

**REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**Vincent Rivera, AIA, Chair
Commission Offices, One Parkway, 13th Floor, 1515 Arch Street
18 December 2001**

Present

Vincent Rivera, AIA, Chair
Rudolph D'Alessandro
Herb Levy, FAIA
Suzanne Pentz

Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Diane M. Hughes, Executive Secretary
Laura M. Spina, Historic Preservation Planner

Also

John Gerbner, Ewing Cole Cherry Brott Architects
Steven A. Wexler, Society Hill Civic Association
Lenore Millhollen, Center City Residents' Association/Preservation Alliance
Peter Shaw, PITA Association
Lorna Katz Lawson, Society Hill Civic Association
Rebecca Stoloff, Society Hill Civic Association
Mark Brodsky, Bower Lewis Thrower Architects
Lew M. Halas, Tantala Associates Engineers
Chet Atkins, Wallscape Media
Ronald Patterson, Esquire, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg & Ellers
Jane Glenn, Manayunk Neighborhood Council
Kevin Smith, Manayunk Neighborhood Council
Mary Tracy, Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight
Richard Thom, Old City Civic Association
Paulette Maddox, Historic Landmark for Living
Mimi Dahiel, Historic Landmark for Living
Carl Freedman, Stuart G. Rosenberg Architects
Dan Mehan, Mehan Builders
Harry R. Blackburn, 236 South 22nd Street
Michael Carosella, 423 South 16th Street
Nicholas Aloï, 124 Queen Street
Peter Quinn, 900 South Front Street
Eileen Eckstein, 1319 Pine Street

Herbert Levy, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:37 a.m.

2000 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Franklin Institute

Franklin Institute, Owner
John Gerbner, Applicant
DATE: 1932, John T. Windrim, architect
PROPOSAL: New ramp, canopys, railings and louvers

This proposal includes revised handicap entrances flanking the monumental staircase, with pavilions and ramps, new railings on the monumental staircase, and HVAC louvers. The handicap entrances will have new metal gates at the historic wall at the sidewalk, opening to pyramidal-shaped glass and metal pavilions. Ramps then arc from the pavilions to the entrances that sit below street-grade. The fencing pattern for the gates is also used on the new railing and handrail for the monumental staircase. The railing will sit inside the historic knee-wall of the staircase. On the sides of the monumental stairs, existing louvers become enlarged to accommodate necessary fresh air in-take for the new HVAC system.

Staff recommendation:

Approval of the ramps, per accessibility guideline but denial of the pyramidal pavilions as designed. Staff recognized that these entrances need identification and visibility; however, the design of the pavilions should be simplified and eliminate any faux stone detailing so that they cannot be mistaken as historic elements. Approval of the handrail on the monumental stairs, per Standards 9 and 10. Approval of the expanded vents, painted to match the neighboring stone, since smaller vents already exist, per mechanical systems guideline.

John Gerbner, the architect, clarified the design of the pavilion and said that the pavilion is replacing a large canopy. In addition, he stressed the need for the pavilion, which will be significant but not compete with the building in scale. He also noted that the free-standing gate would be removable and held back 4 inches from the wall's end.

The Committee thought the circular columns should be removed but the pyramid shape compatible and recommended flat corner angles. Members also thought to better emphasize the gate that a lightning bolt should also be placed in the center to mimic the ones on the sides. The Committee asked that the applicant submit revised drawings to the staff to reflect its recommendations.

The Architectural Committee recommended the following:

1. *Approval of the pavilions with a simplified design and a change in the columns to flat corner angles;*
 2. *Approval of the gate with the edge design repeated in the center;*
 3. *Approval of the handrail and staircase railing, and*
 4. *Expansion of the vents painted in a stone color*
- With the staff to review all details.*

1000 block Noble Street

City of Philadelphia, Owner

T. Brian Heverin, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Replace Belgian block with asphalt for utility trench

This application is for legalizing the removal of the granite-block street paving along the southern edge, from the trolley track to the curb, and replacing it with asphalt.

