

THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

Commission Conference Room

25 July 1991

Present

David Hollenberg, Chairman

Tony Atkin, Architect

Donald Stevenson, Architect

Herbert W. Levy, Fellow of the American Institute of Architects

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Randal Baron, Preservation Planner

Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary

Also

Helen Psimaris, applicant, 45 South Third Street

John Manos, attorney for Ms. Psimaris

Dominique Hawkins, John Milner Associates

Ian Carlton, Waterstone's Booksellers

Daniel H. Saidel, applicant, 113 South 21st Street

Approval

45 South Third Street: Helen Psimaris received a violation for installing a metal, roll-down security grate without a permit. She installed the grates because she lost an estimated \$5,700 through several burglaries.

Mr. Tyler explained that the Committee previously approved grate installations on several historic buildings. In its review of these installations, the Committee has focused on mitigating the impact of these fixtures on historic fabric. This particular installation removed two decorative cast-iron elements from the building piers. The staff suggested that these could be replaced in aluminum for approximately \$30 each. **The Committee recommended approval of the grate installation, contingent upon replacement of the decorative elements.**

113 South 21st Street: Randal Baron provided background information for this application concerning alterations to a brick mansion built circa 1894 in the Victorian Eclectic style. This building is a contributing structure in the proposed Rittenhouse Fittler Historic District. The staff approved a permit application for interior alterations. However, work was undertaken which exceeded the scope of that permit. Specifically, on the upper floors, intricate wooden windows with curved tops and multiple panes were replaced by square, bronze-colored, aluminum windows. A violation was issued for this work.

The Committee observed that this installation was inconsistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Though it would not recommend approval of these windows, the Committee acknowledged that the provisions of Section 14-2007(7)(1), regarding the issuance of building permits within a pending historic district, may allow the legalization of the aluminum windows 90 days after the application for a permit if the historic district is not designated before that time.

The Committee then offered design recommendations for another area of work on this building. Its base was altered circa 1950. Entrances and windows were filled with brick and the entire first floor was clad with marble panels. The condition of the panels was assessed as dangerous by the Department of Licenses and Inspections. Consequently, the applicant sought and the staff approved a permit for their removal. The owner intends to retain the existing openings and proposes to cover the facade either with stucco or brick veneer. The Committee noted that the drawings did not accurately represent the existing openings; the plans of record must represent existing conditions accurately. The Committee then registered its preference for a stucco treatment with simple horizontal scoring on the ground floor. Choice of color for this base is left to the discretion of the owner.

Approval in Concept

The Drexel Building, 1435-41 Walnut Street: Waterstone's Booksellers proposes to alter this building for occupancy. The proposed interior alterations include piercing the decorative ceiling for a staircase. This cut will occur at the present location of two rosettes, which will be removed and stored for re-installation -- a provision included in Waterstone's lease. On the exterior, the applicant proposes to replace existing awnings, plaques and a canopy with new ones at the same locations. The Committee noted that the details illustrating the means of attachment to the building would be required for final approval. The Committee also encouraged the applicants to increase the projection and presence of a glass marquee. In general, the Committee stressed the importance of allowing reasonable alterations of historic buildings to promote their continued use. The Committee, with Mr. Hollenberg abstaining, recommended an approval in concept.

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,


Daniel W. Simcox,
Executive Secretary