

**THE MINUTES OF THE 438TH STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
10 February 1999**

**One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 18th Floor
Wayne S. Spilove, Chair**

Present

Wayne S. Spilove, Chair
Duane Bumb, Deputy Director, Department of Commerce
David Brownlee, Ph.D.
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning Commission
Shelly Merhige, Office of City Council President
David Perri, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Licenses and Inspections
Robert Thomas
Dennis Ward, III
Scott Wilds, Assistant Director, Office of Housing and Community Development
Caroline Wischmann
Stephanie Wolf, Ph.D.

Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Elizabeth Harvey, Historic Preservation Planner
Laura M. Spina, Historic Preservation Planner
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Mark Zecca, Esq., Deputy City Solicitor

Also

Wendy Kern
David Ujfalusi
Martin Rosenblum, Martin Jay Rosenblum & Assoc.
Peter A. Copp, Martin Jay Rosenblum & Assoc.
Jim Holt
Stanhope Browne, Historic Designation Now!
Chris Gallagher
Julie Liedman, Society Hill Synagogue
Beatrice C. Smith
Catharine Franklin
Rochelle Kaufman
Joel Spivak
Christian A. Busch
Tim Arnold, Shalom Baranes Assoc.
Victoria Stieger, Shusterman & Stieger
Gianne Conard, SPA Architects
Ira Kauderer, Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll
Carolyn Pitts, National Park Service
C.J. Moore
Lenore Millhollen, Center City Residents Association
William Leatherbee
David Freeman
Catherine Rhe
Joyce Portnoy

Nancy Fenimore
Bill Fenimore
JoAnn Buller
W. Sells
Catherine Apothaker
Peggy Duckett
Ed Grusheski, Philadelphia Water Department
Alik K. Strakes, Preservation Alliance
Patricia W. Aden, Preservation Alliance
Michael Nairn
Lisa Armstrong, Armstrong & Kaulbach Architects
Stephen Stein
Elizabeth Armour
Nancy Van Dylar
James Ruckman, Gardner-Fox Assoc.
Craig Deutche, Gardner-Fox Assoc.
Gail Bower
Nancy Barton
Bill Barton
Nicole Coughran
Bobbie Burke, Preservation Alliance
Bernice Hamel, Society Hill Civic Association
T. Wellerbach, The Wellnes Community
Robin Schatz, Councilman Frank DiCicco's Office
Judith Eden, Center City Residents Association
Theresa Stuhlman, Fairmount Park Commission
Michael, B. Willner, Esq., Posel Enterprises
Norman Tissian, Society Hill Civic Association

Wayne Spilove, Chair, recognized the presence of a quorum and called the 438th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission to order at 10:00 am.

Minutes of the 437th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission

Ms. Wolf made a motion to approve the minutes of the 437th Stated Meeting and Mr. Bumb seconded the motion. Mr. Zecca noted a change for the Commission's vote concerning 237-47 South 18th Street, the Barclay Hotel. He stated that the record should note the condition of the Commission's decision, that the applicant withdrawal his appeal to the Court of Common Pleas upon the submission and approval of a permit application.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to approve the minutes, as corrected. Mr. Ward seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, 30 November 1998

Mr. Wilds noted that his title should be listed as "Assistant Director," not "Deputy Director." Mr. Ward made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Thomas seconded it. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Report of the Architectural Committee, 26 January 1999, Robert Thomas, Chair

Fairmount Water Works

City of Philadelphia, Owner

Claire Donato, Architect/Applicant

Date: c. 1812-72

Proposal: Rehabilitation of New Mill House, landscaping, restoration of balustrade, parking, bridge

Mr. Thomas explained the various aspects of the application. The proposal includes restoration and renovation of the cast-iron balustrade, pole-mounted lights along the deck and up-lighting of the buildings, paving materials for the deck, renovations of the New Mill House, landscaping and parking. He noted that the Committee recommends approval for all aspects of the proposal except for the landscaping and parking. The Committee asked the applicant to return next month with more details.

