

FINAL APPROVAL
Jan 6, 1959
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

D R A F T

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

November 25, 1958

Present were: Mrs. Richardson Dilworth
Mr. Harry A. Batten
Mr. R. Norris Williams

Mr. William J. Schwabe, representing Mr. Wm. T. Gennetti
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian
Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Executive Secretary

Mrs. Earle R. Kirkbride, Assistant Historian
Mr. Robert A. Corrigan, Assistant Historian

Mr. John F. Harbeson, Architect, guest of the Commission

Mr. Grant M. Simon, Chairman

THE MINUTES of the October Meeting were approved as circulated.

Mr. Simon introduced Mr. Harbeson and the Assistant Historians to the Members of the Commission. Mr. Harbeson spoke of the architectural archives that are to be collected and housed at the University of Pennsylvania and said that he would be interested in acquiring the complete list of houses certified by the Historical Commission.

DR. TINKCOM'S REPORT

Stencils have been cut for the comprehensive list of certified buildings. A map and an index of streets will be included with it.

The balance of the HABI Forms are about ready to be mailed. The Commission has ordered photostats from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and has ordered a straight chair, as recommended at the October Meeting.

Mrs. Kirkbride is preparing an informal compendium of architectural details of various types of dormers, doors and doorways, &c/. to be used in conjunction with the Commission's file of photographs and other historical data.

Dr. Tinkcom reported that Mr. Schwabe had suggested that the Commission ought to appear in his weekly report to the Mayor and added that first such report made note of the article "The New Market in Second Street, the first assignment

with which the Mayor charged the Commission, had been submitted. Mr. Simon mentioned a short article that appeared in the intermural newssheet, "Property Lines" by Mrs. Maurer, which dealt with Mrs. Kirkbride's street surveys in Southwark. The Chairman also reported that copies of THE GERMAN-AMERICAN REVIEW containing Mr. Simon's article on "Descenders and Founders" were sent to the Mayor, who acknowledged with thanks, this and Dr. Tinkcom's article in THE PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY, mentioned above, on "The New Market in Second Street".

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

126 Elfreth's Alley and the Benjamin Rush house were particular concerns of Mr. Peterson's, who was out of town and unable to attend the meeting.

709-711 Locust Street has been demolished because information that it is on the Certified List was not available to the Department of Licenses and Inspections in time to save it.

KIRKBRIDE'S. Mr. Batten reported that he had no information concerning this.

NEW BUSINESS

~~Mr. Batten reported that~~ The secretary was asked to read the letter from the Mayor, thanking the Commission for the restatement of the Commission's position on Washington Square East, mailed October 30th. Letters acknowledging this, were also received from Mr. Wagner and Mr. von Moszisker.

A letter from Dean Perkins expressed the hope that the Commission was not reversing its position in regard to approval of moving the high rise buildings from the Yellow Cab lot on Fourth Street. Comments from those present were unanimous in hoping any high rise buildings on the west side of Fifth Street would be built south of Locust and that Locust Street would remain open. Mr. Batten clarified the position of the Old Philadelphia Corporation as a consulting body and reported on several meetings he had attended, at one of which he and Mr. Greenfield had recommended that architects of the caliber of Messrs.

Simon, Martin, Brumbaugh and Willing be employed to design any houses to be built or restored in Society Hill and that the builders be certified as competent to carry out the restorations before being permitted to bid. This recommendation was put into the Minutes of the Old Philadelphia Corporation.

The question of conventional financing versus Government assistance, through the FHA was discussed and the merits of the four firms who had submitted bids for redeveloping Washington Square East.

It was recommended by Mr. Williams that the Chairman write to Mr. William L. Day, President of the Old Philadelphia Corporation, whose report was read, saying that it had been received. It was thought that if the Commission can persuade the redevelopers to keep the high-rise buildings to the boundaries of the certified area, it has accomplished much. It is hoped that this may be carried one step further, asking them to design the "filler buildings" so that they will be in harmony with the historic character of the area.

There was some discussion of Mr. Lawrence M. C. Smith's proposal to keep the tourist industry in mind when redeveloping Washington Square West, his idea being that if the old houses were properly restored with integrity, and the high-rise buildings kept to a minimum (acknowledging them to be an economic necessity) that visitors would come to the area in increasing numbers.

A letter from Mr. Arnold Nicholson was read. Mr. Williams recommended that the letter be acknowledged with thanks, with a minimum of comment.

Judge Saylor's letter regarding Germantown Academy was read by the Chairman, followed by a discussion as to whether the proposal of moving the old buildings to a new site would be judicious from any point of view. It was recommended that Mr. Simon write to the Board and express the views of the Commission on this proposal.

SUBMISSIONS brought into the office during November were briefly discussed. The Meeting was adjourned at five o'clock.

Respectfully submitted, &c....