

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

20 February 1980

Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Chairman

Present: Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Chairman, Architectural Advisor to the Commission
Theodore T. Bartley, Jr., A.I.A., Preservation Committee, American
Institute of Architects, Philadelphia Chapter
Erling H. Pedersen, A.I.A., Old Philadelphia Development Corporation
Russell Milnor, A.I.A., Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
Richard Tyler, Historian
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Executive Assistant to the Chairman
Marion Carroll, Architectural Historian
Jefferson Moak, Historical Research Technician

Also

present: Robert Cassway of Cassway-Albert & Associates to discuss his preliminary
proposal for the restoration of Girard's Gentilhommiere, Twenty-first
and Shunk Streets.

Anthony Junker of Euland and Junker, Architects and two of his associates
as well as Carl Doebly of the Clio Group and Bud Wolf of Skidmore,
Owing Merrill to present plans for the rehabilitation of the Penn
Central Thirtieth Street Station.

Carlos Salliant-Smith, Architect, and his clients, Charles Frank and
Leon Coleman, to present plans for the restoration of the Mills
House situate at 238 South Eighth Street.

John Ericson and an associate of H2L2 to present plans for the restoration
of the facades of 238-248 South Eighth Street.

Stewart Harting and Lance Silver, Developers, to present their proposal
for renovations to the buildings located at 219 and 221 Market Street.

David Wismer, Chief of the Construction section of the Department of
Licenses and Inspections, to seek the approval of the Committee for
alterations within a single, first floor bay of the St. James Hotel,
1230 Walnut Street.

Murray Cohen and John Howard of the McDonalds' Corporation, Janice Williams
of the Fox Chase Community Action Council and Warren Huff and Lucy
Comstock of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission to discuss the
proposed demolition of 7901 and 7903 Oxford Avenue and the development
of the site as a McDonalds' Family Restaurant.

Joseph Ottaviano, Contractor, to appeal the Committee's decision to refuse
to award a plaque to the house situate at 232 Spruce Street.

George Moy, Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, to present for
the Committee's consideration a set of rehabilitation specifications
for the building situate at 2904 Diamond Street.

SUBMISSIONS FOR ALTERATIONS

Girard's Gentilhommeire, Twenty-first and Shunk Streets, Cassway-Albert & Associates. Robert Cassway discussed with the Committee members his preliminary proposal for the restoration of Girard's country house situated within Girard Park in South Philadelphia. Rehabilitation work on the building, currently owned and maintained by the Department of Recreation, will be confined to the exterior of the structure and will include improvements in landscaping as well.

Since the existing structure is a product of three periods of construction, the Committee members agreed that the building should be restored to the latest period of alteration that being circa 1825.

Mr. Cassway related his proposal, in detail, to the Committee members noting his intention to remove the paint from the exterior surfaces of the building, repair the cracks in the stucco, recoat the stucco with a protective finish, re-roof the building with wood shingles and repair, or replace, deteriorated original fabric. Mr. Bartley recommended that, during the rehabilitation process, the walls of the structure be examined to determine whether or not they had been stuccoed originally and to ascertain the condition of the brick underneath. In addition, he recommended that a paint analysis be conducted on the exterior walls and woodwork.

Following some additional discussion of the project, the Committee agreed to recommend its approval, in concept. The results of the paint analysis and wall examination as well as a complete set of working drawings must be submitted for review before a final approval of the rehabilitation project can be granted.

Thirtieth Street Station, Ueland and Junker, Architects. Anthony Junker, Architect, and two of his associates as well as Carl Doebly of the Clio Group and Bud Wolf of Skidmore, Owing, Merrill appeared before the Architectural Committee to present their plans for the rehabilitation of the Thirtieth Street Station as part of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project.

As outlined by Mr. Junker, the proposed renovations will consist primarily of operational changes and improvements to the main visual elements on the interior of the structure. Those main areas to undergo restoration include the ticketing area, the North waiting room and the main floor storefronts. Mr. Junker and his associates reviewed with the Committee members the details for the treatment of these areas which were found to be acceptable.

SUBMISSIONS FOR ALTERATIONS (Cont'd)

Owing to the inadequacy of the public address system within the station, plans for the introduction of a new system were presented for the Committee's consideration. The installation of the system, as proposed, would require the erection of twenty, seven foot pylons atop the cheek walls of the descending stairs located within the high central concourse. As proposed by the architect, the design of the pylons would reflect the classical character of the station's interior elements. Because the pylons will pierce the impressive, central space of the concourse, the Committee members agreed that they should be as unobtrusive as possible. Rather than mimicking the architectural design of the interior, the Committee recommended that the architect redesign the pylons in a neutral, contemporary fashion.

Contingent upon an acceptable revision of the pylon design, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Historical Commission that an approval of the Thirtieth Street Station rehabilitation program be granted.

238 South Eighth Street, Carlos Salliant-Smith, Architect. Mr. Smith appeared before the Architectural Committee with his clients, Charles Frank and Leon Coleman, to present plans for the restoration of the Mills house situate at 238 South Eighth Street.

Mr. Smith's request to demolish and reconstruct the original front wall of the Mills house generated particular concern among the Committee members. Since the building's significance rests primarily on its association with Robert Mills, the architect who originally designed the building as part of a row of ten, the Committee agreed that the original front must be preserved if at all possible. Although the facade contains a number of star bolts, an examination of the front wall recently indicated that it might feasibly be preserved with only minor reconstruction in a few small areas. The Committee suggested, however, that the wall be re-examined to determine if any additional structural damage had occurred since the last inspection.