Lisa Armstrong of Armstrong and Kaulbach, Architects, stated that her firm designed Lloyd Hall and created the site plan and master plan for the property. The Art Commission approved the site plan. She noted that the Fairmount Park Commission did not approach her firm for consultation for the new parking plan on the same site. Mr. Tyler stated that since the parking has been moved to the next meeting that Ms. Armstrong may return when the Committee and Commission discuss the issue.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to approve the proposal, except for the landscaping and parking. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Fairmont Water Works

City of Philadelphia, Owner

Edward Grusheski, Philadelphia Water Department, Applicant

Date: c. 1812-72

Proposal: Lighting for esplanade

Mr. Thomas described the proposal for lighting along the esplanade of the Water Works. The Committee recommends approval.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation and Mr. Brownlee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Valley Green Inn

City of Philadelphia, Owner

Irving Shapiro and Robert Levy, Architects/Applicant

Date: c. 1805

Proposal: Addition and rehabilitation

Mr. Thomas explained the proposal for a rear addition. The addition would include a handicap access ramp to satisfy ADA regulations. The Committee voted to recommend approval, changing the wood siding sections of that addition's façade to stone to match the stone of the rest of the addition, with staff to review and approve details.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ridgeland Mansion Barn

City of Philadelphia, Owner

James Ruckman, Architect/Applicant

Date: c. 1840

Proposal: Rehabilitation, new terrace, awning, new doors

Mr. Thomas described the application to rehabilitate the barn at Ridgeland Mansion to a conference center. The proposal includes interior alterations, a new terrace with a canopy, replacing the barn doors with glass doors, and air-conditioning equipment. The Committee voted to recommend approval with staff to review and approve details.

Mr. Ward made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation and Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

8501 Germantown Avenue

Bruce Robinson, Owner

Wendy Kern, Architect/Applicant

Date: c. 1760

Proposal: New roof in faux slate

Mr. Thomas recused himself from the discussion and vote. Mr. Baron presented the proposal for replacing asbestos roof shingles with a hard shingle that imitates slate. Mr. Baron noted that although the Committee recommends approval of the proposal, the staff believes that the new roofing shingle should imitate wood shakes, not slate. The Commission has a picture of the building with shakes, but it cannot be documented that the building had slate at any time. Wendy Kern, architect for the project, stated that the owner wanted slate-like roofing to match an existing pent-eave on the building that has real slate. Ms. Wolf noted that the pent-eave is a later addition. Ms. Kern also stated that although the company that makes the imitation slate shingles also makes imitation wood shakes, the wood shakes do not truly resemble real wood and appear fake.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation and approve the imitation slate shingles. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

2351 St. Alban's Place

Beatrice Smith, Owner/Applicant

Date: 1868

Proposal: Legalize windows, door and glass block; fence

Mr. Thomas explained that the property had deteriorated to a point that the Department of Licenses and Inspections declared it Imminently Dangerous. Ms. Smith purchased the property without knowing it appears on the Philadelphia Register and proceeded with improvements without a building permit. She installed new brick in a portion of a wall under a window and installed a new door. None of the work meets the *Secretary's Standards*. Ms. Smith also proposes to install glass block in basement windows, replace the existing non-historic bay window and increase the height of the existing cinderblock and stucco rear fence. The Committee voted to recommend approval of the brick replacement, subject to masonry cleaning; increasing the rear fence in cinderblock and stucco, and the existing glass block. The Committee also recommended denying the proposal for new glass block in the basement windows and the new bay window. The Committee split about the front door. Three members

voted to recommend approval, but two decided that the door, an important visual element of the house, should be a part of an overall application to the Financial Hardship Committee. Mr. Baron explained that the staff and Committee believed that money should be spent on correcting inappropriate changes rather than installing new elements.

Mr. Perri asked if the alterations made to the building cured the ID violation on the property. Ms. Smith stated that she did not know. She also petitioned the Commission for a change in the rear fence proposal. She asked that the extension to the fence be in wood rather than continuing the cinderblock and stucco.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee, including the new door; approval of extending the rear fence in cinderblock and stucco; to have the staff help the owner develop a proposal for the Financial Hardship Committee, and to ask the Department of Licenses and Inspections to re-inspect the property. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3400-50 Chestnut Street, University of Pennsylvania Law School

University of Pennsylvania, Owner

Timothy Arnold, Architect/Applicant

Date: 1897

Proposal: Rehabilitation, lighting, plaques, transom

Mr. Brownlee and Ms. Wolf recused themselves from the discussion and vote. Mr. Thomas described the proposal to install lighting and plaques on both Chestnut and 34th Street façades. One plaque will sit in the transom above the door and several will attach to brick piers of the perimeter fence. Tim Arnold, architect for the project, stated that one of the goals of the project is to reopen the Chestnut Street-façade entrances. The Committee voted to recommend approval.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Ward seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

228-32 Walnut Street

Marie Cerone, Owner

Martin Rosenblum, Architect/Applicant

Date: 1999

Proposal: New house, garage and wall on former parking lot

Mr. Thomas recused himself from the discussion and vote. Mr. Baron explained that the Historical Commission reviews new construction in districts for comment only and that this property lies in the proposed Society Hill Historic District. Mr. Baron presented the proposal for a new house and garage on a former parking lot at the corner of 3rd and Walnut Streets. The proposal has the house set back from the property line at Walnut Street, with a front garden, and the garage in the rear. A wall will surround the property. Mr. Baron stated that several Committee members believed that the house should move forward to the property line to maintain the streetscape along Walnut Street.

