

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

9 July 1987

David Hollenberg, Chairman

Present: Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect,
Independence National Historic Park
John Dickey, F.A.I.A.

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Merrie L. Winston, Historical Architect
Maureen Heaney, Clerk Steno I

Also: Sabrina Soong, Architect, to present a proposal
for the complete rehabilitation of the building
at 239 N. 10th Street
George Lyman, Tracey Lambert and Jock Deasey,
Architect for Johnson's Wholesale Florist,
and Margo Heegman of Amtrack to present a
proposal for the installation of a greenhouse
structure for the sale of flowers in the
southwest corner of the great main room in
30th Street Station
Frank Weise, Architect, to present a proposal for
extensive alterations to a row of Italianate
Carriage Houses
Stewart N. Schlosser, Architect, to present a
proposal for the rehabilitation of a
mid-nineteenth century granite commercial
building into a "Bed and Breakfast" Inn
Kate Cleveland, Architect, to present a proposal
which calls for extensive interior
alterations, minor exterior alterations and
landscape alterations to the Vernon House and
Park
Kenneth Clarke and Jack Lee from Girard College to
request a demolition permit for six one-story
storage and workshop buildings at Girard College
Diran Alexanian and Howard Krasnoff of First
Fidelity Management to request guidance on what
type of addition would be acceptable to the
McIlhenny Houses located at 1912-1914
Rittenhouse Square
Michael Stack from the Forrest Theatre and Michael
H. Bianchini from Melrose Waterproofing Company
to present a proposal for the repointing and
caulking of the facade of the Forrest Theatre
located at 1114 Walnut Street

CONTINUED

Mary Lou McFarland and Lenore Millhollen, Preservation
Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
William Jordan, Center City Residents Association

ALTERATIONS

239 N. 10th Street, Sabrina Soong, Architect. This application calls for the complete rehabilitation of the building at 239 N. 10th Street. This includes installing new six-over-six true muntin window sash, a new door, doorframe and arched transom window, rebuilding the curved marble stoop and having the ornamental stair rail replicated in iron using the remaining pieces as a model. Damaged slate on the mansard is to be replaced in slate. The paint on the front wall will be removed and the side wall will be repaired and stuccoed in two tones of stucco to indicate floor levels. The application also calls for building a three-story addition at the rear covered by a gable roof.

The Committee recommended approval of the work with the following exceptions:

- 1) The roof of the rear addition should be flat rather than gabled.
- 2) The door should replicate the door at 231 1/2 N. 10th Street.
- 3) The Committee asked that the applicant reuse and salvage as much of the curved marble stoop as possible.
- 4) The Committee also requested that the architect submit a detailed elevation of the railing that will be recast.

The Committee unanimously recommended an approval of this project pending the receipt and approval of revised drawings.

30th Street Station, Gregory Lyman, Tracy Lambert of Johnson's Wholesale Florist, Jock Deasey, Architect, and Margo Heegeman of Amtrak. This application calls for the installation of a greenhouse structure for the sale of flowers in the southwest corner of the main waiting room in 30th Street Station. This greenhouse is meant to balance visually a snack bar in the northwest corner of the waiting room. The greenhouse will serve as a sales area. The storage and workroom will be in a room behind the main sitting area. Carpeting for the snack bar and the greenhouse is also proposed.

The Architectural Committee recommended that the proposed signage atop the greenhouse be removed and placed on a one foot band that will run along the sides of the entire greenhouse.

The Committee recommended a conceptual approval for the proposed greenhouse; however, before a final recommendation can be made revised drawings must be received and approved by the Architectural Committee members.

309-315 S. Chadwick Street, Frank Weise, Architect. This proposal calls for the extensive alterations to a row of simple Italianate carriage houses with a setback third-story addition, a series of added second story balconies, the lengthening of the first and second story windows as well as a new door and window treatment within the doorways and carriage openings. Mr. Weise also proposes to enlarge a small window into a garage door opening at the south end of the carriage houses, which Mr. Weise claimed originally existed.

The Committee could find no visual evidence of an original garage opening in the photographs of the carriage houses. Mr. Tyler agreed to inspect the building for evidence of this feature.

The Committee rejected the proposal, saying that the numerous additional elements were totally inappropriate to the character of these buildings, Mr. Tyler recommended that Mr. Weise look at some of the renovated carriage houses on Brandywine Street in the Spring Garden section to obtain ideas for an appropriate rehabilitation design for the carriage house. Additionally, the Committee requested a sight-line study to indicate whether the roof top addition would be visible from Pine Street.

The Committee also recommended that existing masonry openings should not be enlarged and that simple carriage house doors, perhaps with glass panels, could be used and that any roof top construction be simple in design and should not be visible from Pine Street.

235 Chestnut Street, Stewart N. Schlosser, Architect. This proposal calls for the rehabilitation of a mid-nineteenth century granite commercial building into a "Bed and Breakfast" inn. The extensive interior work will have no impact on the exterior. The front facade which is already largely intact will be restored to its original condition. At the first floor, signage and aluminum infill will be removed and wooden transoms and doors will be installed. They will be milled to match the several original examples of these items still left on the building or on its twin next door.

The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend an approval of this project.

