

**THE MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

David Hollenberg, Chairman

Annenberg School, University of Pennsylvania

18 December 1990

Present

David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman
Tony Atkin, Architect
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect,
Independence National Historical Park
William Cornell, J.S. Cornell & Sons, Inc.
Herbert W. Levy, American Institute of Architects
Donald Stevenson, Architect

Maria Petrillo, Assistant City Solicitor
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary

Also

University of Pennsylvania: Michael Aiken, Provost
Barry S. Cooperman, Vice-Provost for University Research
Amos Smith, Professor and Chairman, Department of Chemistry
Ronald Breslow, Professor of Chemistry, Columbia University
Soloman Pollack, Professor and Chairman, Dept. of Bioengineering
Arthur Gravina, Vice-President, Facilities Management
Marna Wittington, University Senior Vice-President
Robert Venturi, Principal, Venturi, Scott-Brown and Associates
David Marohn, Associate, Venturi, Scott-Brown and Associates
Jim Collins, Jr., Payette Associates
George Thomas, CLIO Group

Other Testimony:

Dr. Robert Kohler, Professor of History & Sociology of Science
Charles Rosenberg, Professor of History & Sociology of Science
Julie Johnson, PhD candidate, History & Sociology of Science
Joseph Nasr, PhD candidate, Regional and Urban Planning
John Blatteau, Architect
Dr. Michael J. Lewis, Bryn Mawr College
Brenda Barrett, Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation

Others Attending: R. Alexander, K. Barbee, F. Blase, D. Bloomgarden, D. Bogen, V. Booker, P. Branco, J. Brody, A. Bunn, A. Cappalonga, M. Cano, B. Cargill, D. Christianson, I. Cohen, J. Danner, D. Doan, C. Doebley, P. Dormer, J. Duan, J. Dudad, J. Empfield, W. Foreman, S. Fujiwara, G. Furst, J. Goode, J. Goodman, R. Gorte, S. Gould, D. Graves, M. Guzman, T. Hewryk, R. Hochstrasser, R. Holcomb, T.P. Hughes, E. Hunt, D. Jones, F. Kazavias, T. Kawasaki, J. Keenan, T. Keenan, H. Kittell, R. Kowalchuk, L. Laakso, A. Landsman, E. Leahy, J. Leahy, A. Lender, S. Mallory, J. McCauley, D. Meaney, M. Miller, S. Mooers, M. Murphy, F. Nelson, K. Olzn, C. Pereira, F. Quivik and others.

Smith Hall: 215 South 34th Street

Having announced the presence of a quorum, Mr. Hollenberg explained that the Architectural Committee convened this special meeting to hear further testimony regarding a proposal by the University of Pennsylvania to demolish Smith Hall. The Commission designated this building along with the adjacent Music and Morgan Buildings in October 1989. Smith Hall, one of the nation's first research teaching laboratories, possesses significance as a landmark of educational and scientific reforms in the late nineteenth century, as a significant element in the nineteenth century landscape of Smith Walk and as a fine example of the work of the regionally important architectural firm of Collins and Autenrieth.

The University wants to demolish Smith Hall to construct a wet-lab facility for the Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. Later phases of the Institute development plan entail rehabilitation of the Music and Morgan Buildings with a new addition behind them and the restoration of the interior of Hayden Hall. In November, the Committee heard testimony from the University and its consultants regarding the nature of the Institute program, the process of site selection and the importance of the Smith site. The Committee also heard considerable testimony opposing demolition based on the historical significance of Smith Hall, as well as general principles of planning, landscape architecture and historic preservation. At the conclusion of its last meeting, the committee deferred the matter and called a special meeting.

During this interim, the Committee requested specific information bearing on this demolition permit request. The Committee asked Arthur Gravina, University Vice-President for Facilities Management, to provide the following:

- a study of a design scheme which would entail demolition of the Duhring addition to Smith Hall and construction of the wet laboratory building, perpendicular to 34th Street on that site. This study should include exploration of the design of a small, attractive courtyard between the new building and Hayden Hall;
- an explanation of the University's master plan with regard to historic preservation, including an inventory of historic buildings. If this document exists, the Committee and Commission request a copy;
- an explanation by Dr. Cooperman regarding the spatial requirements for the Institute, including the criteria for the amount of space, the premium on contiguity and the flexibility of the spatial requirements;
- an estimation of the cost differential between

construction on the Smith site and a remote location. The estimate for the Smith site should include the cost of building on a constricted site; and

- an explanation of the relatively low evaluation of the historical significance of Smith Hall, considering the testimony which regards the building as a landmark in the history of science.

The Committee requested that Dr. Robert Kohler, professor of the History and Sociology of Science at the University, provide:

- documentation clarifying the historical significance of Smith Hall; and
- an appraisal of the integrity of specific, extant features related to its historical significance.

Mr. Hollenberg suggested that these questions serve as an informal agenda for the hearing. He reminded everyone that the Committee served only in an advisory capacity to the Historical Commission, which would convene on 9 January 1991 at 10am in the City Council Caucus Room, Room 401 City Hall. Because of affiliations with the University, Messrs. Atkin and Hollenberg abstained from the ensuing discussion and vote. Mr. Levy assumed the chair.

Before proceeding to the aforementioned inquiries, Mr. Levy requested testimony from anyone who wished to address an issue not broached at the previous meeting. James Colgate, an MA candidate in Architecture and Historic Preservation with a BA in Urban Design, requested that the Committee answer a question which had not been satisfactorily addressed in the previous meeting. Section 14-2007(7)(j) of the Philadelphia Code prohibits the issuance of a demolition permit for an historic building unless the Commission finds that issuance of a permit is necessary in the public interest or that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it may be reasonably adapted. Allowing the demolition of Smith Hall simply because the University prefers that site fails to meet either condition. It does not meet the adaptability clause; Smith Hall has served well as administrative and studio space and there is no question that it could be adapted for many different uses. Second the request also fails to meet the "necessary in the public interest" clause. To allow a university to demolish an historic building simply because it prefers that site would effectively exempt all colleges from these provisions of the Code. If all universities can claim to serve the public good and all university development will be proposed as in the best interests of the institution, then these applications invariably will receive blanket approval. Mr. Colgate insisted that Penn had not met the specific and drastic requirements for demolition of an historic building.

Following this testimony, Mr. Levy requested that the

University address the questions posed by the Committee. Mr. Tyler noted that the University had prepared a comprehensive presentation which would address these questions. Michael Aiken, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, introduced the Administration's presentation by reviewing the origins and purpose of the University and explaining the importance of the initiative to develop the Institute. Since its founding in 1740, the University of Pennsylvania has grown to its present status as an international academic institution of the first rank, noted for the education of its students and the excellence of its research. Sustaining this excellence, however, will require considerable investments in its research endeavors. The cost of research has increased, the competition from other schools is keen, and the existing facilities at Penn are obsolete. These problems are particularly severe in engineering and the natural sciences. University research has been impaired and programs compromised by a lack of space and special facilities. The Institute for Advanced Science and Technology represents a critical element of a comprehensive plan to invigorate research at the University. Its development will preserve and enhance Penn's position at the vanguard of scientific research, with considerable benefit to Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley.

The Philadelphia Code acknowledges that certain buildings warrant preservation for the public good. Penn shares this commitment to our heritage and has invested considerable funds to preserve its historic landmarks. The University has restored or rehabilitated Hayden Hall, the Quadrangle Dormitories, Franklin Field, the Veterinary Hospital, Furness Library, the Evans Dental Building and the University Museum. The restoration of College Hall is underway and work will begin next year on Logan Hall. The University also has invested significantly in preserving its historic landscapes. These projects have cost nearly \$30 million and those underway will cost another \$55 million. Further, Penn has undertaken two comprehensive studies of its nearly 130 buildings; the estimated cost for remedying all existing building problems discovered approaches \$180 to \$200 million. The maintenance of these buildings will be guided by the priorities established by the University's "Advisory Report on Historic Resources."

Though committed to the preservation of significant buildings, the University must balance its responsibility to safeguard its architectural heritage with its interests in cultivating excellence in research on a dense urban campus. To achieve excellence in research, the University must be permitted to make those changes to its built environment which it deems essential. Many University departments occupy historic spaces which were altered at considerable cost. For the Institute, however, the surrounding buildings cannot be reasonably adapted. Across the campus, there are many buildings over fifty years old which possess some historical significance. Yet, if the campus

must remain frozen in its present state, the University will be impaired in its pursuit of its institutional mission. Through the ensuing presentations, the University will address the specific questions posed by the Committee.

Dr. Barry Cooperman, Vice Provost for University Research, suggested that the questions posed by the Committee fell into three general areas: the determination of the Institute's spatial requirements, the factors weighed in the site selection process and the financial planning and phasing of the Institute development program. Dr. Cooperman explained the process of determining the spatial requirements of the Institute. Penn last constructed facilities for research in these fields in 1973. Since that time, these programs have expanded considerably. There has been a rapid growth in research funding as well as more graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. Funding for these programs approaches nearly \$35 million per year, representing a considerable enterprise at the University. Yet, there has been no new construction for these programs since 1973. The schools have been aware of this problem and have been planning to expand for some time. As various departments submitted plans to the Administration, there appeared a unique opportunity to undertake a collaborative initiative in a unified facility. To assess the viability of this venture, the University established a joint space planning committee. After six months, the committee estimated an aggregate need of 256,000 NSF of new lab space. The Committee then established priorities to turn this ideal facility into a feasible project. The criteria included: the intellectual vibrancy of the field, the urgency of the need, the comparative advantage of establishing the program at Penn, and the relation between the proposed research and the industries of the region. The Delaware Valley is the national center of the pharmaceutical industry and one of the major centers for the chemical, petrochemical, aerospace and telecommunication industries. Dr. Cooperman stressed that establishing and strengthening partnerships between the university and these corporations is essential to future scientific research and technological innovation. The Institute will serve as a mutually beneficial center for technology transfer. Based on these criteria, the Committee chose Chemistry, Chemical Engineering, Bioengineering and Computer and Information Sciences for participation in the Institute. The Institute also will incorporate the interdisciplinary Institute for Cognitive Sciences. Collaboration in these fields of inquiry is vital to their research. As planned, the Institute will nurture such collaboration. To undertake this exciting initiative, the committee established 100,000 NSF as an absolute minimum to meet the composite needs of the participating programs for the next twenty years.

