door

This application involves removing the tar covered standing seam metal roof of the side aisles and recovering it with rubber EPDM roofing. Destroyed by fire, the front door will be recessed about one foot to create a landing and allow for an outward swing as required by Code. The once arched doors will now have a fixed transom at the top, and the wood panels of the now rectangular doors will be replaced with glass to allow greater inward visibility and more light. Bernard Nearey provided pictures to show that, although the side roof is quite low, it does have some visibility from Spruce Street. Committee members had no issue with either the proposed roof or alterations to the door, except for the use of glass in the door panels. Instead they recommended installing a second set of glass doors inside the vestibule to allow copies of the historic exterior doors to remain open and let in light during hours of use. The Athenaeum used this solution as have many other historic buildings in the past. The architect explained that this would increase the cost by about three to four thousand dollars which the church does not presently have.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal with the exception of the glass in the front doors.

2201-5 WALNUT STREET AND 130 S. 22ND STREET

Jeffery Hayes, Architect

PROPOSAL: Murals on walls adjoining gas station

This proposal involves painting murals on the stuccoed blank side walls of the two houses to either side of the gas station in order to beautify the corner. The design is based on photographs of the rowhouse and church that once existed on the site. Committee members responded favorably. Herbert Levy, however, questioned whether the Commission should review paint on a party wall. Committee members thought that the murals would help knit together the corner into the rest of the district.

The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal but asked to see the refined sketches as they become available.

1825 DIAMOND STREET

Patrick Amaefuna, Architect

PROPOSAL: Complete restoration

The applicant seeks to restore this building, including new windows, door, brownstone wall, stoop and extensive work not visible to the public. Committee members noted that the balusters of the new railing may need to be spaced more closely to meet the Code, but praised the design and the investment in this building.

The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal with the understanding that the rail might be modified slightly.

5500-6 GERMANTOWN AVENUE

Larry Field, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Ramp

This proposal calls for installing a ramp on the side elevation of a twentieth century rear addition to this bank building. The ramp would match the color of the stone against which it is built.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal.

1127 PINE STREET

Reed Axelrod, Architect

PROPOSAL: window and door replacement

This application involves the replacement of several windows and the front door in wood to match the originals.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal and expressed the opinion that this type of application should be approved at staff level to ease the burden on the applicant as

well as the Committee and Commission.

7500 GERMANTOWN AVENUE

John Teets, Architect

PROPOSAL: Demolition of non-contributing structure and build new church.

The proposal calls for the demolition of most of a non-contributing structure and building a new church. The Commission gave conceptual approval for the new church on this site in the past. The Committee members said that this new design worked better with the rest of the campus. Tony Atkin thought that the design could be improved by lowering the pitch of the tower roof and building up the parapet dormers to relate more closely to other buildings on the campus.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal with just the roof area to come back to the Committee for a final review and explained that all areas of the building lower than the roof were being recommended for final approval and could receive a permit after Commission approval.

FAIRMOUNT WATERWORKS ENGINE HOUSE

Claire Donato, Architect, Mark Thompson Associates

PROPOSAL: Porch Glazing

The Commission several months ago again voted to approve in concept the glazing of the middle bays of the porch on the river side of the engine house for a restaurant use. Because of the weight of the glass and size of the area to be glazed, hefty supports become necessary. The architects showed two options: one with full height steel beams that presents no horizontal division of the space, and a second framed more lightly in aluminum which necessitates a strong horizontal line across the porch. Both require some vertical elements where the glass panels butt together, for example, a nine inch mullion in the very center of the porch. Committee members opted for option A, but asked that the head of the framing be visible about three inches under the porch roof so that the alteration will be perceived as a box enclosure separate from the porch itself. They asked that non-reflective glass be used if affordable.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal.

1416 DIAMOND STREET

George Shmidheiser, Temple University Senior Architect

PROPOSAL: Demolition

The architect asked for permission to demolish this entire brownstone row house. The building has been owned by Temple

University since before designation in 1985. Because of lack of maintenance, water has infiltrated the structure and much of the side wall of the rear ell has collapsed. A letter from ADF Engineering was presented recommending that the building be demolished. A contractor submitted to the staff a demolition permit application about one hour before the Architecture Committee meeting. Committee members noted that this property, sited in the middle of the row, if demolished, will almost certainly lead to the weakening and demolition of the other rowhouses around it. They explained that under the City's preservation ordinance and building code Temple had and continues to have a responsibility to maintain the property to prevent demolition by neglect. They recommended that Temple seek a permit to demolish the rear ell of the property and to build up the back wall in cinder block, and to stabilize and seal the building. The Committee explained that the staff could approve this immediately. Representatives from Temple indicated that they pursue this course.

The Committee voted to recommend denial of the proposal to demolish the entire building and urged the University to adopt the partial demolition, stabilization and sealing approach. They also reminded the applicant that the University should not let the other buildings it owns within this district to fall into this level of disrepair.

PENNSYLVANIA BARGE CLUB
Anthony Weber, Architect
PROPOSAL: Aluminum siding removal

The architect asked for permission to remove the aluminum siding on the water side of the boathouse in order to plan the restoration of the river facade.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal.

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART
Sandra Horrocks, Applicant
PROPOSAL: Build temporary tent on front plaza

This application involves building a temporary tent for the summer of 1996 to accommodate the large number of visitors seeking food during the Cezanne exhibit. The tent would be located in the corner of the front plaza facing the Parkway.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal so long as a drawing is received showing that neither the trees nor the paving pattern will be disturbed by the tent.

Committee members requested that the Rules Committee meet to provide for the delegation of more reviews to the staff. The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Randal Baron

Randal Baron