Staff recommendation: Denial per Standard 5. Although, the granite block had deteriorated at the eastern end of the street, the project area should be restored with granite blocks.

No one appeared before the Committee to represent this proposal.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial per Standard 5.

700-28 Walnut Street, between 7th & 8th Streets

St. James Walnut Association, Owner

Mark Brodsky, Applicant

DATE: 700-10 Walnut Street, 1868-69, Addison Hutton, architect; altered 1885-86, Frank
Furness, architect

712-16 Walnut Street, c. 1807

718 Walnut Street, c. 1950

PROPOSAL: Approval of the tower with revisions in external appearance of parking floors in first 9 stories and rooftop of tower and restoration of façades of 700-16 Walnut Street

This application received approval in concept in August 1999. The proposal is returning for final approval. Two main changes from the previous application: the treatment of the façade at the parking garage level and treatment at the roof.

The Committee and Commission originally approved glazing of the tower at the garage level, the tower's first nine stories. The applicant now wishes to have metal vents instead. At the roofline, the original application had glazing in the angled section. The proposal now calls for metal sheathing. The application also includes rehabilitation of the remaining historic façades, including masonry cleaning and repair and painting of wood windows and doors.

Staff recommendation: The staff could not give a recommendation on the proposed changes to the front façade, owing to the lack of information. For the vents, the applicant should submit a detail drawing of the vents to show the louver configuration and color. Staff would prefer flatter louvers, painted a dark contrasting color. For the metal sheathing at the top of the tower, details should include pattern, color and level of reflectivity. The applicant should submit a sample of the sheathing for review. These details are necessary for final approval. Approval of the façade rehabilitation for the existing buildings, with staff to review details.

The design that received approval in concept included a 9-story garage at the base of the tower. This area, though a different use, had glazed openings so that it did not differ in appearance from the upper stories. Peter Shaw, the developer, stated that the use of glazing poses complex problems for ventilation. He now wishes to install metal louvers or vents at the garage level.

Mark Brodsky, architect for the project, showed Committee members a sample of the metal louver, stating that they would be a color similar to the bordering elements and would have a setback of three to four inches from the building face. The louver has horizontal blades, measuring approximately two-inches in depth. Mr. Brodsky explained that the developer wants the garage area to be lighted and the louvers would allow pedestrians to see the illumination. Committee members questioned the louver's ability to hide the actual light sources. They did not want pedestrians to be able to see cars or the lighting fixtures. Committee members suggested ways to eliminate possible visibility, including widening the blades themselves or installing perforated panels behind the louvers. Mr. Brodsky stated that they cannot install panels behind the louvers because they would decrease the needed ventilation. Committee members also questioned the visibility of the sloping ramps across the façade and the support columns. The Committee asked for more details, including sight-line studies for the lower floors and a section drawing of the wall showing louver details.

Mr. Shaw objected to the need to see further details. He stated that the construction documents must get approval within a month so that he can get a building permit. Mr. Brodsky agreed to send the Committee members the requested details so that they could review them before the Commission meeting in January.

The second change from the initial application occurs at the top of the tower. Mr. Brodsky proposes to install a system of interlocking insulated panels, called Versa Wall, that have a thin metal veneer. He stated that the color of the panels will be bluish-green to match the glazing for the building's windows.

Mr. Brodsky stated that the glazing on the building will have a tinted bluish-green color, with a Low E film. The glazing will not be highly reflective. The framing elements will have a grey-cream color to coordinate with the PSFS building. However, they have not decided on exact colors.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval for the project, only approval in concept for the louvers at the garage level, and asked for more details before recommending final approval, and recommended final approval of the panels at the top of the tower, with staff to review all details.

4217 Main Street

Robert and Maria Vlioras, Owners

Ronald Patterson, Esq., Applicant

DATE: c. 1830

PROPOSAL: Wall wrap sign 25'x 60'

The proposal calls for a wall-mounted, mesh, single-face sign, 25 feet by 30 feet, on the stuccoed party wall of this rowhouse. The applicant has not submitted details of the sign itself but has said the image will be of the American Flag.