5708 Germantown Avenue, Vernon House, Kate Cleveland, Architect.

This proposal calls for the extensive interior alterations, minor exterior alterations and landscape alterations to Vernon House and Park. The interior alterations include rebuilding a central grand stairway that was removed when the building was used as a library. Exterior changes include new gutters, new bulkhead doors, paint to match existing, the removal of a modern pipe stairrail and the extension of two older stairrails on the front steps, as well as the lengthening of two windows on a new rear addition. Proposed revisions to landscaping include:

- 1) building a raised rectangular terrace in front of the house where presently a simple axial walkway leads up to the front stairs;
- 2) creating a landscaped sitting area at the side of the entrance of the caretaker's apartment;
- 3) rerouting the walkway at the rear of the property to discourage pedestrians from looking into the windows of the living areas, and building a fence to create an enclosed back yard, and
- 4) placing HVAC units hidden by a low fence at the rear of the house.

After consulting with the staff, Ms. Cleveland drew a second landscaping proposal incorporating staff comments.

This proposal:

- 1) eliminates the raised terrace in front of the building while retaining the present axial walkway to the house;
- 2) creates a simple walkway bordered by shrubs at the north side of the building;
- 3) reroutes the rear walkway but substitutes dense shrubbery along the rear of the house instead of fencing in the back yard; and,
- 4) substitutes shrubbery instead of a fenced pen to hide the HVAC system.

The Committee recommends approval of all the proposed work on the house with the exception of the lengthening of the two stairrails. The Committee recommends instead the installation of a central stairrail to be installed using the existing holes in the marble. The Committee rejects the first landscaping proposal and recommends approval of the second proposal.

1912-1914 Rittenhouse Square, Howard Krasnoff and Diran Alexanian of First Fidelity Management appeared before the Committee to receive guidance on what type of additional construction would be acceptable on the site.

The Committee pointed out that a proposal to build a thirteen story tower atop the houses had recently been rejected in concept by the Historical Commission. The Committee recommended that a building perhaps as high as eight stories could be built on Manning Street, attached to the rear of the McIlhenny Houses. Such a building could extend across the entire width of the property and rise a maximum of two stories above the McIlhenny Houses. This would preserve the window of blue sky on Rittenhouse Square Street and the new construction would look like a separate building on Manning Street. An additional piece of new construction could be built on the lot that presently houses a garden and a one-story domed modern entry-way that Mr. McIlhenny had built during his residence in the houses. This new construction should be built at the lot line and no higher than the cornice line of the adjacent buildings on Rittenhouse Square Street to restore the original street scape.

1114 Walnut Street, Michael Stack, Esq., and Michael F. Bianchini of Melrose Waterproofing Company to present a proposal for the repointing of the front facade of the Forrest Theatre located at 1114 Walnut Street. This repointing is to include removing of the old mortar with a power saw. It was also proposed that two windows on the East wall of the building be filled in with white brick and toothed into the existing wall.

It was agreed at the meeting that an on-site inspection should be conducted by both staff and Committee members to examine the building and evaluate the work to be done on this building. At the time of the on-site inspection, it was agreed to use white mortar rather than gray. A test patch was applied to the facade on Friday, 10 July, and was to be inspected by Mr. Tyler on Monday, 13 July; at this time Mr. Tyler inspected the building and noted that the work had not been done neatly. Another patch was applied and that was to be inspected on Tuesday, 14 July. Mr. Tyler inspected the site and found the final test patch acceptable. Mr. Tyler stated that he will visit the site from time to time to inspect the work being done on the building. Also at the on-site inspection it was agreed that the brick infill in the windows should be recessed several inches to preserve the form of the opening.

DEMOLITION

Girard College, Robert Hawthorne, Contractor and Jack Lee of Girard College. The applicants appeared before the Committee to request permission to demolish six one-story storage and workshop buildings constructed along the inside of the wall of Girard College. The applicants submitted pictures of the buildings which are to be torn down, showing that they were vacant and modern except for the Victorian Gothic Carpentry Shop and the Foundry.

The Committee recommended approval of the demolition of all of the buildings with the exception of the Carpentry Shop. The approval of the other five building is recommended with the condition that the Historical Commission receive photographs documenting these buildings. The Committee recommended that the College give strong consideration for possible reuses of the Carpentry Shop. The Staff will make an on-site inspection to determine the condition of this building.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Heaney
Clerk Stenographer I

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Architectural Committee Meeting

9 July 1987

Amplification of 1912-1914 Rittenhouse Square

Howard Krasnoff and Diran Alexanian appeared before the Committee for First Fidelity Management to seek guidance on the possible further development of the former Henry McIlhenny residence on Rittenhouse Square.

The Committee pointed out that it had recently heard a conceptual presentation for the construction of a thirteen-story building to the rear of the site and that the Committee and Commission had rejected this proposal.

In response to the request of 9 July, the Committee observed that the present buildings stand four stories in height, or the equivalent of five to six floors in a modern building. In order to respect the historic scale of Rittenhouse Square as represented by the McIlhenny property, the Committee suggested the appropriateness in concept of erecting a new structure perhaps as high as eight stories oriented visually toward Manning Street and set back substantially, i.e., forty to fifty feet, from the building line on Rittenhouse Square. Such a building could extend across the entire width of the site along Manning Street. This approach would maintain the "window" of sky from the Square and give the appearance of a separate structure on Manning Street. This suggestion entails the loss of the Manning Street portion of the complex and the dome entryway at 1916 Rittenhouse Square and the garden for the construction of a new building, residential in character, on the Rittenhouse Square property line, and to the cornice line of the adjacent structures. This would serve to reestablish the earlier street scape.