

THE MINUTES OF THE 377th STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

10 November 1993

Wayne S. Spilove, Chairperson
City Council Caucus Room
Room 401 City Hall

Present

Wayne S. Spilove, Chairperson
William Brown, Community Representative
David Brownlee Ph.D., Architectural Historian
Louis Einhorn, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Property
Bennett Levin, Commissioner, Department of Licenses & Inspections
Arlene Matzkin, Historical Architect
Carmen Torres-Rodriguez
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing and Community Development
Stephanie Wolf, Ph.D., Historian

Jane Hix, Assistant City Solicitor, Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner
Lori Plavin Salganicoff, Historic Preservation Specialist

Also

Jennifer Goodman, Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Adam Schneider, Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation
Kevin M. Dwyer, Pi Lambda Phi International Fraternity
Ted Beitchman, Mayor's Office
Carl S. Primavera, Mesirov Gelman
Lawrence Goldfarb, Cliveden Street Neighborhood
Phil Orchowski, Owner, 251 S. Camac Street

THE MINUTES of the 376th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia
Historical Commission held on 11 November 1993, Wayne S.
Spilove, Chairperson, were approved as submitted.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee of the Philadelphia
Historical Commission, 28 October 1993, Arlene Matzkin,
Chairperson, Architectural Committee:

251 S. Camac: This proposal involves the rehabilitation of a
property which consists of two buildings at the corner of Camac
Street and Manning Street as a restaurant. The plans call for
restoring the c. 1825 front portions of the property and altering

the c. 1915 rear addition along Manning Street. The rear portion would receive a new second floor, have its windows closed, and the rear brick portions stuccoed. A new square window and a balcony are to be added to the rear structure. A tall wall will extend to the third floor in order to hide air conditioners and as part of the future construction of an owners apartment on the third level. Additionally, necessary structural repairs to the 1915 addition will require a bond beam which would eliminate the existing arched openings on the first floor.

The Architectural Committee thought that the work as proposed would be acceptable but requested that the wall at the third story be kept below the corbelled brickwork of the rear cornice of the older front portion of the building. They also requested that the drawings be revised to show the restoration of the windows and door on the front building.

The Commission accepted the Committee's recommendation and approved the proposal with the stipulation that the door, fanlight, and windows be revised on the drawing and restored.

901 South Broad Street: This conceptual proposal involves the rehabilitation of and addition to the Ridgeway Library to convert in into the High School for the Performing Arts. The old building is to be restored, including the grand interior spaces and the central stairway. A large new addition to the rear will almost double the size of the building. The front fence is to be restored and a driveway is to be run through the front lawn.

The Committee reacted favorably to the design dated October 26 1993 which shows new side facades with windows organized into vertical registers. The Architectural Committee had been concerned about the site plan and asked that there be bollards placed around the driveway to prevent parking on the front lawn. Also, the Committee asked to see the design for the identifying sign to be placed on the lawn.

The Commission approved this proposal in concept.

2000 North Broad Street: The applicants, Pi Lambda Phi Fraternity, have proposed the demolition of the carriage house at 2000 North Broad Street, which is also known as the Stafford Mansion. This carriage house has deteriorated significantly since its designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission in 1986, despite efforts by the Commission staff to work with the fraternity members on its upkeep. Collapsing exterior walls caused by the separation of facing brick from backup brick is being exacerbated by water entering through the parapet. The Department of Licenses and Inspections has issued a dangerous condition citation.

The Committee concluded, after reviewing the feasibility of possible reuses, that the carriage house was too expensive to save and recommended to the Commission that it should be demolished as soon as possible.

The main house is another concern. It was suggested that a "Demolition by Neglect" violation be issued to encourage the fraternity to hire an architect and to begin to address this building's problems. The fraternity will have paid off its mortgage by early in 1994 and have indicated that it will refinance to pay for the necessary work. It does not, however, know at this point what work will be necessary to stabilize the house. The Commission stressed to the applicant's representative, Kevin Dwyer, the importance of pursuing this stabilization and rehabilitation as soon as possible and encouraged them to retain an architect immediately.

Kevin Dwyer, Chapter Advisor to the fraternity, stated that Pi Lambda Phi has been working, since first discussing the matter with the Committee, at the local and national levels to retain a architect for the preservation and stabilization of the main residence. For the moment, however, the main concern of the fraternity is the deteriorated and potentially dangerous carriage house.

The Commission approved the demolition of the carriage house at 2000 North Broad Street, with the understanding that the fraternity will address the problems of the Mansion without delay.

220-222 Spruce Street: This proposal calls for the construction of a one-story rear addition to this property. Visible from American Street, the proposed addition would however be substantially set back from the street and largely hidden by a brick wall.

The Commission approved this proposal in concept.

**THE REPORT of the Activities of the Philadelphia Historical
Commission Staff, October 1993, Richard Tyler, Historic
Preservation Officer**

Richard Tyler reported that Lori Plavin Salganicoff joined the staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission on November 1, succeeding Ira Kauderer. Ms. Salganicoff is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Historic Preservation program and has since worked for the National Park Service, various architectural firms, and as a private preservation consultant to firms in Bucks County and Philadelphia.

