

THE MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE MEETING

OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

26 January 1989

- Present: David Hollenberg, Chairman
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect, Independence
National Historical Park
David DeLong, University of Pennsylvania, Preservation Program

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation
Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
- Also: Tim Lisle and Alison Towers, Dagit Saylor Architects, to
present plans for the rehabilitation of 712-716 Walnut
Street.
Lauren Leatherbarrow, Architect, J. Orchowski, George Lutz,
and J. Fontana to present plans for alterations to 309 S.
Camac Street.
Norman Demson and Kevin Holm of Caryle Construction
Corporation and William Schwartz, Esq. to present
preliminary plans for the construction of a high rise
tower at the rear of the Rittenhouse Club, 1811 Walnut
Street.
Terry Garfield, Architect, to present plans for alterations to
507 Delancey Street.
Bob Mainwaring, Architect, to present his proposal for the
rehabilitation of 115-117 North 3rd Street.

SUBMISSIONS FOR ALTERATIONS

712-716 Walnut Street, Tim Lisle and Alison Towers, Dagit-Saylor, Architects. Mr. Lisle and Ms. Towers presented to the Architectural Committee for review plans for the rehabilitation of the locally designated buildings located at 712, 714 and 716 Walnut Street. The plans, as presented, call for the restoration of the front facades of 712 and 714 Walnut Street. The building at 716 Walnut Street, with its commercial ground floor, will undergo a partial restoration. The upper floors and main entrance will be returned to their original appearance; the 1950 ground floor storefront will be removed and a new storefront will be constructed to retain the existing commercial use.

The Committee addressed the design of the new storefront and asked that the entrance door be narrowed into a single door and that it be centered within the storefront opening. It was agreed that a symmetrical treatment of the commercial area would be more in keeping with the original streetscape design. The Committee further expressed its preference for a reconstruction of the original dormer windows rather than the introduction of skylights into the roof. If the developer chooses to install skylights, the Committee asked that they be kept as low as possible on the roof. Finally, the Committee also suggested the reconstruction of the original chimneys particularly at 716 Walnut Street.

RECOMMENDATION: Final approval subject to redesign of the storefront.

309 S. Camac Street, Lauren Leatherbarrow, Architect, and George Lutz, Contractor. Ms. Leatherbarrow presented to the Committee her plans for alterations to the rear of 309 S. Camac Street and for the replacement of the front entrance door. The major portion of the proposed work consists of the removal of both a rear dormer window and a section of the rear roof to allow for the creation of a new patio/deck at that level.

Following some discussion about the project, the Committee agreed to allow the proposed alteration of the rear roof subject to some minor revisions. The Committee asked for the retention of the original brick cornice on the rear wall and a relocation of the deck railing. The railing should be pulled back slightly away from the edge of the rear wall. Finally, the architect was asked to submit a drawing of the proposed new front door which should be painted and not stained.

RECOMMENDATION: Final approval subject to minor revisions and the submission of a drawing for the front door.

1811 Walnut Street, Norman Demson and Kevin Holm of Carlyle Construction Corporation and William Schwartz, Esq. Messrs. Demson, Holm and Schwartz appeared before the Architectural Committee to present preliminary schematic drawings showing the proposed construction of a hotel tower at the rear of the Rittenhouse Club, 1811 Walnut Street.

It is the intention of the developer to preserve intact the first 60 feet of the 1811 Walnut Street envelope and the first floor sitting rooms on the interior. The sitting rooms will serve as a mini lobby for the hotel and as retail space. The face of the hotel tower will be set back approximately 130 feet from the building line of Walnut Street. As currently designed, the tower will have a tall, slender profile and relate more closely to Central Business District development to the north rather than to Rittenhouse Square.

The area beyond the first 60 feet of the Rittenhouse Club will be demolished for the construction of an atrium. The Rittenhouse Club has requested permission to salvage the main dining room from 1811 Walnut Street and to relocate it within their new quarters.

Following some discussion about the project, the Committee agreed to recommend its approval in concept. It was also agreed, however, that a site visit was warranted to determine what interior architectural features, particularly in the proposed atrium area, might be preserved in place or salvaged and reused elsewhere within the complex. This visit will take place on 9 February 1989.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval in concept.

507 Delancey Street, Shep Houston, Architect. Terry Garfield appeared before the Architectural Committee to present Ms. Houston's proposal for the construction of a third floor addition and roof deck atop an existing two-story back building at the rear of 507 Delancey Street as well as for the construction of an over-sized dormer-type addition on the rear portion of the roof of the main building.

The Committee did not object to the design of the proposed third floor addition and roof deck atop the two-story back building. They did object, however, to the construction of the proposed over-sized, dormer-type structure, known as an airplane roof, at the rear of the main building. The Committee found the proposed roof alteration to be completely out of scale with the original building and its roofline. The members suggested that the proposed roof alteration, which will provide access to the roof deck atop the new third floor addition, be redesigned and scaled down.

RECOMMENDATION: Denial.

115-17 North 3rd Street, Rodgers Mainwaring & Associates. This application involves the restoration of two identical four story, brick warehouses within a row of once nearly identical buildings. The upper floors are to have paint removed and repointing, if necessary, as well as new wood, true muntin, window sash to be installed in existing frames. The ground floor metal and wood, modern storefronts will be removed and a design replicating the original storefronts, based on an insurance survey and on an original storefront surviving in the same row, will be installed. The doors to the cellar will be built with either solid or glass panels depending on the use of the basement.

The Committee recommends approval of this application subject to staff review and approval of shop drawings for all millwork and cleaning and pointing specifications.

RECOMMENDATION: Final approval.

27-29 Bank Street, Atlas Sign, Inc. This application involves the fabrication and installation of a single 8' by 4' double faced internally illuminated sign on the facade of 27-29 Bank Street. The sign will project 4'4" over the sidewalk and will hang 10'1" above the ground.

The Committee evaluated the design of the sign in relationship to the honky-tonk character of the Bank Street streetscape and agreed to recommend its approval provided the sign did not project beyond the inside face of the curb. This provision will require that the width of the sign be reduced by approximately 6 inches.

RECOMMENDATION: Final approval subject to reduction in width of sign.

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee members and staff discussed at length the potential for an increased workload for the Architectural Committee as a result of the upcoming designation of several large local historic districts. By the end of 1989, the staff anticipates the addition of three historic districts to the Commission's list - Rittenhouse/Fitler, Spruce Hill and Society Hill. Several thousand additional properties will fall under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission as a result of these designations.

Several methods of handling the increased workload were considered by the Committee. These included the creation of a second committee or having the present committee meet twice a month. The Committee found neither of these to be acceptable. Having two committees would create problems of consistency and having the existing committee meet more often would be too burdensome. After some discussion, it was agreed that the present procedure might be streamlined. The Committee found the staff evaluations of each project, prepared by the staff and distributed prior to each meeting, to be extremely

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helpful and suggested that they be made available to the applicants. These evaluations would highlight for the applicants the areas of concern on each project and focus their discussion at the meetings. In addition, in instances where the Committee members agree with the staff evaluation of a project no hearing would be necessary. Appeals would be heard by the Historical Commission should an applicant disagree with a Committee and staff recommendation.

The staff agreed to study the problem and to develop a method of streamlining the process for a more efficient handling of the applications received by the Commission office.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of increasing the size of the Committee by two persons. Currently, five architects sit on the Committee. These members serve without remuneration and are called upon occasionally to assist the staff in the review of more complex projects. It was agreed that the addition of two more architects would lighten the load of the present members and add persons with new or additional expertise to the group. The staff will consult with the Committee members and prepare a list of potential candidates for consideration by the Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer