

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**Robert Thomas, Chair
Commission Offices, One Parkway, 13th Floor, 1515 Arch Street
25 July 2000**

Present

Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair
Rudolph D'Alessandro
Herb Levy
Suzanne Pentz

Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Diane M. Hughes, Executive Secretary
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Also

Richard Koelle, The Vitetta Group
Kelly Lemon, The Vitetta Group
Jirair Youssefian, The Vitetta Group
Nan Gutterman, The Vitetta Group
Joseph Jacovini, Girard College
Jack Lee, Girard College
Daniel Bontempo, Granary Associates
Dale Lamontagne, Granary Associates
Mary DeNadai, John Milner Architects
Mike Barber, Dagit Saylor Architects
Richard Thom, Old City Civic Association
Petra Stanev
James Campbell, Campbell Thomas and Company
John M. Johnston
Carolyn & Bob Wahrenberger, 535 Delancey Street
Phil Kunz, PDK Architects
Mike Ambrose, PDK Architects
Edward Lauber
Judith Eden, Center City Residents Association
Vito R. Chimenti, Pierce College
Eric Spaeth, Voith and Mactavish Architects

Herbert Levy, Acting-chair, called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

2101 South College Avenue, a.k.a. 1900-98 Ridge Avenue, Girard College
Girard College, Owner

Robert O'Conner, Applicant

DATE: 1833-1847

PROPOSAL: New school building, dormitories and mechanical units

This proposal consists of the construction of a new school building, three dormitories, a chiller unit, and an electrical transformer, all situated on vacant ground most recently used as baseball diamond. The two architects both propose using pre-cast masonry units for the walls of the structures to approximate the color of the existing buildings on the campus. The chiller unit will sit next to the windows of an existing building surrounded by a chain link fence.

The staff's recommended approval based on Standards 9 and 10.

Nan Gutterman, Kelly Lemon, Richard Koelle, Jack Lee, Daniel Bontempo, and Joseph Jacavini were present to explain the proposal. Richard Koelle gave a presentation which included photographs and site plans illustrating in detail the placement of the school and the three dormitories. It also showed the chiller units to the side in the rear. There are two architectural firms involved with this project: The Vitetta Group for the school and H2L2 Architects for the dormitories. In view of the cost of marble, the architects both have tried to capture the character of the existing campus in modern materials. These materials are of two types: split-face block CMU and a sandblasted decorative-face CMU. Samples of the proposed materials were shown to the Committee. In order to create a pattern, both split-face and decorative-face CMU will be used for the school.

Mr. Tyler stated that buildings once occupied the site of the new construction.

The Committee found the scale and color of the materials appropriate.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval based on Standards 9 and 10.

3700 Chestnut Street, SW corner of 37th Street, Westminster Hall

University of Pennsylvania, Owner

Vivek Ghimire, Architect

DATE: 1884-86

PROPOSAL: ADA ramp, porch alteration and bird proofing

The work consists of installing a new vinyl floor on top of the existing wooden one and adding a metal code-compliant railing. The architect also proposes re-grading the bluestone 37th Street courtyard walkways to create a wheel chair accessible entrance, and adding Nixalite bird proofing inside the courtyard arcade.

The staff's recommendation is for approval of all the work, except the vinyl flooring which violates Standards 5 and 6.

Mike Barber was present to answer questions and to explain the proposal. This proposal has been modified so that the plastic wood, proposed to cover the porch floor, will not be used and the existing wood floor will be painted. The railing to be installed over the existing railing to meet code would be a square section metal tube painted black that sits 42 inches above with a diameter of 2 x 2 installed at a 45 degree angle to mimic the existing rail.

There is a walkway in the courtyard that the applicant proposes to slope to reach the level of the cloister and to slope the slate to both sides of a door in the cloister to meet the floor of the building.

There are metal tie-rods that tend to attract birds. The bird-proofing part of this proposal has been modified from the Nixalite Protection to a new system of thin stainless steel piano wire clipped to the top of the tie-rod. Only two or three rods may be needed. The question arose whether the connection of two different metals would result in galvanic corrosion. Because the rods have a polyester coating, such a problem would be alleviated.

Mr. Barber wanted it stated for the record that he met with the University of Pennsylvania's Cultural Resources Committee.

Mr. Baron requested that a letter be submitted from the applicant stating his decision to withdraw the plastic wood and the Nixalite system from the proposal.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval per Standards 9 and 10.

3700 Spruce Street, University of Pennsylvania Quadrangle Dormitories

University of Pennsylvania, Owner

Richard Russell, Applicant

DATE: 1895

PROPOSAL: Chimney caps

The work consists of adding chimney caps to two chimneys with alternatives in either stainless steel or blue stone. The former would be shorter and less massive than the latter. The chimney caps will prevent water penetration into the fireplaces of the housemaster's apartment and the Mask and Wig Club.

The staff recommended approval of the stainless steel, the smaller option, with a dark finish.

Mary DeNadai attended to present the project and to answer questions. She explained that stainless steel cannot hold paint. Either solution would create an asymmetrical appearance. Mr. Tyler favored the stainless steel, because it will not read as an original part of the building.

A lengthy discussion followed on the alternatives. The applicant agreed that the stainless steel has a low profile but she could not decide between the two.

Mr. Levy believed the bluestone a more appropriate material for the building and that the stainless steel would look out of character.

Mr. Thomas recommended the bluestone because at this height, the height differential will not be significant. The Committee voted in favor of the bluestone owing to the inability to coat stainless steel.

The Architectural Committee recommended in favor of the bluestone.

1030 Irving Street

Grace Schuyler, Owner

Dominic Aspite, Applicant

DATE: c. 1824

PROPOSAL: Raise visible rear roof slope

The applicant withdrew his proposal in writing.

216-18 Market Street, SW corner of Strawberry Alley

Daisy Investments, Owner

Janice Woodcock, Architect

DATE: c. 1860

PROPOSAL: Alter storefront on 218 Market Street and renovate upper floors of 216-218 Market Street

This application calls for creating apartments in the upper floors of 216-218 Market Street and renovating the storefront of 218 Market Street to allow for an entrance to the upper floors and for a store. The plan shows a new entrance cut into the front of the historic storefront to provide access to the upper floor apartments, the addition of a missing storefront cornice, and the installation of nine-over-nine windows in the front façade.

The staff recommended denial, for the windows should contain six-over-six sash and the new doorway to the upper floors should be cut into the vestibule elevation of the storefront per Standard 9.

In this proposal the owner wishes to place the door to the apartments in the front plane of the storefront to separate the store entrance and the upper floor entrance. The storefront of 218 Market Street reflects a high degree of architectural integrity. Placing the door in the face of this shopfront would destroy historic fabric and would change the look of the façade. Moreover, an entrance exists on Strawberry Street with the buzzers planned for the apartments; since the apartment residents would actually use Strawberry Street, the Market Street entrance would receive infrequent use.

Janice Woodcock was present to answer questions and explain the project. She also stated that the owner is very vehement in his wish to have the door placed on the plane of the building line and believes the apartments would not be visible with the door to the side.

The Committee thought that the owner can achieve what is needed and still meet the Standards and recommended denial of the proposal as submitted.

Another part of this proposal addresses the missing cornice. Absent documentation for the original cornice, the applicant proposes a simplified bracketed cornice with an area for signage. The storefront postdates the building itself and the brackets seemed like a simplified version of what might once have been there. In addition, the present non-historic door does not fill the original opening; a wood panel closes the gap. The owner intends to remove the panel and install a properly fitted door. The transom above the door now contains a single light which would be replaced with leaded glass to match the shop window transoms. The developer seeks to replace all the material of the existing storefront with new material, i.e., to demolish and reconstruct the

storefront. The staff recommended preserving as much fabric as possible and replacing fabric only in instances of severe deterioration. The building is already painted and the applicant proposes to remove the paint with an environmentally safe product.

If the applicant returns with revised drawings consistent with the Committee's suggestions, before the Commission meeting, the Committee recommended approval and the owner would not risk having to wait another month for the next Committee meeting.

Richard Thom, Old City Civic Association, stated that he opposes the door flush with the front, but could go along with the door on the side, however, would rather the storefront remain as built.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval for the following:

1. *Installing a new door of the historic height;*
 2. *Installing a leaded glass transom above the door;*
 3. *Removing the paint;*
 4. *Repairing the storefront;*
 5. *Installing new. Wood 6/6 windows, and*
 6. *Introducing a new door into the side of the vestibule.*
- With staff to review all details.*

112 Chestnut Street

Waseem Kalla, Owner

James Campbell, Architect

DATE: c. 1830

PROPOSAL: Restore storefront, install awnings and exterior seating

The proposal involves removing non-historic storefront elements and installing a more appropriate storefront based on a simplified version of historic design. The restaurant owner will install a new fiberglass sign and awnings and an outdoor café.

The staff recommended approval per Standards 9 and 10.

James Campbell, architect for the project, was present to explain the project and answer questions.

At the time of designation, the 1830 storefront had been replaced. The present storefront features stone and stucco panels between the original stone piers. The staff and applicant worked together to find a design typical of buildings of that period. The transom would probably have been leaded but not documented. The new design represents a simplified version of an 1830s storefront.

Other parts of this proposal include canvass awnings with writing on the lip, and a fiberglass sign fitted over one of the transoms in such a way that it can be reversed. The reason for this proposal is to have a café outside with just tables. There is to be a ramp at the main door with a simple railing, and the non-historic concrete step will be removed.

Mr. D'Alessandro questioned the thickness of the door because it looked like a panel in the drawings, and questioned why the transom bar was so thin. The applicant stated that the transom

bar, which was actually thinner than desired, should have been heavier because the doors have to swing out.

The applicant stated that there is not really a ramp but a raised sidewalk.

Richard Thom, Old City Civic Association, questioned approval of the raised sidewalk and permit approval for the outdoor café.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval. Mr. Thomas recused himself from the voting.

211-213 North 3rd Street

John B. Williamson, Owner

James Campbell, Architect

DATE: c. 1830

PROPOSAL: New storefront and signage

The proposal involves a storefront alteration to install full-length windows, a single door, and signage in a one and half story building. The masonry building remains as a fragment of two, former four story brick warehouses. The applicant seeks to remove one of the two original masonry sills of the former storefront window.

The staff recommended approval except for the removal of the sill, which should remain per Standard 2.

James Campbell, the architect for the project, presented revised drawings in which all the sills and windows remain. He stated that what exists now is a large one-story building which lays out well for his client, who proposes to alter the front façade only with signage. Presently there are aluminum storefront windows and a door between the marble columns.

Mr. Levy questioned the lighting. The applicant said that there will be three simple incandescent light fixtures that will hang over the front facade. Mr. Levy recommended that the staff review the light fixtures.

The proposal to remove a projecting sign and to install a very large flat wall sign met with reservations from the Old City Civic Association. Richard Thom, Old City Civic Association, said that he thought a projecting sign in conjunction with a smaller flat wall sign more appropriate in terms of visibility and historic compatibility. If reduced and made smaller, the sign would add to rhythm and character of the street.

The Architectural Committee recommended the approval of the sign as proposed but also approval of an alternative smaller flat wall sign or a non-illuminated projecting sign, or one illuminated externally with staff to review details. It also recommended matching the pieces and the retention of the actual framing of the windows. Mr. Thomas recused himself from the vote.

35 South Strawberry Alley

Ron Nihlam, Owner

Charles Datner, Architect

DATE: c. 1910

PROPOSAL: Storefront in former loading dock and window

The applicant seeks to legalize the construction of a new storefront in place of a loading dock. The applicant will remove the aluminum windows and six-panel door also installed without a permit, and will reinstall wood windows.

The staff recommended approval per Standards 6, 9 and 10.

Charles Datner, architect for the project, was present to answer questions and explain the proposal. The applicant proposes to restore the windows to wood one-over-one, and a new door to match the other door in the storefront.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with staff to approve details per Standards 6, 9 and 10.

535 Delancey Street

Carolyn Wahrenberger, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1802

PROPOSAL: Rooftop addition

The owner has returned with additional information and a revised plan to add a gambrel roof without a dormer to her row house. Her sight line study shows that the roof without the dormer would have minimal or no visibility.

The staff recommended approval per Standard 9.

The Committee previously reviewed a proposal to add a floor to this house. It then concluded that if the addition could be made invisible from the street, it could recommend approval. The house next door shows a scar on the wall of an earlier pitched roof; if the proposed addition's roofline followed this line, it would not be visible from the street.

Mr. Baron presented an 1843 insurance survey which showed a shed roof at the top with a loft over the third story. Nothing in the document indicated the existence of a dormer. On the basis of the physical evidence for a floor at 535 Delancey Street the sight line study, the Committee recommended approval.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

2041 Mt. Vernon Street

C. Brian Killian, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1875 altered 1989

PROPOSAL: Rear deck

The applicant seeks to install a roof deck on the visible rear ell of his house. The neighboring house on the corner already has a deck.

The staff recommended approval.

The proposal is to add a deck with a wood railing on the rear ell, which is visible, and to cut down a window to make a door. The deck fits the neighborhood in size and scale.

Mr. Thomas stated that the balusters seem farther apart than the code allows.

The Committee recommended that the staff review the door, which should have a second vertical muntin.

Mr. D'Alessandro questioned the design of the rail; it was stated that the balusters will attach directly onto the deck floor rather than to a horizontal rail.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with staff to review details.

1910 Rittenhouse Square

Mary Parenti, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1890

PROPOSAL: Alter front door, bay and sidewalk

The applicant seeks to alter a front bay, and to install a new door, planters and a patterned sidewalk.

The staff recommended denial. The architect should base the revised bay on the historic photographs and the sidewalk should follow the larger pattern of the former slate sidewalk. The door alone meets Standard 6.

This building which faces Rittenhouse Square has undergone many alterations over the years. In particular the metal bay on the front façade seems to have had a transom bar and a relatively large cornice. Earlier pictures also show a cornice and a shed roof.

Phil Kunz and Mike Ambrose appeared to present the project and to answer questions.

The proposal involves building a new bay around the existing, non-historic bay; it would have a paneled base and a balcony. The staff thought that the proposed changes incompatible with the historic character the building and the original bay and recommended denial of the bay as submitted.

The door alterations seem to follow the original historic design, and the paint scheme seems appropriate.

Concrete currently paves the sidewalk. The proposal specifies the use of small, cast stone pavers. The applicant stated that the neighboring property has stamped concrete with a large pattern that is already scarred by utility work. Plain white concrete tends to turn different shades of gray. In the rear of the building, a brick paver was used with a herringbone pattern. For these reasons, the applicant wants to use a small paver in the front that can be replaced without compromising the appearance of the whole.

The Committee, however, thought that a larger scale or 2'x 2' bluestone or cast stone paver appropriate historically.

Mr. Levy objected to the planters and their placement in front of the basement windows. The Committee believed that historic features should remain exposed and visible. The Committee recommended that the applicant photograph the planters and the existing basement windows and return with a revised drawing.

The applicant stated that the flower box portion can be withdrawn and the existing flower boxes will remain.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of the proposal as submitted. It encouraged the applicant to submit drawings that incorporate the suggestions made by the Committee for staff review before the next Commission meeting. In this event, the Committee recommended the approval of the following:

- 1. Door with details;*
- 2. Treatment of the front bay consistent with the design evidenced by historic photographs;*
- 3. The basement window exposed and visible, and*
- 4. Pavers in bluestone or cast stone at a larger scale, at least 2'x2'.*

1420 Pine Street, Pierce College

Pierce College, Owner

James Mergiotti, Applicant

DATE: c. 1830

PROPOSAL: Rooftop HVAC

This application calls for installing a second cooling tower on the roof of 1420 Pine Street. The public will see the unit from Broad and 15th Street. There is currently a cooling tower on the roof, which is highly visible.

The staff recommended approval but the unit should be painted brick red to blend in with the stair tower.

The other unit on the roof is stainless steel painted gray. The applicant ideally would like to install a factory-baked unit on the roof.

The Committee recommended that the applicant use a unit in a color of his choice. Should that be deemed too intrusive, the applicant must repaint the unit with the Committee and staff to review the color.

1426-1434 Pine Street, Pierce College

Pierce College, Owner

James Mergiotti, Applicant

DATE: c. 1830

PROPOSAL: Legalize vinyl basement windows

This application calls for approving the removal of wood basement windows and the installation of vinyl ones without a permit and the resetting of the sills to shed water.

The staff recommended denial per Standard 6.

This set of row houses functions as one building . The Commission has reviewed and approved the proposal for the rehabilitation of these buildings by the College. The full construction documents submitted for permit purposes, however, contained some details not included in the drawings reviewed and approved by the Commission. In processing the permit application, staff had the alteration of the basement windows noted specifically as deleted and initialed by the architect. On a site visit with the architect, Mr. Baron explained that window replacement would require a review and that vinyl windows would probably not meet with the Commission's approval. Subsequently, the window openings were closed down and vinyl windows installed in each opening without a permit. The architect suggested that screens with a dark netting would conceal this non-historic treatment.

The staff noted that the window openings form a highly visible feature of the Pine Street elevation. In this context, the windows themselves should remain visible behind any screen, made of wood and have six true divided lights. The bricks currently behind the sill slope inward; this allows water penetration. Resetting the bricks would prevent this; staff deems this appropriate.

The applicant presented old photographs which show screens. The applicant has directed the contractor to retain the screens. The applicant, however, questioned the historic presence of the windows and asked how to determine the historically correct treatment now. Mr. Thomas responded that windows would have been necessary to prevent the freezing of pipes. The screens and windows should be reviewed and the screens should allow visibility.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of pitching the sill to create a wash, wood windows with three lights of glass and a half-inch clear screen, and restoration of the openings to their original dimensions.

1910 Spruce Street

Michael and Constance Cone, Owners

Christopher Shivo, Applicant

DATE: c. 1855

PROPOSAL: Rooftop terrace and HVAC

The applicant seeks to construct a rear deck and HVAC unit possibly visible from Delancey Street on the back of their Spruce Street row house.

The staff recommended approval with the HVAC unit shifted to the less visible west side of the property.

Eric Spaeth was present to explain and answer questions about the proposal and displayed photographs.

The proposal involves a Spruce Street house with a rear that faces Delancey Street. In 1998, the Commission reviewed a proposal to demolish the garage and to erect a new garage with a deck on top of it. In the rear portion of the house the applicant now proposes a deck with brick piers and a railing to match the railing on the new garage. Also the applicant proposes a large air conditioner on the roof of the building, raising a concern that the unit will be visible from the

east side because the building is more exposed on that side. The roof plan showed the possibility of moving the unit to the west side thus making it less visible.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval at the west side.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Hughes
Executive Secretary