Concerning the treatment of the joint between the Mills house and the adjacent structure at 240 South Eighth Street, the Committee recommended that stucco be used to fill the space rather than brick since the stucco will more clearly define the break between the two buildings. In addition, on the front facade, the Committee suggested that the entrance steps reach to the middle of the bearing wall only and that the marble water table be continued beyond that point.

SUBMISSIONS FOR ALTERATIONS (Cont'd)

The plans, as presented, for the construction of a rear extension to the Mills house and the introduction of a roof deck met with the Committee's approval as did the proposal to demolish and reconstruct the side and rear walls. On the gable wall, the Committee suggested that the "D" window be enlarged and that it match in size and design the original as shown in an early photograph on file in the Commission office. On the rear wall, the Committee asked for the elimination of the door and arches and suggested that the wall be treated in a simple manner similar to the original design.

The Committee agreed to recommend an approval, in concept, and directed the architect to submit for further review a complete set of revised working drawings.

238-248 South Eighth Street, H2I2, Architects. John Ericson presented to the Committee members for review his proposal for the restoration of the front facades of these six buildings. Following a discussion of the restoration details, the Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the plans as submitted.

219-221 Market Street, David Beck, Architect. Stewart Harting and Lance Silver submitted to the Committee members for review plans calling for the renovation of the two buildings situate at 219 and 221 Market Street.

As described by the developers, each of the buildings will be raised to a height of four stories with the new additions to the front facades being executed in a completely contemporary manner. This same basically modern treatment will continue along the east (side) elevation of 219 Market Street. On the front facades, the Committee recommended that the new windows be stepped out beyond the plane of the existing windows and that they be positioned nearly flush with the outer plane of the wall. A detail showing the Committee's suggested treatment of the Market Street elevation is requested.

The Committee agreed to recommend an approval of the project, in concept.

St. James Hotel, 1230 Walnut Street, Otto Schum, Architect. David Wisner, Chief of the Construction section of the Department of Licenses and Inspections, explained to the Committee members the architect's proposal to introduce into an existing opening on the Thirteenth Street elevation a secondary means of egress. The additional exit leading from the interior fire stair to the street, according to Wisner, is required by the City code.

SUBMISSIONS FOR ALTERATIONS (Cont'd)

The proposal, as submitted, called for the installation of an exit door within a single arched opening and the retention of a section of granite topped by a transom light. While the Committee agreed to permit the installation of the new doorway, they recommended that the granite base within the opening be eliminated completely and that a metal panel be installed in its place below the glass transom.

The Committee requested that the drawing be revised in accordance with the above recommendation and resubmitted to the staff for a review and final approval.

John Wanamaker Crystal Tea Room, H2L2, Architects. At the request of the Project Architect, Burton F. Miller, Jr., Mr. Bartley inspected the work underway in the Crystal Tea Room on the ninth floor of the John Wanamaker store and discussed with the architect his design intentions, the scope and nature of the work and the materials to be employed. Mr. Bartley found the project to be acceptable and asked that Mr. Miller submit to the Historical Commission reproductions of the descriptive perspective drawing indicating the "furniture" to be installed and a typical section of the carpet pattern.

The Committee, in accordance with Mr. Bartley's report, recommends the approval of the proposal as submitted.

DEMOLITIONS

7901-7903 Oxford Avenue, McDonald's Corporation. Representatives of the McDonald's Corporation, the Fox Chase Community Action Council and the City Planning Commission staff discussed with the Committee members the proposed demolition of 7901-7903 Oxford Avenue and the development of the site as a McDonald's family restaurant.

Although the neighborhood expressed some reservation concerning the design of the restaurant and the proposed landscaping, they did not oppose the development of the parcel by McDonald's. Since there appeared to be no objection by the community to the proposed development, the Committee agreed to recommend the release of the buildings for demolition. This recommendation, however, is contingent upon the receipt of a letter from the McDonald's Corporation stating the Corporation's intention to cooperate with the community in an attempt to resolve the design and landscaping issues.

PLAQUES

232 Spruce Street. The contractor for the restoration of 232 Spruce Street, Joseph Ottaviano, Jr., appeared before the Architectural Committee to appeal the Committee's recommendation concerning the owner's request for a Commission plaque. The Committee, at its meeting of 16 January 1980, recommended against the issuance of a plaque to 232 Spruce Street. The Committee found the brickwork and pointing to be inconsistent and the lighting fixture to be inappropriate.

Mr. Bartley agreed to examine the building again and subsequently reported to the staff. While the brickwork and pointing were determined to be acceptable, the lighting fixture must be removed before a plaque can be issued.

314 Fulton Street. This request for a plaque was tabled. It will be considered by the Committee at its March meeting.

417 Spruce Street. The Committee recommends that a "Certified-Altered" plaque be issued to 417 Spruce Street.

REHABILITATION SPECIFICATIONS

2904 Diamond Street. George Moy, Construction Supervisor for the Philadelphia Housing and Development Corporation, presented for the Committee's review specifications for the repair of the front wall of the building situate at 2904 Diamond Street. The Committee found the proposed repairwork to be acceptable and agreed to recommend the approval of the specifications as presented by Mr. Moy.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Executive Assistant to the Chairman