Mr. Tyler also announced that on 9 November, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled on the reargument in United Artists Theater Circuit, Inc. v. Philadelphia Historical Commission. By a vote of four to zero with one concurrence, the court reversed its decision of July 1991. The court now holds that the mere listing of private property as historic without the consent of the owner is not a taking under Article I, Section 10 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. The court, however, also voided the designation of the Boyd Theater, for the Commission exceeded its statutory authority in certifying the interior of this building. Without an amendment to the ordinance expressly empowering the designation of interiors, the Commission may not list or regulate interiors. The Commission may, however, now return to the creation of historic districts which United Artists put on hold.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Bennett Levin of the Department of Licenses & Inspections (L & I) stated that the Mayfair House represents an "imminent danger" to the neighborhood and that he will continue to push the demolition order through the court system. Describing the perceived "imminent danger," he added that the property has become a drug haven and, despite the historic nature of the building, it has become a problem in an otherwise fine neighborhood.

Mr. Levin went on to say that L & I will not attempt to expedite the legal process with respect to the demolition of the building and is looking for a good-faith gesture by the owners through their paying this year's taxes (a small percentage of the approximately \$390,000 in total taxes owed). The demolition order has been appealed to the L & I Review board.

Mr. Larry Goldfarb, a neighborhood representative, explained to the Commission that as a member of the neighborhood, he finds the house to be dangerous. As an architect, he feels that there are no adaptive reuse possibilities. Mr. Goldfarb stated that he and the neighbors are concerned that the Commission will take a position against the demolition.

Mr. Tyler commented that, although there have been discussions about the property, there has been, as yet, no permit before the Commission. He stated that an historic building which is considered imminently dangerous by the Licenses & Inspections Department is usually signed by the Historical Commission staff immediately, but sometimes there are imminently dangerous elements or components which may be remedied without the destruction of the building. The Commission has a review role pursuant to Section 14-2007 of the Philadelphia Code and should not be circumvented.

Mr. Levin assured the Commission that the application for demolition will reach the Commission before anything is done and that L & I plans to bring before the Commission every historic building which is identified in their inventory of dangerous or imminently dangerous buildings at the earliest possible time.

Mr. Paul Primavera, a representative of the Mayfair's ownership, related that the owners recently renewed a commitment to his firm and that they are now in the process of having funds placed in an escrow account with his firm. These funds will serve to protect the contractor and the engineer who are presently involved with planning to clean and seal the building and to identify any imminently dangerous elements. Mr. Primavera stated that the owners are aware of the broken windows and other maintenance and security problems and claimed that these will be addressed immediately. After this stabilization effort, the Mayfair's ownership is planning to approach the city with adaptive reuse opportunities, claiming that there are "substantial and credible" groups interested in the property.

Mr. Levin proceeded to the topic of the St. James House at 13th and Walnut Streets, and announced that L & I will no longer tolerate scaffolding on downtown streets erected to stop parts of the building from falling and hurting people below. L & I gave the present owners until November 19 to come up with repair proposals. If this has not been satisfied by this date, L & I will barricade the sidewalks, declare the entire building dangerous and evacuate it, and remove the scaffolding.

Mr. Levin explained that his department is now taking a very strong position with people who are allowing buildings to be demolished by neglect. Just prior to the enactment of Bill #380, the Property Maintenance Bill Ordinance for Center City, L & I performed a survey to identify vacant buildings which might have been either visibly dangerous or fire hazards. Under Bill 380, L & I will be making a door to door inventory of "blighted" buildings during the month of December which will likely result in many people challenging the demolition orders which come out of it. The ordinance now allows L & I to intervene before a building is in such a state that a Demolition by Neglect order is issued; they can now write Repair Orders which, if unaddressed after 30 days, will incur a Demolition by Neglect order or the placement of a municipal lien.

Dr. Brownlee summarized the feelings of the Commission by stating that he hoped that for historic buildings, L & I will press for repair rather than demolition. Dr. Wolf added that demolition should not become a cheap and typical way to solve the problem of deteriorating buildings.

Ms. Jennifer Goodman of the Preservation Coalition urged that the Department of Licenses & Inspections coordinate future surveys

with the Historical Commission and inquired as to whether the results of the Imminently Dangerous survey which Mr. Levin mentioned had been shared with the Historical Commission.

Mr. Levin stated that L & I had not yet shared the survey information with the Commission, but plans to do so soon.

**CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION SESSION, 20th Century
Architecture in Philadelphia, Dr. David Brownlee,
Architectural Historian.**

To maintain Certified Local Government status, the National Park Service requires the Philadelphia Historical Commission to present eight hours of preservation education per year. In partial fulfillment of this obligation Dr. Brownlee presented Commission members with a lecture on 20th Century Architecture in Philadelphia.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Plavin Salganicoff
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