

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
COMMITTEE ON CERTIFICATION
MINUTES

13 February 1979

Present: John O. Higgins, Chief, Area Planning Division, City Planning Commission.
Janet S. Klein, Vice-Chairman, Philadelphia Historical Commission.
Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Chairman, Architectural Committee,
Philadelphia Historical Commission.
James E. Mooney, Director, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
Hyman Myers, A.I.A.
Edward Pinkowski, Member, Philadelphia Historical Commission.
Richard Tyler, Historian.

The first meeting of the Committee on Certification met at 3:00 p.m. on
13 February 1979 in 1313 City Hall Annex.

The Committee elected Mr. Pinkowski as chairman.

Mr. Tyler reviewed the past procedures and criteria for the certification of buildings by the Commission, including the former Historic Values Committee and the recent decision to create the Committee on Certification. He also described the past standard of documentation, i.e., photographs, a chain-of-title and an insurance survey if extant, and sought the Committee's judgment for documentation in the future. The Committee recommended that the Commission require the submission of a completed National Register nomination form of the latest date as the minimum standard of documentation for certification. This does not mean, however, that nominations will also be forwarded to the National Register.

SUBMISSIONS

Ringgold Place, i.e., 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925 Waverly Street. Nominated by the Commission staff following an inquiry by a representative of the owner. Entered on the National Register of Historic Places on 29 August 1978, these twenty-five houses were erected in 1862 by William Allison, house carpenter, and altered slightly in 1925 by Tilden, Register and Pepper, architects. They remain intact and represent the form of housing available in the era of the Civil War to the working classes; the 1870 and 1880 census returns indicate that they were occupied by shopkeepers, dressmakers, laborers, brick masons, mostly native born whites with a few first

generation Irish. From 1925 until 1934, George Howe maintained his office in 1900 Waverly Street; in these years he and William Lescage designed the PSFS building at Twelfth and Market Streets.

The Committee recommended the certification of these houses.

1032 Waverly Street. Nominated by the owner. The chain-of-title indicates that it was erected between 1863 and 1891. Now stuccoed and rehabilitated, the house has no distinguishing architectural features and no known historical association. In addition, although 1018-1024 Waverly Street are certified, this building lacks a meaningful context.

The Committee recommended that this house not be certified.

3708 Chestnut Street. Nominated by the occupant. Built about 1850, this house possesses neither architectural distinction nor known historical association. Moreover, it stands within the University City urban renewal area and is now within a context of new construction. It is owned by the Redevelopment Authority.

The Committee recommended that this house not be certified.

629, 631, 633 North Twentieth Street. Nominated by the Spring Garden Civic Association. Like most of the Spring Garden neighborhood, these houses, built c. 1867, represent the speculative development which characterized residential architecture and the marked physical expansion of the City in the decades following the Civil War. These houses stand within the Spring Garden National Historic District.

The Committee recommended the certification of these houses.

562, 564, 566, 568 North Twenty-third Street. Nominated by the Spring Garden Civic Association. The Committee recommended the certification of 562 and 564 North Twentieth Street for the same reasons given for 629-633 North Twentieth Street. The Committee, however, recommended against the certification of 566 and 568 North Twentieth Street because of the pumastone and altered, out-of-scale openings on the first floor. These two houses could be certified upon restoration or the submission of a proposal for restoration.

600, 602, 604, 606, 608, 610, 612, 614 North Twenty-third Street. Nominated by the Spring Garden Civic Association. These houses also date from the 1860's and are within the Spring Garden National Historic District. The Committee recommended the certification of these buildings for the reasons cited in the recommendation for 629-633 North Twentieth Street.

COMMITTEE ON CERTIFICATION

Page 2

12 February 1979

1000 Arbor Street. Nominated by the staff. After some discussion about this clearly early frame house in Kensington, the Committee tabled the nomination and requested additional documentation and photographs. It was also thought that an on-site inspection may be warranted.

The Walnut Lane Bridge over Lincoln Drive, Fairmount Park. Nominated by the staff following consultation with the Chief Engineer and Surveyor. Built in 1950, this is the first major, linear, prestressed concrete structure erected in the United States. It has been widely published as a very significant structure in the history of engineering and technology.

The Committee recommended the certification of the bridge.

PLAQUES

Plaques. The Committee discussed the issues of the replacement of stolen plaques, removal of plaques from one property to another and of plaques which no longer meet the present standards for plaques. The Committee recommended that all requests for plaques, including replacements, be subject to the same review procedure. In effect, requests for replacements would be treated as initial applications. The Committee also recommended that the letter of notification to the owner of a house to which a plaque has been awarded contain the stipulations that the plaque be fastened to and remain on the approved building and that the plaque may be recalled by the Commission should the house fall below the standards adopted for the plaque. A committee member suggested that the Commission establish ownership of the plaque by requiring that the owner of a building donate the plaque to the Commission; this could facilitate the recall of a plaque if such an action became necessary. The Committee thought, however, that the particular language for the recall of the plaque should be drafted in consultation with the assistant city solicitor.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Committee on Certification will be held on 9 May 1979 at 3:00 p.m. in 1313 City Hall Annex.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Tyler
Historian

RT:nk