

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

**Robert Thomas, Chair
Commission Offices, One Parkway, 18th Floor, 1515 Arch Street
26 September 2000**

Present

Robert Thomas, Chair
Tony Atkin
Rudolph D'Alessandro
Daniel McCoubrey

Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Julianne Brennan, Preservation Planner
Diane M. Hughes, Executive Secretary
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Also

Lenore Millhollen, Center City Resident's Association
Samuel Silver
Janet Potter, The Foundation for Architecture
Gersil M. Kay, Building Conservation International
Judith Eden, Center City Resident's Association
Alison McDowell, 852 North 24th Street
Zilian Munas, 221 Fitzwater Street
Ian Cope, Cope, Linder Associates
Gerald Cope, Cope, Linder Associates
Ellen Levin, Cope, Linder Associates
Janet Mason, 118 South 21st Street
Robert Powers, Powers and Company
Deena Parham, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Glen Abrams, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
James O'Brien, Rittenhouse Town Watch and Police Partnership
Danielle Kane, 2101 Chestnut Street
Mike Gianmarino, 132 South 18th Street (Lombardi's)
Felisa Gianmarino, 132 South 18th Street (Lombardi's)
Gerald Cope, Cope, Linder Associates
Jack Weiner, Askot and Weiner LLP
Bennur Kokuz, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Moos One, 130 South 18th Street
Linda Harris, The Philadelphia Inquirer
Martin Fricko, 250 South 18th Street
Mark Rogers, 250 South 18th Street
Wayne Plaff, 250 South 18th Street
Lanny Liebowitz, 2036 Rittenhouse Street
David S. Traub, AIA, 1704 Walnut Street
Cynthia Tedeschi, 1216 Arch Street
David Halpern, 2036 Rittenhouse Street

Elliot Rothchild, Cassway Albert Architect
Winfred F. Keough, 617 South Sumneytown Pike
Douglas W Randall, 1610 North Street
Chris Thomas, Nextel
Matt Hollowell
Sally Jane Elk, Eastern State Penitentiary
Stephen Allen, Teknika Design
Cynthia Philo, Old City District

Robert Thomas, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

221 Fitzwater Street

Zilian Munas, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1830-1899

PROPOSAL: Remove wood siding and stucco rear addition

The proposal involves removing the shingles and the original beaded board wood siding from the visible rear ell of the house and applying stucco. The staff recommended denial per Standard 6. The addition should be reclad in beaded wood siding.

Ms. Munas the applicant presented drawings of the addition with the wood siding and also with the stucco finish. She asked the Committee to consider the cost factor of the restoration in the wood siding. However; the Committee stated that if the cost is the issue, the applicant should make application to the Financial Hardship Committee.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of the submission as proposed but approval of the alternative option with the restoration in wood siding to match the existing.

1801-1813 Walnut Street and 126-132 South 18th Street

Rittenhouse Club Development, L.P., Owner

Jack Weiner, Esq., Applicant

DATE: 1801-03 Walnut Street, 1896-1898

1805-09 Walnut Street, c. 1923

1811-13 Walnut Street, c. 1845; combined and refacaded 1901

126-32 South 18th Street, c. 1845; 126 and 132 altered 1920s

PROPOSAL: Conceptual review for substantial demolition of five buildings and two-phase development of commercial and residential tower

This application in concept calls for a two-phase development project involving seven properties that wrap around the Fell-Van Rensselaer mansion at the northwest corner of 18th and Walnut Streets.

Phase one involves demolishing all but the front facade of the Rittenhouse Club at 1811-13 Walnut Street and of 132 South 18th Street, and front and side façades of 126 South 18th Street. The applicant proposes the complete demolition of the buildings at 128 and 130 South 18th Street and the construction of a building entrance. An “L” shaped eight story commercial building will sit back about five feet from the facades of the two remaining 18th Street facades. The dormers which define the 19th century architecture of the buildings as well as the roofline and structure of the buildings will be demolished. The new construction will rise up in stages beginning with a

single story 16 feet behind the Rittenhouse Club façade and a second rise of two more stories approximately 32 feet behind the façade.

In the second phase the applicant proposes to build a 33-story residential tower atop the eight story commercial construction. Drawings show the cutting of a porte-cochere into the 18th Street and Sansom facades. The Sansom Street façade which the Committee spent a great deal of time reviewing in 1996 for a previous proposal to create a pedestrian friendly façade will now feature two large ground floor loading docks in both phases.

The staff recommended denial of the proposal as drawn per Standards 9 and 10. The applicant has provided no hardship argument to support the demolition of the currently occupied 18th Street properties or the substantial demolition of the Rittenhouse Club. The public good as a basis for demolition should be used for projects of major public benefit such as a convention center or symphony hall, not private development. Historic preservation should be the predominant public interest. The 18th Street properties consist of mid-19th century houses converted to commercial use that contribute to the character and history of the district.

The new construction, sitting approximately 16 feet behind the front façade of the Rittenhouse Club, will create the appearance that the façade attaches like a postage stamp onto the new building rather than remaining as a separate building. The staff thought the new construction should sit behind the existing 18th Street buildings and the entire new construction at the Rittenhouse Club should sit behind the main block of the building. The staff also held that the applicant could remove the rear ells of the Club for new construction but only if Sansom Street gets a new pedestrian-oriented façade.

Robert Powers, Jack Weiner, Gerald Cope, Ian Cope, and Ellen Levin attended the meeting to give a presentation and answer questions concerning the proposed conceptual project. Mr. Cope explained the project. He stated that the Rittenhouse Club has been unoccupied for more than ten years and is in a state of disrepair. Recently they have removed architectural artifacts of significance from this building. The façade of the Rittenhouse Club will remain as well as the retention of the Fell-Van Rensselaer mansion and Allison building. And to further insure this, a façade easement is proposed. The courtyard of the Fell-Van Rensselaer mansion will also remain. The architect has said the new building would capture the rhythm, scale, materials and the details of the streetscape. It will set back from the facades and have three levels of retail. The tower will sit to the northern end of the site and will not cast shadows on the square. He said the porte-cochere entrance would provide the interest of a mews on the street.

The proposed demolition of the Eighteenth Street properties generated great opposition from the community. Many area residents expressed their opposition to the demolition owing to the uniqueness and the liveliness of the existing buildings Eighteenth Street.

Gersil Kay, Building Conservation International, stated her opposition to the demolition. She asked if the applicant had considered using tax credits to restore the buildings rather than demolish them. They responded, they had not. She further stated that this proposal would create more traffic and architecturally the proposal does not relate to the character of the existing buildings on Rittenhouse Square. The poor condition of the Rittenhouse Club may partially reflect the years the developer has owned the property.

Patricia Wilson Aden spoke on behalf of the Preservation Alliance and expressed its support of the project, owing to its belief that it will add vitality to the District. They are very pleased that the developer has offered to donate easements to her organization on several of the properties.

She further stated that there is a verbal commitment that no buildings will be demolished until all permits and variances are approved and in hand. They further believed that the developer will work together with the Alliance and community for input into the project. She said that the 18th Street buildings should not be mere “table legs” for the tower.

The owner of Lombardi’s on South Eighteenth Street expressed dismay about the issue of the demolition sign posting because of the absence of the address, date of the meeting and its lack of adhesiveness to the building.

Many residents of the area spoke out against the curb cuts and vehicle entrance on 18th Street, including Lenore Millhollen of the Center Residents Association. She also questioned the amount of set back for the floors built above the Rittenhouse Club. She noted that since the applicant does not own the Fell-Van Rensselaer mansion, they should not hold out the easement on those facades or the saving of that courtyard as a benefit of this project.

Allison McDowell said that 18th Street is one of the most active, interesting blocks of the Rittenhouse Square area and that it damages the district to have the pedestrian friendly streetscape turned into vehicle space. Other residents expressed the opinion that the existing block provides services useful to the neighborhood such as a bakery and drygoods store. Another mall accessed up an escalator would ruin the neighborhood pedestrian streetscape and fail to meet the needs of residents.

The Committee members thought the amount of demolition unacceptable. They said that the Commission’s function is to preserve buildings not facades. They thought that the rear ells of the buildings might be removed to attach to the new building but that the majority of the structure of each of the buildings must be preserved. Regarding the curb cuts and creation of a vehicle entrance on Eighteenth Street, they noted that this has been rejected by the Commission in the past and does not meet the Standards. They thought the demolition and curb cuts for car access will damage the streetscape, clog the traffic pattern of Rittenhouse Square and more importantly disrupt the pedestrian flow. They also believed that other options for the proposed project should be explored. A tower with substantial setbacks that preserves the significant mass of each of the buildings and provides off site parking should be explored.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of the conceptual proposal for demolition and new construction as submitted.

1528 Waverly Street, SE corner of Mole Street

Ursula Hobson, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1910

PROPOSAL: Install garage doors

This proposal involves alterations to a carriage building. The applicant seeks to remove modern brickwork and install garage doors in the former garage opening. The staff recommended approval.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with staff to review details.

400 South 22nd Street

James Kheeler, Owner

Troy Groth, Applicant

DATE: c. 1860

PROPOSAL: Replace and enlarge roof decks

The proposal involves rebuilding and expanding decks which a former owner built apparently without building or zoning permits. The decks have visibility from 22nd Street and from Croskey Street. The staff recommended approval if pulled back further from the sides of the building to reduce visibility.

Although removal of the existing decks is necessary for the roof repair however; the applicant would like to rebuild the decks.

The Committee recommended that the decks be reduced in size and pulled back.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of the proposal as submitted but approval of the front deck reduced to 12 feet in width and the rear deck reduced to 10 feet.

2036 Rittenhouse Square Street

D. Halpern, Owner

Lanny Liebowitz, Architect

DATE: c. 1880

PROPOSAL: Alter façade, convert shopfront to garage opening

The proposal involves converting a storefront into a garage. The building once served as a carriage house. The louvered design of the garage doors derives from a modern treatment on another carriage house nearby. The applicant wishes to also use the louvered design on the second floor as well.

The staff recommended approval, although the applicant should better research the historic design of the building.

The Committee recommended that the applicant ask the former owner, Henry J. Magaziner about the previous design.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with the staff to review details.

250 South 18th Street, SW corner of Rittenhouse Square Street

Condominium Association, Owner, Mark Rogers, Manager

Martin Fricko, Applicant

DATE: 1923

PROPOSAL: Coat terra cotta with Thoro-coat

The applicant seeks to coat the terra cotta belt courses and decorative arches above the windows with Thoro-Coat to address some spalling of the masonry. The staff recommended approval, although having concerns about the vapor permeability and appearance of the coating.

The Committee expressed concerns about problems with water vapor transmission causing increased spalling, and questioned the type of cleaning proposed for the masonry. They also asked whether patching will be done. They cited another building where this process was done and this led them to question the texture to be attained

Mark Rogers, the building's manager, Martin Fricko, and Wayne Plaff, the Thoro-Coat representative attended the meeting to answer questions and explain the proposal. The Thoro-Coat representative stated that for this building a smooth texture will be used. The applicant stated that he will patch where necessary and re-point around the windows only. He also said that pressure cleaning would be used.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with samples and color to be reviewed by the staff.

1216-1220 Arch Street

Symth Condominium Association, Owner

Marie Weber, Applicant

DATE: 1902

PROPOSAL: Rooftop antennas

The applicant received a permit for the temporary installation of antennas for the Republican Convention, subject to applying for a new permit for the Commission to consider a permanent installation. The antennas are highly visible.

The staff recommended denial because of their visibility, and proposed referral to the Committee on Telecommunications.

Cynthia Tedeschi, Matt Hollway and Chris Thomas attended the meeting for the applicant. Ms. Tedeschi expressed the need for the antennas and asked to keep the side and rear in the same location, with the ideal minimum height above the top of wall. She said they would be willing to paint them. The applicant showed photographs of the existing antennas and the previous ones, which indicated reduced visibility from the perspective of close proximity to the building.

The Committee said that the antennas on the Arch Street side are invasive and would consider approving the rear if re-installed consistent with the submitted drawings. The Committee also stated that they have limited expertise in this matter, and suggested referral to the Telecommunications Committee. They also believed that the Telecommunications Committee could better evaluate technical requirements and make a recommendation to the Commission.

Mr. Tyler expressed his opposition to the Arch Street antennas and stated that the approval of the installation was made with the proviso that Nextel apply for permanent installation within ninety days of the issuance of the permit for the temporary installation.

The Committee recommended that the owner attend the Telecommunications Committee meeting and prepare a master plan for any future installations. The Committee further recommended that no further installation be approved until the receipt and adoption of a master plan.

The Architectural Committee recommended that the proposal be referred to the Telecommunication's Committee.

250 South 17th Street

Rittenhouse Management, Wayne Spilove, Owner

Terry Grayboyes, Applicant

DATE: 1920

PROPOSAL: Replacement windows

At start of this property's proposal Judith Eden and Lenore Millhollen, Center City Resident's Association, stated that they vehemently oppose the addition of this or any other proposal to the agenda less than twenty-four hours in advance. Ms. Eden then cited this the Rules and Regulations Sections 6.2 and 6.3.d.2 which also stipulate that a proposal must be received nine days before the Committee meeting to allow the public to view the plans and comment on the proposal.