Having explained the determination of the spatial requirements, Dr. Cooperman introduced a presentation on the site

selection process. There are three alternative sites for the Institute: the Smith site, the Duhring site or a remote site. The first entails razing Smith Hall and building on its site (feasibility study scheme #7). The Duhring site (scheme 3A) entails demolition of the Duhring addition to Smith Hall and new construction on its site aligned perpendicular to 34th Street. Building on a remote site is a third alternative. This last option entails certain common problems regardless of its location. The most favorable remote site is a parking lot adjacent to the Laboratory for Research in the Structure of Matter (LRSM) along Walnut Street east of 33rd Street. It, however, is also unacceptable. The University selected the Smith site for reasons related to intellectual interaction, economy, safety and construction phasing. To explain the intellectual benefits accruing to contiguous facilities, Dr. Cooperman introduced several professors.

Professor Amos Smith, chairman of the Chemistry Department, stressed the limitations of existing facilities and the importance of the Institute. The study of chemistry serves as an intellectual bridge between the physical sciences and the natural sciences. Encouraging interaction among researchers in various fields by placing them in contiguous facilities can reap unforeseeable benefits. Penn has been known for its collaborative research, an achievement facilitated by the general pattern of grouping similar fields of study together in precincts. The Chemistry Department has grown significantly. At present it has 30 faculty, 165 graduate students, 75 post doctoral fellows and 40 support staff. Of its \$11 million annual budget, \$8.6 million comes from research. This funding has allowed the department to pursue fascinating lines of inquiry, including the synthesis of new drugs, the development of high strength polymers and new technologies, as well as the study of genetic materials and laser spectroscopy. This research is founded on the principle of improving the human condition. The program has been remarkably successful in raising funds and drawing students; one graduate student received the prestigious Packard Award, an honor bestowed upon only twelve scientists nationwide. This success, however, has further increased the demand for space. Some students lack office space and work in the hallways. Several expensive pieces of equipment also rest in the corridors -- all because of a lack of space. Six young appointees have not yet fully developed their research programs; without adequate facilities, they will justifiably leave. Last year, the department lost one distinguished colleague to another university which offered better facilities. The plan for the Institute represents the department's hopes for the twenty-first century. To further explain the benefits of contiguous facilities, Dr. Smith introduced Dr. Ronald Breslow, professor and chairman of the Department of Chemistry at Columbia University. Dr. Breslow also served as chairman of Columbia's building committee.

Dr. Breslow stressed that the University demand for more space is well founded. Dr. Breslow served as chairman of an ad hoc advisory committee which undertook the past two five-year reviews of the Department. That committee examined the existing programs at Penn and determined that a lack of space was the foremost problem facing its research endeavors. Chemists use space intensively, spending often more than twelve hours a day in the laboratory. Contiguous facilities foster interaction among researchers. Without this contiguity, significant benefits from collaboration may be lost. The recommended plan offers this tremendous advantage. A member of the American Philosophical Society, Dr. Breslow appreciated the value of historic buildings and strongly opposed crass commercial encroachment on historic structures. This request, however, possessed just cause. He concluded by noting his surprise that this internal University matter had become a public debate.

Solomon Pollack, Acting Chairman and Professor of Bioengineering, emphasized the importance of collaborative research in contemporary scientific research. Although Penn is ranked among the top five bioengineering programs in the country, it occupies inadequate facilities in the basement and first floor of Hayden Hall. The Institute would provide much needed space for research for the preservation of life -- disease and injury -- as well as for improving the quality of life -- including implantology. Given increased longevity, the value of the latter increases significantly. This research benefits immeasurably from interdisciplinary collaboration. As proposed, the Institute offers the contiguity essential for this research.

James Collins of Payette Associates explained the material and safety benefits of contiguous facilities. These buildings must provide for the use, transport and disposal of radioactive, volatile and caustic materials. Safety, therefore, is a critical concern. The Chemistry and Engineering complex possesses handling facilities for these substances. Construction on a remote site would require duplication of these facilities at a cost of \$7.8 million, another \$3.4 million for the equipment and an additional \$700,000 per year in operating costs. In total, a remote site adds a premium of \$21 million over twenty years. The best remote site, that adjacent to the LRSM, provides some of the infrastructure and would add a premium of only \$15.9 million: \$6 million for facilities, \$2.4 million equipment, and \$7.5 million over twenty years for operating expenses. Another consideration, that of moving the LRSM labs to the Chemistry Building and vice versa, would add \$29 million. These options also possess high opportunity costs.

Arthur Gravina, Vice-President of Facilities Management for the University, explained these opportunity costs and the reasons for dismissing several remote sites. Based on recent assessments, the estimated value of land on campus is near \$25

per square foot. Based on this figure, the LRSM site adds \$2.4 million in opportunity costs. Further, Penn plans to use this site for construction of a utility plant. Building on the Lott Tennis Courts would block the view of the historic Palestra and encroach on the University's limited recreational land. The University dismissed Hill Field for the same reason. Although the Science Center had been suggested, Penn does not own that complex. The northwest corner of 34th and Chestnut Streets has been earmarked by the Redevelopment Authority for high-rise housing. The northeast corner, adjacent to a parking garage, is reserved for a 120,000SF academic program; this space is too small for the Institute. Dr. Cooperman noted that this explanation concluded the University presentation regarding the dismissal of a remote site. To compare scheme 7, the desired development scheme, and scheme 3a, a design for which the Committee requested further exploration, Dr. Cooperman introduced David Marohn, an associate with Venturi, Scott-Brown and Associates.

Mr. Marohn explained the architectural and aesthetic differences between these two infill development schemes. Scheme 3a entails the demolition of the Duhring addition and the construction of a new building perpendicular to 34th Street. Although the northern portion of Smith Hall would remain as office space, it appears as a remnant. Worse, this design extends the massiveness of the Chemistry Building into the landscape of Smith Walk and drastically reduces the size of the courtyard between the new building and Hayden Hall. Further, the abrupt transitions between three distinct facades along 34th Street would appear peculiar. This design also would require the disruption and re-rating of certain mechanical systems. Although it meets the program requirements, scheme 3a would cost nearly \$5.2 million more than Scheme 7, (\$45.5 million).

In contrast, Scheme 7 provides a linear public facade along 34th Street and creates a gracious private space to the rear. It also would establish an impressive gateway for Smith Walk and offer an interesting juxtaposition of buildings from different periods, an aesthetic common to the Penn campus. Its floor plan is more completely aligned with the Chemistry Building, facilitating academic collaboration. It also offers thirty percent more windows. In summary, Scheme 3a meets the general wet laboratory requirements for the Institute with less floor plan flexibility, higher construction costs and greater impact on the site. For the program and this historic part of campus, the more appropriate building type is one relatively plain and narrow with a linear face on its public side and gracious private courtyard on its interior side, like the Quadrangle, and many other fine historic Philadelphia buildings.

George Thomas of the CLIO Group, Inc. explained the reasons that a University Committee, consisting of himself, Dr. David

Brownlee and Dr. David DeLong, placed Smith Hall in the lowest category of historical significance. Briefly, the Committee determined that Smith was demonstrably less important than many of the buildings surrounding it. Although hesitant to recommend its demolition in order to save other more significant buildings, he accepted this directive as a preservation imperative. The University has grown to view its historic buildings as assets. In 1988, the University undertook an inventory to establish priorities for its preservation efforts. Dr. Thomas then presented a general history of the campus development which emphasized that the notion of a landscape that preserved one particular period was atypical on this dynamic campus. He then explained the classification system and provided examples of buildings within each of the categories.

Having provided this general background information, Dr. Thomas explained the placement of Smith Hall in the lowest classification. Its architects, Collins and Autenrieth, were demonstrably out of touch with their era in designing Smith Hall in a Victorian mode. Further, its relatively early alteration, less than a decade after its construction, suggest an architectural program which was a failure. The history of Smith Hall is suspect as well. The advocates for its preservation emphasize that it was the site where laboratory training became essential to scientific education. This assertion is clearly not true. As early as 1873, Logan Hall contained the first experimental laboratory space at the University. The Hare Building, constructed in 1878, also predated Smith Hall in its use of laboratories for scientific education. Given these facts related to its history and architectural style, Dr. Thomas and his colleagues placed Smith Hall in the lowest category. Further, preserving Smith Hall would not be meaningful as little of its interior remains intact. The building has not served as a laboratory in over a generation. The idea of retaining only the northern wing, as suggested by scheme 3a, would preserve a meaningless fragment. Given contemporary Code requirements, renovations would destroy any significant, extant interior features. Scheme 3A, therefore, offers neither good architecture nor good preservation.

Robert Venturi, principal of Venturi, Scott-Brown and Associates, stressed the precedents for expansion through urban infill. Most historic European buildings rise from the ruins of older buildings. Mr. Venturi then suggested that there are two primary building types: sculptural, which sit in space, and linear, which create direct or enclose space. Great spaces combine both styles and display an evolution of building. The generic science laboratories of today represent refinements of loft and factory buildings of earlier times. Placing such a building in this part of campus would not disrupt an artificial unity, but rather offer a linear background that would highlight the sculptural buildings across 34th Street. Through rhythm,

repetition and ornamental hierarchy, this new building will attain intrinsic architectural value as well. The recommended design scheme also offers the benefit of deflecting Smith Walk. This realignment will enhance public safety, provide a more interesting architectural focus on the Furness Building and add an element of surprise as one approaches 34th Street from the east. In contrast, design scheme 3A is disastrous. The new construction would provide an ominous context for the remnant of Smith Hall, condemning it to perceptual demolition. Finally, Mr. Venturi suggested that an extreme historicist position, calling for the preservation of all buildings, is as bad as the extreme modernist perspective, which brought so many fine historic buildings to the ground only decades ago. Both place theory above the practical use of space by people.

Marna Wittington, Senior Vice-President of the University of Pennsylvania, explained the costs of the four phases of the Institute development plan. Phase I, the demolition of Smith Hall and the construction of the wet-lab facility, will cost \$39 million. Phase II, the renovation of Music and Morgan with a rear addition for dry-lab facilities, will cost \$24 million. Phases III & IV, the restoration of the interior of Hayden Hall and other alterations, has been estimated at \$12 million. This total investment of \$75 million represents a very important commitment for the University. Funds for this project will come from three sources. The federal government has allocated \$10 million in the FY '91 budget for a program similar to that proposed by Penn; the University firmly believes that it can compete successfully for this grant. Another \$25 million also may become available if the Institute develops as anticipated. The Commonwealth has allocated \$15 million to the University in its capital budget. The University itself constitutes the third source. The Board of Trustees authorized a debt of \$20 million for this project. Other funds will come from gifts; two trustees have committed themselves to raise money for this project. The University presently has adequate resources for Phase I. The timing of phases II through IV will depend on the fund-raising efforts. Given the amount of this anticipated investment, the University cannot afford to risk development on a remote site with a less than optimal program. The Institute team acceded to the preservation of two of the three historic buildings on this block of 34th Street. Any further compromise would not be in the best interests of the University. Ms. Wittington suggested a comparison of the endeavors represented, in their respective eras, by Smith Hall and the Institute. While it is important for Penn and Philadelphia to restore its most important buildings, it is also important to reinvest in scientific enterprises.

Dr. Cooperman concluded the University presentation by requesting the opportunity to address any opposing testimony when deemed reasonable. At 11:05am, Mr. Levy announced that the Committee would adjourn for ten minutes. Following this brief

respite, the Committee requested the testimony of Dr. Robert Kohler, Professor of the History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Kohler disputed the conclusion that Smith Hall possesses less importance than most other campus buildings, for it is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the history of science. The University consultant assumes that the revolution in scientific education which occurred in the 1890s began, and ended, with the simple introduction of laboratory experimentation in classrooms. Rather, these developments of the 1870s served only as a prelude to the irreversible revolution which reached fruition in organized research and training in research. This German mode of education for the few was altered radically by the democratic American ideal of mass education. The key idea was that research could be taught to everyone. The educational focus moved from the simple transferral of old information to the ability to produce new knowledge. This research became the basis for practical careers in academia, high-technology industries, hospitals and similar pursuits. Through the late 1880s and early 1890s, universities espoused this idea institutionally in the construction of dedicated facilities. The University of Pennsylvania was one of six institutions which led this educational revolution. Once Johns Hopkins had been perceived as the lone pioneer in this endeavor; yet, further research has illustrated that the revolution occurred in a much more competitive, pluralistic environment. These views of the history of science are well established and hardly controversial.

The architecture of Smith Hall reveals this revolution. It stands as the sole survivor of a second group of medical buildings constructed by the University for research and training through the 1890s. Some argue that the Hare Building was the site for this development. That view is simply incorrect. Although some research and graduate training occurred there during the 1880s, Hare, like Logan Hall, had been built for general college use. Neither possessed dedicated research facilities. Any research undertaken in them was constrained by lack of space and inadequate facilities. The Hare Building was effectively outdated soon after its construction. The revolution in scientific training was embodied in a second phase of buildings.

Smith Hall is the quintessential embodiment of the research revolution; its exterior looks like a laboratory, and its floor plan is clearly designed for research. The building possesses a very clear relation between its architectural design and its use. Its primary sponsors, Provost William Pepper and John Shaw Billings, were highly conscious and articulate in the research movement. Building the infrastructure for this educational revolution became the focus of their professional endeavors. Smith Hall was built as an exemplar of their ideals of research

and training as a service to the community. The northern wing was divided into small rooms and groups of rooms for specialized research. These laboratories were not reserved solely for academics; they were available for a small fee to anyone with the ideas and zeal to conduct research. This convergence of academic research and municipal service was among the most distinctive features of Smith Hall. The southern portion of the building, replaced by the Duhring wing in 1899, housed a large lecture hall, then a library. The Duhring addition did not mar the symmetry of the building because it was so clearly asymmetrical in function. Architects Collins and Autenrieth designed the external appearance to convey the practical ideal embodied by the activities inside. Billings acknowledged that this building defied conventional attitudes toward architecture. At the opening of Smith Hall, he remarked:

as regards the external appearance of the building, opinions will...differ; I will only say that it has been planned from within outward, which is the reason it looks like a laboratory and not a castle or cathedral. In many respects, it forms a striking contrast to the Library (Furness Building)...and it is fit and proper that it should do so. The Library represents the...experience and wisdom of the past. The Laboratory is the workshop of the future.

The research ethos is clearly reflected in the architecture of Smith Hall, and the University commended Collins for its design. Contrary to earlier claims that the architects were "out of touch," they were very much attuned to these modern ideals. Through its history Smith Hall produced numerous researchers with the skills to devise new technologies, to draft new environmental regulations and to develop municipal health systems.

The building itself served as an instrument for experimentation in heating, ventilation and sanitation systems. A room on the first floor was fitted with radiators of four different designs to test their comparative efficiency. The pipes were left exposed and painted different colors for study. In this manner, Smith Hall is unique; there was nothing like it before, and nothing quite like it since. There is no comparison between it and other early hygiene laboratories. Elsewhere, individual rooms were used for experimentation, or programs were dispersed among makeshift laboratories across campuses. Smith Hall is a masterpiece of laboratory design.

Most of the original Laboratory of Hygiene remains intact. Several partitions have been added and others removed, but the decorative ceilings, the various building systems and even the four different radiators survive. Although it has suffered from years of "deferred maintenance," it is a miraculous survivor from the crucial moment of the research revolution. Its demolition for the short term advantages of timing and money would be

tragic. The importance of the Institute is not disputed. As a chemist and an historian of science, its prospect is exciting. The point is that alternatives exist, but they have not been taken seriously because the University decided from the start that Smith Hall was worthless and disposable. That view rests on ignorance. It is not Smith Hall that stands in the way of the Institute but rather faulty planning which resulted in a scheme that required the destruction of an irreplaceable historic landmark. The planning process was flawed even in its historical advice. If the Administration wanted to understand the historical significance of Smith Hall, it could have asked those dedicated to the study of the history and sociology of science. Dr. Kohler expressed hope that the University now would consider remote sites more seriously. However, if they declined, he urged the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission to defend this extraordinary, possibly unique, historic landmark.

John Blatteau, architect, graduate and professor at the School of Architecture, presented testimony stressing the importance of incorporating historic resources into the University's future. He suggested that the present plan for the Institute compromised its image and opportunities for expansion. In 1988, the architects completed a study which recommended the construction of two new laboratory buildings flanking Smith Walk along the east side of 34th Street. The subsequent historic designation of Music, Morgan and the Smith Buildings resulted in further study of this plan. The current proposal not only compromises the earlier bold image but also impairs future growth. In addition to demolishing one historic building, it would graft a modern addition onto Music and Morgan. Worst of all, it will forever alter the distinctly nineteenth century aesthetic of Smith Walk. To stress the value of Smith Hall's influence on Smith Walk, he referred to the Pennsylvania Campus Development Plan 1982-1984 Report on the Development of the East Central Precinct, prepared by the Center for Environmental Design and Planning of the Graduate School of Fine Arts. This plan heralds the intangible, yet unquestionably excellent quality of the campus along 34th Street. Regarding the three designated buildings, the Plan notes:

The small scale of the three buildings fronting on 34th Street, as well as their porches and richly ornamented facades, make this short stretch of 34th Street one of the most pleasant edges on the Pennsylvania Campus.

Further, the Plan clearly identifies the Cret Building directly adjacent to the Chemistry Building as less historically significant, badly planned and conceived, and more easily subject to demolition. It is undistinguished with neither the physical grace nor historical importance of Smith Hall. To cite the Plan directly, "From the standpoint of the Campus image and quality of environment [when deciding between demolishing Smith and Cret],

preserving Smith Building is the correct choice." Given the importance of the campus character to alumni and to the citizens of Philadelphia, it seems unjustifiable to demolish Smith Hall and the surrounding setting because it is the most convenient site. Smith Hall is the oldest remaining building in the precinct and the symbolic anchor of the Walk and entire precinct. As the oldest, original science building, namesake of the Walk, and integral part of the landscape, its ranking as "contextual" by the University consultant is inexplicable. The classification of Music and Morgan as "distinguished" in comparison makes sense only as a justification for the University's intention to demolish Smith Hall. Further, these buildings form an ensemble, an historic landscape; ranking the buildings individually is a ludicrous enterprise. This site, perhaps unlike any other on campus, links us with many past generations of Penn alumni. Finally, Mr. Blatteau addressed the issue of expansion. In 1985, the Chemistry Department expressed an interest in 70,000NSF for wet-laboratory expansion. The present plan, together with the dry-lab facility, calls for 100,000NSF. Ten years from now, when the Institute becomes successful, where will it expand? With Smith Hall already gone, Music, Morgan and the other buildings of the precinct seem like the most likely targets for demolition. By proceeding with the proposed plan, the University places considerable pressure on future generations to continue the demolition of this historic landscape. As an alternative, Mr. Blatteau suggested construction on the Lott Tennis Courts. Although this would decrease existing recreational land, this resource seems more easily replaced than the loss caused by the razing of Smith Hall. Similarly, construction on the site adjacent to the LRSM would offer the architects the opportunity to design a visual gateway to the University. The development of the Institute enables the University to demonstrate that meaningful change is not only inevitable, but that it can be a positive act which does not require the destruction of historic resources. In conclusion, he requested that the Committee deny the University's request.

Charles Rosenberg, professor of the History and Sociology of Science, emphasized the significance of the building to public service as the Laboratory of Hygiene. Billings left Johns Hopkins University because they would not provide him with adequate facilities. Although the City of Providence had an earlier bacteriology laboratory, it differed significantly from Smith Hall. Smith was a collaborative experimental station more than a college laboratory.

Dr. Michael Lewis, professor of architectural history at Bryn Mawr College, explained that Smith Hall is a fine example of German inspired architecture and a fine example of the work of its architects, Collins and Autenrieth. He suggested that the previous assessment, measuring it against the yardstick of Victorian English or Gothic architecture, was misguided. Rather

than dismissing the building as a Victorian pastiche, he suggested measuring its value by the German meter stick. Throughout the nineteenth century, German architects dismissed literal adaptations of historical styles. Instead, they used a synthesis of architectural elements from different styles. Smith Hall employs this modern style. Collins entered Philadelphia as the only university trained architect in the City, a man quite attuned to the forefront of German architectural theory and practice. Smith Hall displays several features popular to contemporary German architecture: its low, shallow pediment, the repetition of mass produced terra cotta panels which form the frieze, and the abstracted lines of a Greek portico. In conclusion, Dr. Lewis suggested that this building has not been understood and found wanting, but rather understanding this building has been found hard and not tried. Mr. Levy expressed appreciation for a fine presentation.

Julie Johnson, PhD. candidate in the History and Sociology of Science and an alumna, stressed that she supported the development of the Institute and wanted it to have adequate room for future growth. That is the reason that those persons opposing demolition urge the exploration of other sites. Unlike the University consultants, the students and faculty opposing demolition appeared without fee, on the principle that Smith Hall, a building on the Philadelphia Register, warranted preservation. This choice is not between the preservation of life and the preservation of a pile of bricks and mortar. Both interests can be accommodated. Ms. Johnson indicated that she had collected over one thousand signatures of persons opposed to demolition. [Note: As of 2 January 1991, these signatures have not been presented to the Commission. Perhaps this refers to the petition favoring designation in 1989.] The graduate and undergraduate student assemblies have passed resolutions urging alternatives to demolition. Ms. Johnson suggested that the University also hopes to obtain approval from the City in order to evade a strict Section 106 review by the Bureau for Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. She concluded that too many questions remained unanswered and too many alternatives insufficiently explored to sacrifice Smith Hall. Ms. Petrillo injected that ensuring a full and fair debate is essential to these proceedings, but requested that any further testimony contain solely new information.

Joseph Nasr, PhD. candidate in Regional and Urban Planning, suggested that the University further explore several remote sites. He disseminated site plans of eight different locations which offered alternatives to the proposed plan. Finally, he noted that the internal debate suggested by Dr. Breslow of Columbia University had not occurred and that was the reason that this debate had occurred in a public arena. Mr. Levy suggested that many of these alternatives had been presented previously; accordingly, he requested that if there was no further new

information, that he would like to conclude the presentations. Mark Thompson, architect, rose to announce that he would waive his right to be cut off.

Barry Cooperman suggested that the Committee distill the debate to two fundamental legitimate points. First, the Institute is essential for Penn to remain a research university of the first rank. Second, Smith Hall possesses some value as an historic resource. He asked the Committee to balance the two factors and determine which was more important. He suggested that some of the opposing testimony failed to acknowledge points clearly made by the University. He does not contest the testimony of Professor Kohler. However, he asked if the building possessed sufficient value to prevent the University from proceeding with the development of the Institute. Dr. Cooperman acknowledged the difficulty of deciding between the nineteenth century landscape heralded by Mr. Blatteau and the vital contrasts offered by a landscape filled with different architectural styles of different periods suggested by Mr. Venturi. Dr. Cooperman objected to Mr. Blatteau's conclusion that the current plan, a reasonable compromise, compromised the program itself. Second, he emphasized that the addition to the Music and Morgan Buildings ensured their preservation, rather than their demolition. Third, he explained that if the Institute were so successful that it required more space, that some of the more autonomous programs may leave the precinct.

Brenda Barrett, Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation (BHP), indicated that the BHP will review this project if the University receives funds from either or both the Commonwealth and federal government. The BHP reviewed the nomination for the National Register district and the feasibility study. She noted that the BHP preliminarily accepted the proposal by the University. The criteria used for site selection were reasonable, as were the reasons given for dismissing the remote sites. She specifically addressed scheme 3a, referring to it as not necessarily good preservation. Both it or scheme 7 would constitute an "adverse effect" on Smith Hall, a contributing building in a National Register district. Having made that determination, the BHP will inquire if there is a "feasible and prudent" alternative. Ms. Barrett concluded that schemes 6 & 7, though constituting adverse effects, are supported by considerable legitimate concerns.

The Committee deliberated on the proposal. Mr. Stevenson inquired if the Advisory Report had been based primarily on architectural criteria. Mr. Thomas replied affirmatively. Mr. Stevenson repeated his objection to this survey dooming buildings in its lowest classification. Given the eloquent and compelling testimony by Dr. Kohler, this assessment of the historical significance underestimated the value of Smith Hall. Mr. Tyler observed that the historical significance of this building had

been acknowledged during the designation hearing at which the Commission evaluated these arguments and voted to designate the building.

Mrs. Batcheler stressed that the experience of Smith Walk offered a special aesthetic to which Smith Hall contributes significantly. She then expressed her fascination with the testimony by Dr. Kohler. Given the historical significance of this building, Mrs. Batcheler disagreed that design scheme 3a did not preserve the building in a meaningful way. To the contrary, given the historical significance and functional asymmetry of Smith Hall, further emphasized by the Duhring wing, this scheme seems to preserve Smith Hall in a meaningful way, perhaps further expressing its functional asymmetry. Mrs. Batcheler discouraged demolition and encouraged further exploration of Scheme 3a.

Mr. Hollenberg asked Ms. Wittington to clarify one point regarding the funding and phasing of the project. He raised this point solely because it seemed counterfactual to a previous statement that the University could construct the wet laboratory facility solely with private funds. Dr. Cooperman reasserted that the University could proceed with the construction of Phase I without public grants. Mr. Tyler further assuaged the concern of the Committee by noting that, if it were inclined, it could recommend approval contingent upon new construction.

Mr. Cornell acknowledged that both sides presented compelling testimony and that he felt torn throughout the proceedings. His only questions regarded the construction costs which seemed low. Mr. Collins assured him, based on his experience in developing laboratories across the country, that they represented his best estimates within five percent.

Mr. Tyler spoke to the issue before the Committee. Noting that the practice of historic preservation is largely a planning process, he stressed that the University made a strong case that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the proposed site and design. He suggested that the Committee consider the whole campus a large house with many rooms with a need to change one room. Although the preferred scheme entails the demolition of Smith Hall, it also commits the University to the preservation of the Music and Morgan Buildings as well as Hayden Hall. Further, Penn has invested considerably in preserving the rest of its "house." Mr. Tyler also noted that Scheme 3a undermines an opportunity to add to this district a distinguished building by a renowned architect of the late twentieth century. In conclusion, Mr. Tyler urged a favorable recommendation.

Ms. Petrillo asked if the Committee was prepared to vote. Mr. Levy indicated that he wished to examine several issues and to allow time for the Committee members to deliberate, without further presentations, at a third meeting. He stressed that if

the significance of Smith Hall had been adequately evaluated at the beginning of the process, these proceedings would not have been likely to have extended so long.

Mr. Stevenson expressed reservations regarding the presence of the proposed building on the historic landscape of Smith Walk. Mr. Venturi stressed that the sketch of the proposed building was a massing study and not a final design. Mr. Stevenson noted this point. However, he indicated that the buildings of the walk, in effect, comprise it. Further, the massing study was the only perspective drawing offered for consideration in this decision. Mr. Tyler added that Commission jurisdiction is limited to Smith Hall, and does not include the walk. Ms. Petrillo disagreed with this representation and noted that the nomination for the building included its role in forming the surrounding landscape. She then asked if the Committee was prepared to call a vote. Mr. Levy polled the Committee, then reaffirmed that he wanted more time for deliberation.

Following considerable discussion, Mr. Tyler asked how the Committee proposed to resolve the issue, and if it intended to forward a recommendation to the Commission for its January meeting. Ms. Petrillo requested that the chairman call a vote if a majority of the Committee were prepared to forward a recommendation. Noting that the Committee served in an advisory role to the Commission, she expressed hope that the Committee would serve its function and allow the Commission the opportunity to review this application at its next meeting. Mr. Levy called a vote on the question of whether to recommend an approval of the demolition permit application for Smith Hall. Mrs. Batcheler and Mr. Stevenson opposed the request. Mr. Cornell voted to recommend approval. Ms. Petrillo announced that the Committee would forward a recommendation to the Commission, by a vote of two to one with Mr. Levy abstaining, to deny the demolition permit application. That meeting will occur on Wednesday 9 January 1991 at 10am in the City Council Caucus Chamber, Room 401 City Hall. Mr. Tyler requested that the record reflect that the Historic Preservation Officer took exception to the recommendation.

Cheers arose from a section of the audience. Yet Mr. Levy, acknowledging that there would be no further meeting on this application, voted to forward a favorable recommendation. Mr. Tyler announced that the final vote was two to two and that the Committee will forward a divided recommendation to the Commission. Several people objected that a different vote already had been announced and that a considerable portion of the audience had departed. The Architectural Committee adjourned at approximately 1:30pm.

Minutes Approved: 9 January 1991
Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary