

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

**Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street**

30 December 1993

Present

Arlene Matzkin, AIA, Chairperson
David Hollenberg, Historical Architect, National Park Service
Herbert Levy, AIA, Geddes Brecher Qualls Cunningham
William Cornell, J. S. Cornell & Sons, Inc.
Don Stevenson, Sherwood, Henderson, architects

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner
Lori Plavin Salganicoff, Historic Preservation Specialist

Also

Mark Blair, Washington Square West Civic Association
Warren Bradway, 345 S. Camac Street
Richard W. Thom, OCCA
Peter Pinnola, 7127 Germantown Avenue
Timothy Piffer, 847 Scattergood Street
George R. Zacharkow, Mattioni, Mattioni, & Mattioni Ltd.
Heather Cicalese, Mattioni, Mattioni, & Mattioni Ltd.
Mimi Dubiel, Historic Landmarks for Living
Ann Rosenberg, Historic Landmarks for Living
Mike S. Bomstein, 7127 Germantown Avenue

The Architectural Committee decided to hold future Architectural Committee meetings on the last Tuesday of the month rather than the last Thursday. This will be effective immediately; the next Architectural Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 25th.

7127 Germantown Avenue (at Durham Street)
Peter Pinnola, Esq., Mike Bomstein, Esq., Applicant
PROPOSAL: Porch Enclosure

This proposal involves work done without a permit to enclose a rear side porch. The porch is highly visible on this corner house and is enclosed with clapboards which obscures the porch posts and removed any sense of the old porch.

On 31 July 1985, at the 292nd Stated Meeting of the Historical Commission, a design was approved which enclosed a portion of the porch which is not visible to the public. The visible side of the porch was recently enclosed using the same materials, but received a violation because it was not included in the permit drawn on the approved portion.

The Committee did not want to make the applicant undo the work already undertaken but rather recommended that it could be made to look more like a porch again by affixing appliqued wood to look like porch posts and a porch skirt onto the new construction. They asked for a drawing showing this proposal.

110-112 South Front Street
George Zacharkow, Esq., Lawyer for Applicant
PROPOSAL: Demolition

This proposal calls for the demolition of this five-story building which suffered two fires in May and July of 1993. During the months between the fires and the demolition permit application, the owner considered the possibility of rehabilitating the building. The owner contends that the building, vacant since 1991, is dangerous and not economically feasible to rehabilitate. The Department of Licenses and Inspections labeled the building Imminently Dangerous in the summer because of the fire damage and because the building was not sufficiently sealed and therefore a target for vandals and further fire damage. Since that time, the building has been sealed with masonry and the sidewalk has been closed. L & I has granted the Commission some leeway to consider the situation.

Mr. Zacharkow described the two fires as having caused damage to the building's interior from the second through the fifth floors. A structural engineer hired by the owner found the structural integrity of the building to be highly suspect, particularly at the top two floors.

Presented with a demolition request shortly before the Architectural Committee meeting, the staff of the Historical Commission requested that the owner or its representatives provide the following information:

1. Cost figures for the following options:
 - a. restore/rebuild the top two floors and secure the rest of the building
 - b. remove the top two floors and secure the rest of the building
 - c. demolish the whole building
2. A copy of the insurance proceeds information

The Commission has not yet received any of this information. A copy of what was sent to the Committee is enclosed. Claims have been made on each of the fires, and an affidavit by an officer of the Provencal Realty Co., the owner of the building, indicates that approximately \$300,000 was to have been paid as a result of the first fire.

A \$1.8 million estimate for partial demolition, repair and replacement in kind to return the building to its condition before the fire was provided to the Committee, however no estimates for other options such as stabilization and partial rehabilitation were presented. Mr. Zacharkow explained that this estimate was done for the purpose of insurance adjustment. Committee members expressed the opinion that some of the costs listed in the estimate seemed inflated and that more economical materials and methods could be utilized in a rehabilitation of this building.

Mr. Tyler noted that the upper two floors appear to be unsalvageable and that demolishing those floors and retaining and rehabilitating the lower three floors should be investigated. This would preserve the pedestrian-level streetscape and retain the cartway which sits at the southern portion of the building. Ms. Matzkin suggested that this program might be made more feasible by demolishing some percentage of the back portion of the building. The consensus of the Committee was that the first three floors and the cartway are the most important aspects of the building to be saved.

Mr. Zacharkow expressed concern that this building is still in a dangerous condition while this discussion is underway about its future. Mr. Baron recommended that the applicants consider bracing or otherwise stabilizing the street-side facade of the building as has often been done on pending Housing Authority projects.

Mr. Richard Thom of the Old City Civic Association presented photographs and maps of the area surrounding 110-112 S. Front Street showing the "missing teeth" and parking lots resulting from the demolitions of historic properties in the area in the last few years. Mr. Thom pointed to the fact that this portion of the Old City National Register District is losing much of its integrity. In contrast, this block has not yet lost any of its integrity. Mr. Thom also described a rehabilitation project for a successful restaurant just one block north of 110-112 S. Front. Finally, Mr. Thom requested that the "first three floors" option be investigated, that the cost estimate presented be rejected as inflated, and that the Commission hire an independent engineer to provide new estimates.

A representative from the Landmarks for Living apartment building next door expressed her concern that the building had been left open after the first fire for an additional fire. Mr. Zacharkow responded that the building had been closed with plywood after the first fire.

In order that the Commission may make a reasoned and informed judgement, the Architectural Committee recommended that the applicants be required to provide an engineer's cost estimate for partial demolition with rehabilitation of the first three floors, as well as realistic cost estimates for total rehabilitation and total demolition. Additionally, the Committee recommended that the applicants be required to provide economic feasibility and return on investment figures for each of these options. Finally, the Committee asked for a description of the insurance proceeds from both fires as this will impact the economic feasibility.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lori Plavin Salganicoff".

Lori Plavin Salganicoff