

THE MINUTES OF THE 334TH STATED MEETING

OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

13 September 1989

Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman

Present:

Christine Washington, Vice Chairman
David Brownlee
Caroline Golab
David Hollenberg
Jason Nathan
John Street, Esq., Philadelphia City Council
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning
Commission
Don Kligerman, Commissioner,
Department of Licenses and Inspections
Benjamin F. Ellis, Jr. Commissioner,
Department of Public Property
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing and Community Development

Sandra Tatman, Member of the Historical Commission's
Committee on Historic Designation
Maria Petrillo, Esq., Chief Assistant City Solicitor
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation
Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner

Also:

George B. Thomas, CLIO Group, Inc.
Art Gravina, University of Pennsylvania
Titus Hewryk, University of Pennsylvania
Steven Poshanger, University of Pennsylvania
Jerald Goodman of Schneider, Harrison, Segal and Lewis,
for the University of Pennsylvania
Judith McGaw, University of Pennsylvania
Peter Spiegel, Daily Pennsylvanian
Angela Charamella, Temple University
Robin Rothstein, Daily Pennsylvanian
Elizabeth Hunt, University of Pennsylvania
Amy Slaton, University of Pennsylvania
Julie Johnson, University of Pennsylvania
Michael Stack, Attorney for Bookbinder's Restaurant
Jack Elfman, Delran Builders Company, Inc.

Caroline C. Hamlet, 1422 S. 13th St.,
advocate for Hall-Wiley House
Jeff Rockwell, 341 S. Camac Street
Howard Kittell, Preservation Coalition of
Greater Philadelphia
Robert Kohler, Jr., 215 S. 34th St.
University of Pennsylvania
Sarah Tracy 215 S. 34th St.,
University of Pennsylvania
Mark B. Thompson, 502 S. 24th St.
Julie Denenberg, 4838 Osage Ave.
James Cassidy, 3909 Chestnut St.
Randy Henkels, 502 S. 24th St.
Sabrina Soong, Architect, regarding 248 Market St.
Ronald Rodewall, Camac St.
Michael Richard, Camac St.
Dale Truscott, 8 Blackwell Place
Lee Truscott, 8 Blackwell Place
Lauren Truscott, 8 Blackwell Place

THE MINUTES of the 333rd Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 9 August 1989, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman were reviewed and approved.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 31 August 1989, David Hollenberg, Chairman.

Mr. Hollenberg reported to the Commission that his Committee met on 31 August 1989 and voted to recommend a final approval on ten projects with some of the approvals subject to certain conditions. The ten projects are as follows:

2045 Rittenhouse Street
301 South 21st Street
248 Market Street
1907 Sansom Street
723 Rodman Street
1225-33 Locust Street
5335-37 Germantown Avenue
Corn Exchange Building, 2nd and Chestnut Streets
521 South Leithgow Street
111-13 North 3rd Street

The Committee agreed that the revisions requested by the Committee in each case could be reviewed at staff level and would not necessitate an additional presentation to the Committee.

Mr. Hollenberg's motion for a final approval of these ten projects was seconded and carried.

Mr. Hollenberg next presented to the Commission his Committee's recommendation that the current placement of the PECO transformer in the garden of Emanuel Court at 22nd and Chestnut Streets be denied.

At its meeting of 30 March 1989, the Architectural Committee expressed its on-going concern for the placement of a large PECO transformer in the garden of Emanuel Court near the 22nd Street entrance. The plans, as originally approved by the Historical Commission, indicated placement of the transformer within a pit. However, when PECO refused to allow the unit to be buried, the architect had it placed on a pad approximately six feet above grade near the 22nd Street entrance to the property. This action was taken without first obtaining the review and approval of the Historical Commission. As such, placement of the unit above ground constitutes a violation of the building permit.

Over the past several months, the architect and owner have attempted to mitigate the impact of the transformer upon the property by erecting a stone curtain around the unit and surrounding it with shrubs. At its 31 August meeting, the Committee discussed with the architect, Mr. Thompson, the final architectural treatment of the unit and the landscaping scheme. Following considerable discussion, the Committee members determined that the placement of the transformer above ground and near the 22nd Street entrance was totally unacceptable and that the attempts to mitigate the impact with a masonry enclosure and landscaping were unsuccessful. In view of this determination, the Committee voted to recommend that the transformer be removed from its current site and located elsewhere.

Mark Thompson, architect for this project, addressed the Commission and asked for an opportunity to present other solutions to this problem that might further mitigate the impact of the transformer upon the property. For example, Mr. Thompson suggested that it may be possible to change the grade level in the area of the transformer and to replant with larger shrubs to hide more successfully the presence of the PECO unit.

Mr. Nathan questioned the wisdom of undertaking yet another landscaping plan and suggested that the architect might consider relocation instead. Mr. Thompson explained that relocation would be extremely problematic and expensive and that his client would prefer finding a solution to the problem that will not require relocation if, indeed, one exists.

Mr. Brownlee suggested that the architect submit his landscaping plan to the Architectural Committee for its review prior to proceeding with its implementation.

When questioned about placement of the transformer(s) inside the building, Mr. Thompson responded that such an undertaking would be extremely problematic and that it would require extensive alteration to the building itself. Moreover, the client is already suffering from a shortage of square footage and cannot afford to lose more space. Mr. Hollenberg reported to the Commission his Committee's belief that another site (outdoor) solution to this problem may exist, although the members' preference would be to place the unit(s) indoors.

Mr. Hollenberg's motion to deny an approval of the PECO transformer with its current mitigation plan was seconded and carried. The Committee's recommendation for a denial was upheld, however, with the understanding that the architect will return to the Committee and the Commission with alternative solutions to the problem.

Next, Mr. Hollenberg presented to the Commission his Committee's recommendation that the report prepared by the applicant for the property at 136 South Front Street be submitted to an independent consultant for evaluation. This report was prepared and presented to the Historical Commission as part of a demolition permit application for 136 South Front Street and in compliance with Section (7)(f) of the preservation ordinance.

Mr. Tyler noted that revisions to the original report were received recently and that these revisions along with staff and Committee comments as well as third party comments should all be submitted to the independent consultant for analysis.

The Commission voted to impose its statutory delay, not to exceed six months, on this application and directed the staff to submit all the requisite documentation to an independent consultant for evaluation.

Mr. Nathan questioned the staff concerning the Parking Authority's cooperation in providing Mr. Taxin with parking spaces. Mr. Tyler reported that the Parking Authority in August entered into an agreement with Mr. Taxin to provide up to 40 parking spaces on an as needed basis at \$3.00 a slot. Bookbinder's Restaurant has taken advantage of this agreement only twice since entering into it. Mr. Stack, attorney for Bookbinder's, stated that he was unaware of Bookbinder's utilization or non-utilization of the Parking Authority garage.

Mr. Nathan questioned Mr. Stack concerning Bookbinder's sale of development rights on its parking lot to the north of 136 South Front Street and the scope of the agreement entered into with that developer to provide Bookbinder's with underground parking. Mr. Stack agreed to obtain the specific information requested by Mr. Nathan and to submit it to the Historical Commission staff. Mr. Nathan expressed concern that Mr. Taxin will again have insufficient parking if only one underground level is provided by the developer.

Finally, the Commission asked the staff to expedite this matter so as not to cause the applicant any undue delay.

Mr. Hollenberg next reported on two projects which required either no action or a deferral of action.

No action is required by the Commission regarding 230 Pine Street since the applicant's contractor was unavailable to answer questions and present drawings to the Architectural Committee at its meeting of the 31st.

Ms. Petrillo recognized the presence of several neighbors concerned with the expeditious resolution of the 230 Pine Street application. Since the applicant for this matter remains in violation, Ms. Petrillo asked and received from the Commission permission to contact the applicant's attorney and require the submission of all drawings and specifications within two weeks. If the materials are not received by that time, additional legal steps will be taken to assure compliance with the Licenses and Inspections Review Board's order.

The second application, for which the Committee has recommended deferral of action, involves the Fairmount Park Commission's request for permission to demolish the Hall-Wiley House at 900 Susquehanna Road, an eighteenth century stone house in Northeast Philadelphia.

The Hall-Wiley House possesses significance as a rare eighteenth century farmhouse in Northeast Philadelphia which has retained the integrity of its country setting in the middle of Pennypack Park. Representatives of the Fairmount Park Commission explained to the Committee that the Park Commission lacked resources to maintain the building and to make the repairs necessary to secure a tenant for the house.

The Committee recommended several courses of action to the Park Commission representatives including the possibility of selling or leasing the house while retaining title to the ground upon which it sits. It was the opinion of the Committee that the Commission should impose its six month statutory delay on the demolition of this house and during that period of time work with the Park Commission in an effort to find a way to preserve this important house.

Several members of the Commission expressed particular concern with regard to securing the house from the elements especially during the winter months. The staff agreed to notify the Park Commission of its concern and to ask that the building be secured from weather and vandals. In addition, the Commission asked that staff members of the Historical Commission, the Planning Commission and the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation (PHPC) meet with the Fairmount Park

Commission and other interested parties to discuss the possibility of preserving, in particular, this house and, in general, other important buildings owned by Fairmount Park.

Mr. Nathan suggested that PHPC be invited to make a presentation to the Historical Commission concerning its study of ten Fairmount Park houses and the various ways, explored by PHPC, in which these houses might be preserved.

Following some additional discussion, the Commission voted to impose its six month statutory delay on demolition of the Hall-Wiley house, to require that the building be protected during this period of time and to ask PHPC to make a presentation to the Commission at an upcoming meeting.

Councilman Street further reported to the Commission that approximately 50 to 100 million dollars will become available from the sale of various city-owned assets in Fiscal Year 1990. Approximately 12.5 million of the total will be used to augment the city's operating budget; the remainder will fund various city capital projects. Mr. Street suggested that the preservation of City owned historic buildings should be considered in the allocation of these funds. Mr. Tyler offered to meet with Councilman Street to discuss further the possibility of obtaining funds to be used toward the preservation and maintenance of these buildings.

The last project reviewed by the Committee concerned the building located at 341 S. Camac Street. The applicant, Mr. Rockwell, appeared before the Committee after having received a stop work order issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections for work undertaken without a permit. The applicant removed a brick chimney and replaced a sash window with glass block on the rear facade of the building facing Lantern Court. Mr. Rockwell also proposed to add a third floor rear addition and deck to the house, to enlarge several window openings, to install new windows with false muntins at the rear of the property and to add a simple iron railing at the front entrance.

Mr. Hollenberg reported his Committee's recommendation for approval of the addition, the deck, the rear window enlargement and the railing. The Committee also asked that Mr. Rockwell stucco only the third floor addition and that he remove the glass block and install single pane casement windows on the rear facade. The applicant agreed to comply with these conditions.

The Committee, however, was evenly divided on the issue of chimney reconstruction and, for this reason, no recommendation regarding this particular item is offered to the Commission.

Jeff Rockwell explained to the Commission that removal of the chimney allowed for additional floor area within a very small house. He further advised the Commission that the chimney which he removed was, in fact, a reconstruction and not the original nineteenth century chimney.

The Commission expressed its distress over the applicant's not having obtained the necessary permits and approvals in this instance. The Commission agreed to support the Committee in its recommendation regarding changes required to the building to bring it into compliance and further voted not to require reconstruction of the chimney in this case because of the small size of the building, the recent date of the chimney and the significant cost of reconstruction.

THE REPORT of the Philadelphia Historical Commission's Committee on Historic Designation, 10 November 1988, David Brownlee, Chairman. Dr. Brownlee presented to the Commission a report from the Commission's Historic Designation Committee for its meeting of 10 November 1988. Dr. Brownlee explained that the Commission's consideration of historic designation for three buildings owned by the University of Pennsylvania was continued over several months at the request of the University. He further explained that because of his position as a faculty member at the University, he absented himself from both the discussion and the vote on these buildings at the Committee meeting and would do so as well today. Caroline Golab who also is a University faculty member abstained from the discussion and vote as well.

Dr. Brownlee introduced Sandra Tatman, a member of the Designation Committee, who agreed to present the Committee's recommendation for these three buildings - the Music and Morgan Buildings at 201-205 South 34th Street and the Edgar Fahs Smith Hall at 215 South 34th Street.

Ms. Tatman provided the Commission members with an extensive history of the three buildings and presented slides of them. The buildings were once part of a group of science-oriented buildings on 34th Street at the University of Pennsylvania and extended around the corner onto Spruce Street. Smith Hall, formerly the Laboratory of Hygiene, was designed by the architectural firm of Collins and Autenrieth and erected between 1890 and 1892. In the late 1890s, an addition was made to the original building by Duhring, Okie and Ziegler. This building possesses architectural significance as an important example of the work of Collins and Autenrieth, a significant architectural firm in late nineteenth century Philadelphia, as well as historical significance as one of the primary seats of the study of Public Health in the United States.

The Music and Morgan Buildings, built 1890-1891, possess significance for their history as an orphanage and as the Physics laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania as well as for their architectural importance as fine examples of the work of architects Cope and Stewardson. The buildings, originally constructed as the Foulke-Long Institute, housed the orphaned daughters of Civil War soldiers and Philadelphia firemen. After only a few years, the buildings were sold to the University to house the Randal Morgan Laboratory of Physics. This Physics laboratory represented a revolutionary new approach in Science Education based on the German model of teaching science through experiment and empirical study instead of lectures.

Following Ms. Tatman's presentation, Mr. Tyler advised the Commission that a quorum was no longer present. In view of this situation, Mr. Tyler proposed that testimony be taken for the record, that that record be transcribed verbatim and then distributed to the members of the Commission prior to the next Commission meeting. The actual vote on designation will then be taken at the 11 October 1989 meeting. It was further agreed that this item will be scheduled first on the agenda for that day.

Arthur Gravina, Vice President of Facilities Management for the University of Pennsylvania, did not object and agreed to proceed with his testimony on behalf of the University. The University administration, according to Mr. Gravina, has been convinced of the importance of the Morgan and Music buildings and understands the role of the Smith Building as it relates to the scale of the streetscape along 34th Street. Mr. Gravina, however, challenged the significance of Smith Hall identifying it as a late work of the modestly interesting early Victorian architects Collins and Autenrieth. This firm, according to Mr. Gravina, was most notable for its commercial buildings and selected for the hygiene building not because of express skills in medical facilities but because they are architects of the donor. In the 1870s, he explained, they were clearly behind their major contemporaries such as Furness. He further testified that the later exterior alteration to the building significantly altered the original symmetry and integrity of the structure. Mr. Gravina also challenged the historical significance of the building noting that it was not the first building to reflect the change in teaching techniques.

In view of this, the University agrees to support the designation of the Morgan and Music Buildings but requests that Smith Hall not be designated.

Several persons in the audience spoke in support of the proposed designation of all three University buildings. These included Julie Johnson, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Pennsylvania; Robert

Kohler, a professor of the History of Science and Medicine at the University; and Howard Cattell of the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia.

George Thomas, architectural historian and consultant retained by the University of Pennsylvania to prepare the historic resource inventory, supported the University in its challenge to the historical and architectural significance of Smith Hall.

Mr. Gravina further advised the Commission that the University is considering expansion of its laboratory space at 34th and Spruce Streets. However, Mr. Gravina assured the Commission that the University would consider the preservation of Smith Hall either in whole or in part and that it would work with the Commission and its Architectural Committee in reaching a design solution acceptable to both parties.

Ms. Johnson, at this time, presented the Commission with a petition circulated last spring containing over 600 signatures in opposition to any proposed demolition of Smith Hall, the Morgan Building or the Music Building.

Mrs. Wshington thanked all parties for their patience and cooperation in testifying for the record. The Historical Commission will next meet on Wednesday, 11 October 1989, to consider this matter.

OLD BUSINESS

24,26,28 South Front Street. Barbara Kaplan asked the staff and counsel for an update concerning the properties at 24, 26, 28 South Front Street. Ms. Petrillo reported that she has been in contact with the owners of these properties in an effort to reach an agreement concerning their preservation and/or reconstruction. In the interim, the Department of Licenses and Inspections has cited two of the buildings as being dangerous and one as being imminently dangerous.

Ms. Petrillo further reported that she received recently a letter from Thomas Leidigh of the firm of Keast and Hood recommending that the buildings be demolished entirely. Given the dangerous condition of these buildings, Ms. Petrillo expressed serious concern for public safety and the City's liability. With the permission of the Commission, she agreed to ask the Department of Streets to close the sidewalk and street while this matter remains unresolved.

Ms. Petrillo will also ask the owner to file for a demolition permit application that will be conditioned to ensure preservation of historic fabric and reconstruction of the original design. Finally, the owners have expressed some reservation with regard to donating a facade easement on the reconstructed buildings.

It was agreed that another meeting of the ad hoc committee formed to resolve this issue should be called immediately.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer