

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

**Robert Thomas, Chair
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street
31 March 1998**

Present

Robert Thomas, Chair
Tony Atkin
J. William Cornell
Herbert Levy
Daniel McCoubrey
Suzanne Pentz

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
R. Scott Jacob, Executive Secretary to the Commission
Kristin Fetzer, Historic Preservation Planner
Elizabeth Harvey, Historic Preservation Planner

Also

Edward Lane, DataFac Architects
Brion Lipshutz, Gould Evans Architects
Lawrence Gilbert, Architect
Thomas Unkefer, Unkefer Brothers Construction Company
Nathalie Peeters, Venturi, Scott-Brown and Associates
Anthony Miksitz, Dagit Saylor Architects
Dan Kayser, Dagit Saylor Architects
Lenore Millhollen, Center City Residents Association (CCRA)
Judith Eden, CCRA
Louis DiGregorio, Architect
Michael Carosella
Deborah Fleischman
Martin Rosenblum, Martin J. Rosenblum, R.A. and Associates
Patricia Solvibile
William Solvibile
Carl Zucker, Attorney
Perry Whidden, Richard Gluckman Architects
Henry McNeil
Barbara Greenfield, Albert M. Greenfield and Company, Inc.

Mr. Thomas recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

401 North Broad Street

Nathan Jacobs, Owner
Edward Lane, Architect/Applicant
DATE: 1929-31
PROPOSAL: Ground and 3rd floor vents, rooftop HVAC

This proposal calls for installing large grills in place of a modern storefront on the Callowhill Street facade of this industrial building. The applicant also seeks to insert vents into the third-floor windows. In addition, the applicant wishes to mount five, eleven feet high HVAC units on the roof.

Edward Lane, architect for the project, presented photographs showing the view of the roof from various street-level vantage points. Committee members agreed that the proposed HVAC units will blend with the industrial character of these rooftops. Mr. Thomas recommended painting the units grey.

Mr. Lane stated that he intends to remove the large, 1950s post office storefront window and fill the void entirely with louvers. He wishes to cover the louvers with a metal grill similar to the mesh grills that cover the other first-floor windows on this facade. Mr. Baron recommended designing a louver scheme that matches the pane configuration of neighboring historic windows on the building. The Committee did not concur. Mr. Levy suggested the applicant install full louvers in the entire openings, and block out the unneeded portions internally. Committee members thought the applicant could install metal grills to match those on the other first-floor windows, but asked that he paint the louvers and grill a dark color. Mr. Lane explained that mechanical equipment on the third floor of the building requires louvered vents. Committee members thought the proposed vents appeared appropriate for this side of the building, in that they will use the existing 1950s frame.

Committee members voted unanimously to recommend approval of rooftop HVAC units, the third-floor louvers, and of removing the post office storefront and installing dark-painted louvers behind a dark-painted mesh grill to match the grills on neighboring windows, with staff to review and approve the paint color.

200 North 9th Street, a.k.a. 901 Race Street

Yu Man Chiu, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1855

PROPOSAL: Partitions visible from exterior

This proposal involves installing walls within a second-floor glass greenhouse that wraps the second floor of the building. The walls will have visibility from the exterior. A former owner of the property attached the greenhouse to the building without benefit of Historical Commission review. Licenses and Inspections issued a permit for the work probably owing to confusion over the correct corner address. Committee members agreed that the proposal will not harm the building's exterior any more than the greenhouse already has. Mr. Baron showed the Committee new plans showing the partitions matching up with the mullions of the greenhouse addition.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

858 South Front Street

Albert and Judi Pestrak, Owners

Lawrence Gilbert, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1810

PROPOSAL: Rear addition, raise roof, roof deck and basement areaway and stair rail

This proposal includes rear additions and a deck, both in highly visible locations on this corner property. The applicant plans to rebuild the rear roof slope for the third floor addition. Although not proposed as part of the application, the drawing also shows a first-floor projecting greenhouse window that this owner installed without a permit. The scope of this work will correct several other illegal alterations, including HVAC and holes in the brick exterior.

Lawrence Gilbert, architect for the project, stated that he designed the proposed rear roof slope to set back eighteen inches in order to maintain the historic roofline. Committee members recommended redesigning the third-floor addition to resemble a large dormer, with a shallow gable slope. The Committee asked the applicant to install the dormer's cedar siding on a horizontal plane instead of sloping as in the proposal. Mr. Atkin suggested matching the brick of the proposed second-floor addition with the existing, non-original first-floor rear addition instead of cedar siding. The architect and other Committee members preferred the cedar siding, owing to the difficulties of matching historic brick.

The Committee also recommended using two double-hung, true muntin, wood windows in the addition instead of the proposed double casement window. The owners agreed to comply with this recommendation. Committee members thought the greenhouse window could remain. Mr. Baron suggested they at least recommend painting the greenhouse window to match the other windows. The Committee disagreed because of the greenhouse's construction of anodized aluminum.

The proposal also includes the installation of stairs to the basement with a plain, wrought iron railing. The applicant stated that the width of the sidewalk will accommodate the new stairs. Committee members approved of the proposed stair rail, but noted that installing the stairs requires other city approvals.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of a gabled dormer addition, cedar clapboards on the new additions, roof deck with wood rail, two double-hung, true muntin windows in the second-floor addition to match existing historic windows, and black metal stair rail all with staff to approve details.

144 North 2nd Street

Borough Belsky, Owner

Brion Lipshutz, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1810

PROPOSAL: New facade

This proposal entails erecting a new Flemish bond brick facade to restore the building to its appearance of c. 1860 when a Victorian storefront was introduced into this c. 1810 structure. The current facade dates from the turn-of-the-century, and has severe structural problems. The outer wythe of brick contains horizontal wood boards, coursed into the brickwork, which have rotted and weakened the facade. The parapet wall mostly hides the dormer. The architect has used the neighboring paired building as a model for this restoration.

Mr. Atkin suggested making reference to the later phase of this facade to show that it has experienced alteration over the course of its existence. Brion Lipshutz, architect for the project, agreed to use a slightly different color brick on the facade. Staff will consult with the applicant on the choice of the brick.

Mr. Baron explained that the proposal also includes shortening the upper-level windows to match neighboring windows. The current, non-original window frames extend to the floor. Mr. Lipshutz stated that he proposes a box-type cornice. Mr. Levy remarked that the cornice, as designed, may cause drainage problems. Committee members thought staff should review and approve exterior design details of the new cornice and window replacements.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of restoring the facade to its circa 1860 appearance, with Flemish bond brickwork, with some subtle reference to the circa 1910 alterations, windows and cornice, with staff to review and approve details.

1300 Locust Street, Pennsylvania Historical Society

Pennsylvania Historical Society, Owner

Nathalie Peeters, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1902

PROPOSAL: Install glass front doors

Mr. McCoubrey, Mr. Thomas and Ms. Pentz all recused themselves from the vote owing to their professional association with the project.

This proposal calls for installing new glass doors in front of the existing metal front doors. The Committee has discouraged this proposal once. Mr. McCoubrey assisted Ms. Peeters in explaining the proposal. He stated that the Historical Society needs to have out-swinging doors for an emergency exit, and explained that the current, in-swinging, solid doors do not meet

this requirement. Committee members suggested converting the solid doors to out-swinging. Mr. McCoubrey described the reasons why this cannot happen, including their size and weight. Mr. Baron recommended painting the frames of the new glass doors to match the solid doors. The applicants explained that the bronze has dignity, and the color of the doors may change.

The remaining three Committee members voted to recommend approval.

1426-1434 Pine Street, Peirce College

Peirce College, Owner

Anthony Miksitz, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1840

PROPOSAL: Addition to rear; ramp from rear leading to 15th Street; new door and gate on 15th Street

This scheme involves constructing a new rear addition, roofing over the spaces in between the rear ells of the several rowhouses, a handicap accessible ramp leading onto 15th Street. The installation of the ramp necessitates demolishing the rear portion of the corner building. A fence will shield the ramp. The metal picket fence will contain non-illuminating metal signage.

The architect also proposes a second means of egress door on 15th Street. Committee members expressed concern over the proposed new door and stairs on 15th Street, and recommended either locating the exit at the rear of the building, or placing the stairs inside and lowering the door to grade-level. Anthony Miksitz, architect for the project, stated that the Streets Department has already approved the stairs. Committee members explained that exterior stairs often attract vagrants.

Mr. Miksitz described the proposed gate that will serve as the main entrance to the Admission Center of the College. He plans to construct the gate, fence and sign in steel, painted black. Half of the fence and sign will sit at the front edge of a low wall.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposed stairs and raised door on 15th Street. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the additions to rear, the handicap accessible ramp leading from the rear to 15th Street, a new door at grade-level on 15th Street if the Department of licenses and Inspections will not permit a second means of egress from the atrium, and the fence with non-illuminated signage.

Mr. Atkin noted that the new use of these buildings warrants installation of more windows on the almost windowless end wall.

1829 (1827-1831) Pine Street

Michael Carosella, Owner/Applicant/Contractor

DATE: c. 1850; altered c. 1950 for hospital

PROPOSAL: New entrance and watertable

This proposal involves rehabilitation work to the front facade of the building, including a new main entrance, the watertable and basement grates. The Committee and Commission reviewed this project two months ago, but asked the applicant to come back with more appropriate designs for the entrance and watertable, with help from Commission staff. Louis DiGregorio, architect for the project, showed photographs of the neighboring basement grates he intends to have copied for this building. The Committee did not object to the watertable and basement grates, but asked the applicant to adjust the plans to incorporate the historic window placement after the stucco removal.

Michael Carosella, the Contractor for the project, asked the Committee to consider recommending approval to expand the new door proposal to eight or eight-and-one-half feet wide, with the incorporation of sidelights to fill the added space. He explained that the current entrance proposal appears too small for the triple facade. The Committee agreed with the appropriateness of adding two sidelights to the door surround.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposal, including the expansion of the entrance by two feet, and incorporating sidelights, with staff to review the design.

2004 Sansom Street

John Ciccone, Owner/Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1850; glass storefront c. 1935

PROPOSAL: Neon Sign

This proposal involves installing a new neon sign for the glass storefront.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

1600 Spruce Street

Patrick Hobson, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1855

PROPOSAL: Convert blocked-up door to a window

This proposal entails reopening a blocked-up doorway and creating a new window based on the design of the building's main shop window. The applicant plans to build frames around window and another window on the same facade to match a large storefront window that sits between them. Committee members recommended eliminating the two new ornate frames around the two windows and the proposed panel below the existing window. They recommended designing the new window to match the old door without a frame, but with the proposed panel to hide the remnants of the old steps.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal as submitted, and approval of a simple door frame around the new window and panel below it.

2417 Delancey Street

Milton Steele, Owner

Peter Miller, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1970

PROPOSAL: Enlarge opening in masonry wall; new front gate and door

The owner wishes to alter the masonry garden wall, gate and front door of this Bauhaus-type modern rowhouse. Although called non-contributing to the district, this building falls within a unique row of buildings with a distinct pattern of solids to voids. Peter Miller, architect for the proposal, stated that there are already several changes to this row of buildings. He proposes to widen the front gate to allow for more light into the garden, and for moving furniture in and out. A second, smaller gate leaf will fill the extension. He added that the owner would replace the current, non-original, and highly decorative gate with a simple, modern gate, more in keeping with the style of the rowhouse. The applicant also proposes a paneled front door.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval to widen the opening and install a simplified gate and flush door.

1642 Pine Street

Deborah Fleischman, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1830

PROPOSAL: Rear addition; deck

This proposal involves an addition and alterations to the rear of the rowhouse on Pine Street and its brick carriage house on Waverly Street. The proposal calls for building an addition with vinyl siding and vinyl windows with snap-on muntins. The location faces on to a block of Waverly Street that contains the fronts of many rowhouses.

Mr. Atkin recommended stuccoing the addition instead of using vinyl siding. Martin Rosenblum, architect for the project, explained that the owners wish to use vinyl siding for its affordability. He suggested a compromise to stucco the side wall of the addition, paint the existing metal wall of the third floor rear and leave the vinyl siding only on the rear face of the addition, owing to its obscured location behind the proposed deck. Mr. Rosenblum stated that he will wrap the stucco around the corner of the addition to meet with vinyl trim, with staff to review and approve the color of the paint and siding. The Committee approved of this idea. The Committee recommended installing the proposed vinyl windows without the snap-on muntins and painted to look like wood, or installing true muntin, wood windows on the new addition. Committee members explained that

because the rear of this building faces front facades on Waverly Street, they cannot recommend approval of the proposed windows. The Committee expressed no objections to the proposed addition, deck, or garage opening.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of painting the existing third-floor tin wall and stuccoing the side wall of the addition and installing siding only on the rear face of the addition, with staff to review and approve the color of the paint and siding. The Committee also voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed vinyl windows without the snap-on muntins, finished to look like wood, or installing true muntin, wood windows on the addition. It also voted to recommend approval of the garage alteration and the wood deck.

2056 Locust Street

William and Patricia Solvibile, Owners/Applicants

DATE: 1930

PROPOSAL: Legalize new windows

This proposal involves legalizing the replacement of the fourth-floor windows on this corner property. The owner installed four vinyl, double-hung sash in place of original wood, true-muntin, casement windows. She would eventually like to replace the rest of the windows to match these new sash. Committee members thought the owner should replace the historic windows because the current vinyl sash do not match the historic originals in design, operation or materials. Patricia Solvibile, owner of the building, stated that she did not know of the house's historic status when she had the work done, and questioned its inclusion on the *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places*. Committee members explained that her property has been labeled as contributing to the Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District, and stands as an important example of early Modern architecture. The Committee explained that the top-floor windows, while different from those below, contribute to the style and character of the building, and that the Commission's standards require replacement windows to match the original in form, design, and where possible, materials. The Solvibiles stated that they would like to table their proposal until the May Commission meeting so they can present their case to the full Commission in person.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial, and to request a replacement of the wood, six-light, casement windows.

1916 Rittenhouse Square Street

Dr. James Fox, Owner

Henry McNeil, Prospective Buyer

Carl Zucker, Applicant

DATE BUILT: c. 1957

PROPOSAL: Demolition of entrance pavilion; construction of a four-story building

For comment only - not for permit

Mr. Tyler stated that this has come to the Committee only for comment and not for permit purposes. Indeed, the Commission has not yet received a building permit or a demolition permit application; the latter requires a seven-day posting. Henry McNeil, the prospective buyer, sought merely a sense from the Committee of the possibility of subsequent approval upon submission of the necessary permit applications and documents to assist him in his decision whether to execute a purchase option that expires on 6 April. Inasmuch as this presentation does not constitute an application as defined in the ordinance, and the Commission will not meet until 8 April, Mr. Tyler advised Mr. McNeil and his legal council Carl Zucker not to rely on the Committee's comments or suggestions.

Carl Zucker, the applicant, stated that his client, Henry McNeil, would like to purchase the house at 1914 Rittenhouse Square Street and the lot with the entry pavilion at 1916 Rittenhouse Square Street. He explained that Mr. McNeil wishes to build a four-story addition in place of the pavilion to serve as a gallery addition to the main house. He added that maintaining the home as a private residence and gallery on Rittenhouse Square honors the legacy of Henry McIlheny.

The Committee divided the issue into two parts: the demolition of the existing structure, and the design of its replacement. Although the Commission listed the garden and structure as "Contributing" to the Rittenhouse/Fitler Historic District, the Committee thought the Mr. McNeil could demolish it, if replaced with a sympathetic design. They thought that the entry pavilion could be sacrificed owing to its construction in the late-1950s, and the fact that as an addition, it fails to stand alone as an independent structure. Mr. Tyler recommended to the applicant that they consider grafting the new structure onto the back of the pavilion, however, this option did not receive consideration.

Committee members recommended the architect redesign the proposed new structure to complement its neighbors, and meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* for new construction. The Committee thought that the proposed design failed to respect the rhythms and scale of its neighbors. Perry Whidden, an architect for the project, explained that the current design scheme derives from the programmatic needs of the gallery. Committee members explained that even if the structure needs to have an exterior screen, the exterior requirements must also be met. Committee members also thought that building a structure without a setback would better respect the line of the street wall.

Respectfully submitted,


R. Scott Jacob