Staff recommendation: Denial per Standard 9. A sign of this scale will visually overwhelm the historic façade. The application is also incomplete since it lacks the details of the sign itself.

Lou Halas, Chet Atkins and Ronald Patterson, Esquire, attended the meeting. Mr. Patterson stated that the project was presented to the Department of Licenses and Inspections as a non-commercial sign and each time the sign changes the applicant would come back to the Commission for approval. He noted that the owner installed such a sign without a permit. That sign has since been removed, but the hardware remains in place. Mr. Halas stated that the wall wrap sign is mounted to the wall and angled at the corners, bolted to the wall clips and then connects with aircraft cables. He also noted that the bolts are designed to be removable.

Councilman Nutter, as well as the Manayunk Neighborhood Council, sent letters expressing opposition to the proposed sign.

Kevin Smith, of the Manayunk Neighborhood Council expressed his opposition to the sign.

Mary Tracy, of the Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight, presented drawings, which showed the significant amount of hardware needed for attachment, and further expressed opposition to the proposed signage. She noted that the proposed installation is likely to become permanent and that

a public service announcement like ones regarding the dangers of smoking are just as invasive to the historic district as commercial signage.

Richard Thom spoke on behalf of the Old City Civic Association expressing its opposition to the sign and stated that the materials violate the *Standards*.

Lenore Millhollen, of the Center City Residents' Association/Preservation Alliance, spoke cautioning the Committee not to set a precedent which would mean an influx of building wraps which she views as enormous planned advertising.

The Committee inquired about authorization from the building's or open lot's owner for the proposed sign. Members thought the scale of the size too overwhelming and would not meet code and strongly stressed the effect of the over-scaled signage on the appearance of the building. Mr. Levy expressed concern that federal law prohibits erecting structures in the flood plain. Members pointed out to the applicant that the plans clearly state "plan to advertise", which the applicant said that these plans were from an earlier proposal and the notes were not changed. The question of illumination was raised, and the applicant responded that eventually it would be lit. Members also noted that the Manayunk signage Ordinance prohibits both the size and placement of the signage.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial per Standard 9 based on the inappropriate scale and materials of the proposal.

44 South 2nd Street

2nd Street Investments, L.L.C.

Ronald Patterson, Esq., Applicant

DATE: c. 1810

PROPOSAL: Wall wrap sign 20'x 60'

The proposal calls for a wall-mounted, mesh, single-face sign, 20 feet by 60 feet, on the stuccoed party wall of this building. The applicant has not submitted details of the sign itself, although he has stated that for this application it is an image of the American Flag.

Staff recommendation: Denial per Standard 9. A sign of this scale will visually overwhelm the historic façade. The application is also incomplete since it lacks the details of the sign itself.

Ronald Patterson, Esquire, Lew Halas and Chet Atkins attended the meeting. The applicant accepted that the comments from the previous application applied to this one as well. He noted that the owner installed such a sign without a permit. That sign has since been removed, but the hardware remains in place.

Richard Thom, Old City Civic Association, who spoke in opposition to the wall wrap, presented photographs showing an illegally erected sign and questioned the type of brick on this building. It was determined to be a salmon brick, which is a very soft brick easily susceptible to damage by the attachments.

Ms. Spina noted that the application calls for 66 bolts into the historic fabric and the integrity of the building has been compromised by the attachments, which should be removed. Mr. Baron noted that paint on masonry has a historic precedent while a fabric sign of this scale does not.

The Architectural Committee recommended removal of the attachments and denial of the sign per Standard 9 based on the inappropriate size, material and means of attachment.

2101 Chestnut Street, NW corner of 21st Street

Harry Waloff, Owner

Patrick Dewey, Applicant

DATE: 1957

PROPOSAL: Install awning

The apartment building wishes to install a curved awning over the original marquee at the entrance to the building.

Staff recommendation: Denial per signage guideline. Although this building is non-contributing to the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District, owing to its age, the front entrance and canopy are designed elements that should be preserved and left visible.

Mimi Dubiel and Paulette Maddox, of Historic Landmarks for Living, attended the meeting. Ms. Maddox stated that she proposes to clean the carriage lamps and has taken down an existing canopy. She proposes a fascia across the bottom of a new canopy to hide the lighting

Several members of the Committee thought the existing marquee should be restored and left exposed, while two others thought it was acceptable to cover it given the non-contributing status of the building.

The Architectural Committee's vote was split. 2 members favored the proposal and 2 members recommended denial.

2025-29 Chestnut Street

Freire Charter School, Owner

Dave Terrell, Applicant

DATE: 1923

PROPOSAL: Banner, façade alterations

This application, which involves the conversion of the YWCA building into a charter school, has multiple parts. On the front façade, the proposal includes new aluminum windows at the second floor, a new banner to hang from an existing flagpole, and new brass plaques to flank the front door. On the rear elevation, the proposal calls for removing the doors at the 3rd floor and infilling the openings with brick and aluminum windows to match others on the building, new HVAC vents at the 1st and 2nd floors, a rebuilt 1st floor with new glazed brick, three new exit doors and a single new window, and an internally-illuminated flex-face awning.

Staff recommendation: Approval of the banner, brass plaques, windows on the front façade, though historical research should be done to verify the historic window configuration, rear windows and the new doors. Denial of the rear awning, per the entrance guideline. The awning should have a canvas cover and have separate lighting fixtures.

Carl Freedman attended the meeting and stated that the awning is a temporary solution. In addition the applicant proposes a bright pink and red glazed brick on the rear which will be the main entrance of the school.

Mr. Levy questioned the legality of the awning's height. Mr. Rivera thought the awning's design should be higher and compatible with the overhanging fire balcony at the 2nd floor and that the proposed plastic illuminated awning is not appropriate. In addition, the lighting should not show through the awning. Members believed a canvas material more appropriate and that the window in the trash area shown on the plans should be removed.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the proposal with a revision in the material and design of the awning, with the staff to review details.

1214 Pine Street

Ruth Eldridge, Owner

Daniel Mehan, Applicant

DATE: 1828, William F. Thorn, bricklayer

PROPOSAL: New windows with applied muntins

The proposal calls for new wood, double-insulated windows, with applied muntins and a spacer-bar. The current windows have a non-historic brickmold.

Staff recommendation: Denial, per window guideline. The replacement windows should have true-divided lights and a brickmold that matches the historic profile.

Dan Mehan, Ruth Eldridge, the owner, Matt Pasquarello and Jeff Stokes, Pella Window representatives, attended the meeting. Ms. Eldridge stated that her intentions were to purchase the best type window and believes it important that the windows are beautiful on the inside as well as the outside. She opposes the inner glass energy panel and stated that the proposed windows have the same proportions as the existing windows. The Pella window representatives showed the Committee samples of the proposed windows.

The Committee questioned the replacing of the frames, but it was said that the windows are available with or without the frames. Members said that although the house does not have the original window and the brick mold is not historic, the muntin profile does not match and it does not want to set a precedent. The Committee noted the absence of shop drawings, which would show the details of the frames as well as the panes.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial per the window guidelines.

236 South 22nd Street, SW corner of Latimer Street

Harry Blackburn, Owner/applicant

DATE: c. 1880, storefront c. 1925

PROPOSAL: Move AC units to roof and stucco chase for wires

This proposal involves curing a violation for air-conditioning mechanical tubes and wires on the side façade of the building. Mr. Blackburn proposes to move the HVAC units to the roof and install chases for the wiring. He proposes to stucco these to help hide them. Mr. Blackburn has said that a former owner installed the units.

Staff recommendation: Approval, however the electrical wiring should enter on the rear face of the building if possible and not run along the side.

Harry Blackburn attended the meeting and stated that he proposes to create two chases at the bottom area built outward and covered with stucco to hide the existence of three different types of wiring running down the side of the building.

The Committee expressed concern about matching the existing stucco. It recommended the use of a false downspout, which matches the existing spout, splitting it and putting the wires inside. This would be a less expensive solution and would solve the issue of matching the stucco. The applicant concurred with the Committee.

Lenore Millhollen, Center City Residents' Association, concurred with the recommendation, and said that the Association is in agreement with any proposal which will clean up this building.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the proposal replacing the chases with downspouts with the staff to review details.

123-125 Chestnut Street, NE corner of 2nd Street

123-29 Chestnut Street Associates, Owner

Dominic Aspite, applicant

DATE: 1899, Frank Newman, architect

PROPOSAL: Signage

This proposal involves re-facing a plastic box sign. We have no record of the sign's previous approval.

Staff recommendation: Approval. The sign sits against modern door fabric away from the historic fabric.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

423 South 16th Street

Michael and Mario Carosella, Owners

Thomas Citro, applicant

DATE: c. 1860

PROPOSAL: Front windows with applied muntins, legalize new rear of building

This proposal involves legalizing the alteration of the somewhat visible rear of this rowhouse. The staff in 1999 approved a permit to rebuild the front façade because of its Imminently Dangerous condition. The 1999 plans for the new front façade called for new true-divided light wood windows with 7/8 inch wide muntins. The new plans call for windows with an applied muntin grid.

Staff recommendation: Denial of the windows per Standard 6 but approval of the rear addition because of context.

Michael Carosella, the owner, and Thomas Citro attended the meeting and stated that the rear of the house was demolished and rebuilt in a contemporary stucco design. The applicant explained that the front elevation referred only to the window configuration and was not an application for any other work.

The Committee said that the 6/6 windows with applied muntins were inappropriate. It recommended 6/6 true divided light windows and the applicant concurred with this recommendation.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the proposal with revision of 6/6 true divided light windows. The Committee asked that the applicant provide a scaled elevation of the rear of the property and work with the staff on restoration details for the front door and windows.

125 Queen Street

Michael Carosella, Owner

Thomas Citro, applicant

DATE: c. 1830

PROPOSAL: Demolition, new construction of townhouses

This proposal calls for the complete demolition of a house with a passageway to small courtyard houses at the rear. A former owner incorporated these houses into the larger house to form a triplex. The building has a covering of PermaStone. The applicant has submitted a citation from Licenses and Inspections saying that the house has dangerous conditions. They also have a report from an engineer recommending that the house be torn down. What the application does not make clear is the work or cost necessary to make the house safe with star bolts or other measures.

The second part of the application involves the construction of a new house on the site with a large setback for parking.

Staff recommendation: Denial of the demolition per Standard 6. The owner should provide a plan to make the building safe. Denial of the new construction both because the old building should be saved and because the new construction does not fit into the streetscape in its plan, design or materials.

Michael Carosella, the owner, and Thomas Citro attended the meeting. The applicant stated that he is willing to come back to the Committee for review of the design of the new construction. He is seeking to acquire a permit for the demolition.

The Committee addressed the issue of the house's dangerous condition, and stated that this is different from imminently dangerous. Ms. Pentz referenced the report from the engineer and noted that the wall fracture, deteriorating lintel and the front wall bulge are repairable conditions and should have been addressed in the report. She further stressed the importance of the preservation of the property. She also recommended shoring the front in the meantime and thought there should be clearer photographs of the building and its conditions. The applicant was given information about the Committee on Financial Hardship. He was told that the Ordinance requires an owner to repair a building to prevent its demolition by neglect. Members also thought that the engineer's report should address how to repair the conditions as stated. Members concurred that a site visit to determine the condition should be arranged by the staff and some of the members.

The Architectural Committee recommended tabling the proposal pending the determination of a site visit and the receipt of more information.