In response to a question from Mr. Thomas, the applicant stated that no emergency existed and that she could return at the next month's Committee meeting.

The Architectural Committee recommended that this proposal be added to next month's Architectural Committee's agenda.

7402-04 Germantown Avenue, NW corner of Gowen Avenue

Ken Weinstein, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1770

PROPOSAL: Rear addition

The proposal involves two additions at the rear of the property, one for more dining space and a second for a walk-in refrigerator. The staff recommended approval per Standard 9 and 10.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

1703 Jefferson Street, NE corner of Bouvier Street

Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, Owner

Brenden McHugh, Architect

DATE: 1886

PROPOSAL: Demolish rear, restore front

The proposal calls for removing the partially visible rear ell and restoring the front façade. Although the rear ell has significance, The Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation finds the whole house too large to renovate and sell as affordable housing. The house stands vacant and the City might demolish the shell as they have the neighboring historic house. The staff recommended approval.

For an affordable single family dwelling the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation believes the house needs to be smaller.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval based on the limited visibility of the rear ell and its present condition..

1708 Jefferson Street, SE corner of Bouvier Street

Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, Owner

Brenden McHugh, Architect

DATE: c. 1885

PROPOSAL: Demolish and rebuild side wall into a modern design, restore front façade

The proposal calls for rehabilitating the surviving portion of Cecil B. Moore's house into a private house. The plan calls for removing about ten feet of the surviving brick side wall and adding a new stuccoed side wall containing a memorial mural to Cecil B. Moore. A giant arch creates a frame for the mural.

The staff recommendation: Richard Tyler found the design appropriate including the arch detail which he said evokes the door heads of Italianate houses in the neighborhood. The other six staff members recommend denial based on Standards 9 and 10 and found the design out of scale and inappropriate to the building. Staff thought the design should preserve the remaining historic fabric, and the memorial should include Raymond Pace Alexander who also once lived here. The architects should modify the design, removing the round and keystone shape window openings as well as the over-scale arch.

This project, owing to the deterioration of the building's structure, needs to move forward as quickly as possible.

Elliott Rothchild, Don Garber, and Cavin Jones, the mural's artist, attended the meeting to explain the proposal and answer questions.

Some Committee members thought the corner return should extend to the parapet wall level of the side elevation. They also believed that a cleanly defined edge holds up longer than a stepped wall. The Committee's overall view is that the arch and windows should be symmetrical and the arch constructed of a durable material not styrofoam as proposed.

Mr. Tyler said that the Committee should not comment on the mural's content, and that, like Cecil B. Moore, the treatment was larger than life.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of a design modified with greater retention of the existing brick wall cut on a straight line with the arch to be constructed in a more durable material with the staff to review details.

2319 Green Street, NE corner of 24th Street, St Francis Xavier Church

Philadelphia Archdiocese, Owner

Audrey Jamison, Applicant

DATE: c. 1859

PROPOSAL: Ramp

The application calls for the installation of a handicap accessible ramp on the 24th Street side of St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church, a Romanesque Revival church built in 1894. The plans show the infill of existing basement windows, and the removal of granite treads and an existing door and transom to accommodate the ramp. The applicant proposes to infill the basement windows with concrete masonry units, and relocate the existing granite treads at the base of the ramp. The plans show a ramp of concrete faced with split face grey concrete masonry

units with a black horizontal railing system. The staff recommended approval of the ramp per Standards 9 and 10.

One Committee member raised the question of the type of material being used for the ramp and recommended the use of concrete.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval. Three Committee members favored the grey split-face block units and one member favored concrete.

1610 North Street

Douglas Randall, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1886

PROPOSAL: Full third floor roof addition, cornice replacement

The application calls for the addition of a third floor to an existing circa 1900 two-story carriage house. The applicant proposes to clad the addition with vertical aluminum panel siding and three large glass and aluminum windows. The application also includes plans for a new wood deck off the rear of the third story and an extension of an exterior staircase clad with new aluminum siding on the side and rear elevations. He proposes to replace the metal cornice on the primary façade with either a fiberglass or wood cornice to match the original design. The rear of the carriage house has visibility from 16th Street.

The staff recommended denial of the rooftop addition according to Standard 9. Approval of the replacement of the cornice per Standard 6.

Douglas Randall and Tom Schweiker, the architect, attended the meeting to answer questions and explain the proposal. The applicant expressed his need for additional space. Visibility is the issue and the Committee recommended that the addition be set back on the roof with a sight-line study to determine placement to avoid visibility from directly in front of the building.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial as submitted but approval of an addition with a setback with staff to review details.

1612 North Street

Spring Garden Community Development Corporation, Owner

Stephan White, Architect

DATE: c. 1850

PROPOSAL: Façade restoration, new garage gate

The application calls for renovation of a three-story row house built circa 1850. The plans show new 2/2, true divided light, double hung windows on the second and third floors and new crossbuck garage doors fitted into the existing ground floor opening. In addition, the applicant plans to restore the original stone stoop and steps while installing a new door, a frame and transom to match the existing original at 1614 North Street. The applicant will also scrape and repaint the existing cornice. The staff recommended approval of the façade renovation.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with the staff to review details.

1614 North Street

Spring Garden Community Development Corporation, Owner

Stephan White, Architect

DATE: c. 1850

PROPOSAL: Façade rehabilitation

The application calls for façade renovation to a three-story circa 1850 row house. The applicant proposes to install 2/2, true divided light, double hung windows on the second and third stories, closing a later window opening, a new door frame and transom to match the existing original, and a new four panel door. Plans show four new bi-fold eight light and two-panel garage doors that match the existing. The application also shows the restoration of the existing cornice and chimney. The staff recommended approval per Standard 6.

Manuel Delgada and Stephan White attended the meeting to present the proposal and answer questions.

Mr. D'Alessandro questioned the removal of the existing door. The restoration would reestablish the earlier look of the building.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with the staff to review details.

1616 North Street

Spring Garden Community Development Corporation, Owner

Stephan White, Architect

DATE: c. 1886

PROPOSAL: Façade rehabilitation, enlarge masonry garage opening

The application calls for the renovation of a three-story carriage house built circa 1886. The proposal calls for the enlargement of an existing garage opening and the fitting of new crossbuck garage doors with hinges to match original hinges on second and third floor doors. The enlargement of the garage would result in the removal of 18 inches of original brick as well as require a new lintel and cornice. The installation of a new crossbuck loft doors on the second and third floor will reuse existing hinges, and the owner will install new 2/2, true divided light, double hung windows on the first through third floors. The applicant also proposes to add a new door and a stone stoop. The applicant plans to scrape and repaint the existing cornice.

The staff recommended denial of the expansion of the existing garage opening per Standards 9 and 10. Approval of the façade restoration, not including the expansion of the garage opening, per Standard 6.

The Committee believed the expansion would allow reuse of the building that historically housed vehicles.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval with staff to review details.

12 North 3rd Street

Stephen Allen, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1860

PROPOSAL: Awning

The application calls for the installation of a cloth awning over the first floor storefront on this five-story brick building. The proposal shows the awning attached to the flat section of the cornice and a one-foot high lip. The awning would project thirty inches from the face of the building. The black awning will have lettering on the lip. The staff recommended denial per Standard 9.

Stephen Allen, the owner, and Cynthia Philo, Old City District, attended the meeting to answer questions and support the proposal.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

609 North 17th Street

Andrew Tull, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1859

PROPOSAL: Legalize rear addition

This application calls for legalization of a cinderblock and stucco rear addition placed on the building by a former owner before the consideration of the Spring Garden District. The addition has little public visibility. The staff recommended approval per Standard 9 and 10.

The Committee recommended legalization that owing to its having been done by a previous owner and its having very little visibility.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

2107 Fairmount Avenue, Eastern State Penitentiary

City of Philadelphia, Owner

Sally Jane Elk, Applicant

DATE: 1825; altered 1889

PROPOSAL: Electrical transformer

At a previous Committee and Commission meeting exterior lighting was approved. However at that time the placement of an electrical transformer did not appear in the permit application.

This proposal involves the placement of an exterior electrical transformer at the corner of Brown and Corinthian Streets and is highly visible. The equipment is five feet high and sits on a concrete raised pad. It will be surrounded by a chain link fence and shrubbery.

The Architectural Committee recommended approval.

Mr. Baron consulted with the Committee for staff review guidance on rooftop air conditioning units at 1610 Chestnut Street and 401 North Broad Street.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Diane M. Hughes