

MINUTES OF THE 272nd STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

7 July 1983

F. Otto Haas, Chairman

Present: Janet S. Kelin, Vice Chairman (Acing Chairman in Mr. Haas' absence)  
John Taxin  
Paul Deegan, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Property  
Val C. Mogensen, Executive Assistant Director of Finance  
Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Architectural Advisor to the Commission  
Kenneth Cooper, Deputy City Solicitor, Law Department  
Gilda Kremer, Deputy City Solicitor, Law Department  
Richard Tyler, Historian  
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Architectural Historian

Also: Leonard Ivanosky, Jr., Esq., representing the owners of 7925 Ridge Avenue.

Unless otherwise noted, all actions taken herein are the results of motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES of the 271st Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, 2 June 1983, were reviewed, approved and directed to be filed.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee for 15 June 1983, Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Chairman, Architectural Advisor to the Commission. The Report for 15 June 1983 was reviewed and amended. The minute relating to 426 Spruce Street was corrected to read as follows: "They did express some concern, however, over the juxtaposition of the new, over-sized windows on the 'south' (not north) elevation..." Mr. Levy further noted that he abstained from voting on this matter. On page 4 of the report in the minute relating to the Belgravia Hotel, "Mr. Alesker" not "Mr. Livingston" made the presentation to the Architectural Committee. Finally, the Vice Chairman asked for the deletion of the phrase "and recommended its approval" from the minute relating to 426 Spruce Street.

Subject to these admendments, the Historical Commission approved the Report of the Architectural Committee for 15 June 1983 excluding the entry relating to the proposed demolition of 7925 Ridge Avenue. The Commission deferred action on 7925 Ridge Avenue until after hearing the testimony of Mr. Ivanosky concerning his clients' property.

At the invitation of Mrs. Klein, Mr. Ivanosky, attorney for the Messrs. Scutti, owners of 7925 Ridge Avenue, identified himself and distributed to the Commission members copies of a letter from F. V. Scutti concerning the subject property (copy attached). Photographs showing the deteriorated condition of the building were passed and a discussion of the merits of the structure ensued.

Mr. Ivanosky reported to the Historical Commission members that Mr. Scutti did consider the preservation and rehabilitation of the house, as requested by the Architectural Committee at its meeting of 15 June, and that, in his opinion, such an undertaking would not be feasible given the seriously deteriorated condition of the building.

Following some discussion, the Historical Commission voted to allow the demolition of 7925 Ridge Avenue without delay. It was the opinion of the Commission that the building, vacant for over 15 years, had suffered substantial damage and that its restoration would prove economically impracticable. The Commission members found this situation an unfortunate one but agreed that there appeared to be no alternative to demolition.

REPORT on Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff Activities for June 1983, Richard Tyler, Historian. The Historian's Report was reviewed, approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

#### NEW BUSINESS

108-110 Sansom Street, John Taxin, Owner. Mr. Taxin raised the issue of 108-110 Sansom Street with the other members of the Commission and related his desire to demolish the houses in order to provide additional parking for his restaurant valet parking service.

Although Mr. Taxin submitted a demolition permit application for 108 and 110 Sansom Street to the Commission staff on 11 August 1982, no action could be taken until the issue of ownership of the property was resolved. At the time of application, nominal ownership of 108 and 110 Sansom Street rested with the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development (PAID). A legal opinion was sought and, subsequently, the matter was resolved. It was later discovered that Mr. Taxin in purchasing 108 and 110 Sansom Street had agreed to certain conditions. These included the following three items:

1. There be no demolition of the historic structures which exist on the property;
2. The plans for use of the properties be subject to review of the Planning Commission staff;
3. Interim use for parking be limited to a maximum of 5 years duration.

Again, no action on the demolition permit applications was taken owing to the PAID/PIDC restrictions. In an effort, however, to expedite the development of the A-4 parcel across from Bookbinders Restaurant on Walnut Street, the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) reached an agreement with Mr. Taxin recently which lifted the conditions imposed on the Sansom Street properties.

With the resolution of the title issue and the removal of the PAID/PIDC restrictions, the Commission agreed that it could now consider Mr. Taxin's request for permission to demolish 108 and 110 Sansom Street. The Commission informed Mr. Taxin that the matter would be brought before the Architectural Committee at its meeting of 20 July 1983 at 2:00 p.m. for consideration and a recommendation to the Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski  
Architectural Historian

Attached: Letter of 27 June 1983 from V. F. Scutti to Leonard Ivanoski, Jr., Esq., regarding the property 7925 Ridge Avenue.