124 Queen Street

Nick Aloï, owner/applicant

DATE: c. 1825

PROPOSAL: Construct fire parapet between windows

This proposal involves the construction of a cinderblock firewall between two row-houses which will rise above the roofline to create a parapet. The applicant will cover the parapet in copper.

Staff recommendation: Approval as a fire safety measure.

Nicholas Aloï, the owner attended the meeting and stated that the proposed fire wall of CMU and copper will extend upward 8 inches, and down the back as well, but the masonry will not be visible. The applicant presented photographs of the present condition of the house, which has been rehabilitated with the Permastone removed and the brick façade restored. The Committee commended the applicant for the excellent job.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

702 South Front Street

Jay Shapson, Owner

Robert Boothroyd, applicant

DATE: c. 1769

PROPOSAL: Vinyl replacement windows

The proposal involves removing historic wood windows and replacing them with vinyl windows with applied grids.

Staff recommendation: Denial per Standard 6.

Mr. Baron explained the proposal; however, there was no one in attendance to represent this proposal.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial per Standard 6.

900 South Front Street, SW corner of Christian Street

Peter Quinn, owner/applicant

DATE: c. 1830

PROPOSAL: Façade rehabilitation

The proposal involves the rehabilitation of this corner house that received a covering of Permastone in the mid-twentieth century. The applicant seeks to rehabilitate the first floor in a beginning phase. He seeks to remove the Permastone from the first floor, install a sign band, re-open former openings and install new doors. He will also move the HVAC units to the roof and hide them with a fence creating the appearance of a deck. The applicant seeks to base this work, in part, on an enclosed historic photo.

Staff recommendation: Approval with staff review per Standard 6. It will be very important to verify that the renovations will not remove original brick work.

Peter Quinn, the owner, attended the meeting and stated that he proposes to move the air conditioning units to the roof and install a railing to hide the features.

The Committee cautioned the applicant about the permastone removal and the importance of removing only a small portion for the determination of what exists underneath. At that point the staff should be contacted for a site visit. In addition, the proposed door and window openings may need to be revised based on what is found beneath the stucco. They cautioned that they are not recommending approval of the removal of original brickwork. The Committee noted to the applicant that a similar condition existed in a prior proposal at 124 Queen Street and recommended that the applicant consider conferring with the owner of this property for guidance.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with the staff to review conditions under the Permastone and review a revised design and details.

1319 Pine Street

Eileen Eckstein, applicant/owner

DATE: 1836, Anthony Frazier, builder

PROPOSAL: Legalize, repair roofing, aluminum cladding, masonry and windows

This proposal involves the legalization of work completed without a permit. A violation has issued. The work includes the re-roofing of a house with gray shingles, rebuilding the dormer and cornice, and covering them with aluminum siding. In addition, the house received wide pointing in Portland cement and a waterproof coating. Many years ago, but after designation, the applicant also removed deteriorated wood windows without a permit and replaced them with one over one wood windows with aluminum panning.

Staff recommendation: Denial per Standard 6 and 7. The dormer and cornice should be reconstructed in wood to match the originals. The masonry treatment can rarely be rectified without causing more damage. A compromise would be to replace all the windows in wood with staff to review details.

Eileen Eckstein, the owner, and Gary Cohen attended the meeting and stated that she proposes to restore the cornice and dormer and presented an estimate of \$5,200.00 for the restoration. She noted that the replacing of the façade windows is not a possibility at this time. She also believes that the dormer window is the original.

The Committee asked that she take a picture from the inside of the dormer window. Mr. Baron believed the configuration of the dormer window to be 6/6 with an arched top. The Committee agreed to make a compromise with the applicant subject to the restoration of the cornice and dormer.

The applicant noted that she can not attend the January Commission meeting and the Committee recommended that she request a continuance.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the legalization of the masonry and façade windows subject to the restoration of the cornice, dormer, and dormer window with staff to review details.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Hughes
Executive Secretary