Commission members discussed the setback of the house. Mr. Wilds stated that he understood the Committee's concern for the building line, but noted that the streetscape has been broken in many places along Walnut Street. Ms. Kaplan explained that the City Planning Commission also favors maintaining the street wall. However, she noted that the building is a larger, single structure, and that the wall surrounding the property recognizes the street line. Mr. Brownlee

also noted that some mansions in the 18th century did not sit right on the property line but were set back from the street, as evidenced by Birch's views.

Elizabeth Armour read a letter from the Society Hill Civic Association's Zoning and Development Committee. The Committee reviewed the plans and supports the proposal.

Ms. Kaplan stated that the staff of the City Planning Commission must approve the proposal.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to not accept the Committee's recommendation and to support the plans as proposed. Ms. Kaplan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

312 South American Street

Michelle Plachter, Owner/Applicant

Date: c. 1840

Proposal: Flower boxes

Mr. Thomas described the proposal for wire basket-type flower boxes. The Committee recommended approval of the flower boxes attached to the wood sills with staff to review and approve details.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

925 Chestnut Street

Jefferson Medical Associates, Owner

Christian Busch, Architect/Applicant

Date: 1925

Proposal: New signage and awning in ramp court

Mr. Thomas described the proposal for a metal and glass awning and signage directing traffic that enters the courtyard off of 10th Street. The Committee voted to recommend approval.

Mr. Ward made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

1210 Spruce Street

William Leatherbee, Owner/Architect/Applicant

Date: 1822

Proposal: Façade restoration, raise rear roof, rear façade alterations

Mr. Thomas recused himself from the discussion and vote. Mr. Baron presented the proposal. Mr. Leatherbee purchased the property and wishes to create two housing units in the building. The proposal includes restoring the windows on the front façade, installing a first floor greenhouse on the rear façade, skylights on the roof and raising the rear roof to make more room on the top floor. The proposal also calls for removing the front chimney and reinstalling a rear chimney.

Mr. Leatherbee stated that the skylights will not be visible from the street. He also stated that the front chimney is no longer needed because a previous owner removed the fireplaces. Mr. Baron explained that, although the Committee and Commission usually require the retention of chimneys, the front chimney has had several alterations. The Committee voted to recommend

approval with staff to review and approve details.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

1701 Locust Street, Warwick Hotel

Apollo Real Estate and Hospitality, Inc., Owner

Judith Robinson, Architect/Applicant

Date: 1923

Proposal: Handicap ramp

Mr. Thomas described the proposal for a handicap ramp behind an existing retaining wall. The ramp will prove unobtrusive and the Committee voted to recommend approval.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

1732 Spruce Street

William Most, Trustee for Owner

Gregory Aschendorf, Contractor/Applicant

Date: c. 1855

Proposal: Legalize door replacement

Mr. Baron explained that the Rules and Regulations allow the staff to postpone a proposal for a period of one month, if the owner requests it. He stated that, at the owner's request, the staff granted the postponement.

Mr. Spilove recused himself and passed the gavel to Ms. Wolf, Vice-Chair.

2101-17 Chestnut Street

All Rite Parking, Inc., Owner

Stephen Stein, Contractor/Applicant

Date: 1957

Proposal: Legalize installation of glass block

Mr. Thomas explained that although the applicant installed glass block without a permit or Commission approval, the Committee decided that the block was appropriate for this modern non-contributing apartment building. The Committee recommended legalizing the work.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Ms. Wolf returned the chair to Mr. Spilove.

309-11 South Street

Michael Axelrod, Owner

Joel Spivak, Contractor/Applicant

Date: c. 1880

Proposal: Demolish storefront; build new storefront

Mr. Thomas described the proposal to demolish the existing historic storefront and install a new one because the tenant wants more room in the store. He stated that the Committee voted to recommend denial, but recommended approval of moving the door forward three feet. The Committee believed that this compromise kept the historical storefront virtually intact, but gave the tenant more space in the store. The tenant would also have to restore the remaining historic fabric, including the repair and restoration of the marble, tiles and brass window muntins. Mr. Baron stated that the applicant returned with new drawings that basically reflect the requirements of the Committee.

Mr. Brownlee noted that this is a rare storefront, almost virtually intact and hesitated changing it. He remarked that the storefront appears to be the result of two different building campaigns: the original storefront, installed circa 1900 in an existing 19th century building, and a renovation from the 1920s or '30s. He asked if the tenant could simply move the items in the store into the display areas. Joel Spivak, architect for the project, stated that the floor level in the display area differs from the rest of the store and moving into the display area would pose a problem.

Mr. Baron noted that if the tenant moves the door forward the side panels flanking the door will become wider. Mr. Spivak stated that the flanking panels will measure nine inches instead of six.

Mr. Bumb made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation and approve the proposal as found in the revised drawings. Ms. Kaplan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

710 South Front Street

Maria and Melvin Ngayan, Owners/Applicants

Date: c. 1820

Proposal: Legalize removal of chimney

Mr. Thomas explained that the owners removed the chimney without a permit or Historical Commission approval. Although the Commission usually requires the retention of chimneys, the house next door has built a rooftop addition made of glass. The Committee did not think that the chimney should be rebuilt next to the glass and recommended approval of the proposal.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Certified Local Government Comment

S.S. United States

Mr. Tyler explained that as part of its CLG requirements, the Historical Commission must comment on nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. As a part of the process, the Commission wrote the owner and published a public notice announcing the discussion at today's meeting.

Mr. Tyler described the nomination of the S.S. *United States* as a historic structure. He noted that it clearly meets Criterion C of the National Register because "it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction." As the work of William Francis Gibbs, an important

naval architect, the ship introduced innovations in control systems, propulsion and the use of aluminum. It still holds the speed record for crossing the Atlantic Ocean, which it set without having its engines at full capacity. The S.S. *United States* holds a distinguished place in the history of American shipbuilding and evokes the great age of transatlantic passenger travel by ship.

Mr. Brownlee heartily made a motion to recommend the designation of the S.S. United States to the National Register of Historic Places. Mr. Ward seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Report of the Historical Commission Staff, January 1999, Richard Tyler

Commission members did not have any questions for Mr. Tyler.

At 11:25, the Commission took a break to hold an Executive Session to confer with legal counsel regarding the appeal to the Court of Common Pleas of the Commission's designation of *Dream Garden*, Docket No. 2358. The stated meeting resumed at 11:50.

Reports of the Committee on Historic Designation, 18 December 1998 and 22 January 1999, David Brownlee, Chair

Society Hill and Pennsylvania Hospital of Washington Square West Historic District

Mr. Tyler stated that the staff provided notice for this meeting as prescribed by the ordinance. The Society Hill Civic Association also published a newsletter specifically about the district. In it, the Association provided a postcard for property owners to log their opinions about the district. The Commission received a total of 233 postcards so far: 226 voted in favor of the district, 4 opposed and 3 undecided.

He then described the two Historic Designation Committee meetings and stated that the staff distributed the reports of those meetings. The Committee voted to recommend the designation of the Society Hill and Pennsylvania Hospital of Washington Square West Historic District to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Brownlee thanked Ms. Harvey and Ms. Spina for their work on the nomination and introduced the presentation. Mr. Spilove asked if any members of the audience, who needed to leave, wanted to say anything for the record.

Robin Schatz, of Councilman Frank DiCicco's office, read a letter from Councilman DiCicco supporting the designation of the district.

Peggy Duckett stated that this district will help protect a period of American history that has great importance. She supports the nomination.

Andi Coyle, Executive Director of Historic Philadelphia, Inc., read a letter of support for the designation of the district.

James Holt stated that he's one of the undecided votes in the postcards. He, in theory, supports the designation of the district, but had several questions about the impact of the designation on property owners. He asked a series of questions about storm windows and doors, window air-conditioners, grandfathering, tree wells and sidewalks and the regulation of

paint colors. Mr. Brownlee stated that the Commission will address these concerns throughout the series of meetings for the district. The Commission will hold meetings until every one of the questions of property owners has been answered.

Ms. Harvey then presented the Society Hill and Pennsylvania Hospital of Washington Square West Historic District to the Commission. She gave a brief history of the neighborhood and described the various architectural styles found within the district. Ms. Spina then described the boundaries of the district and explained examples of individual properties listed as “significant,” “contributing” and “non-contributing.” Mr. Brownlee explained that the nomination has three parts: an overall Description of Architecture and a Statement of Significance, which describe the district as a whole, and an inventory, which describes each individual property in the district.

Mr. Ward made a motion to designate the Society Hill and Pennsylvania Hospital of Washington Square West Historic District to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion.

Mr. Spilove asked Commission members if they had any questions. Mr. Wilds questioned the exclusion of the Mikveh Israel cemetery on the north side of the 800 block of Spruce Street. He noted that the cemetery dates to the period of Society Hill as well as Pennsylvania Hospital. Mr. Brownlee explained that the cemetery sits in a block that has numerous non-historic buildings that would not create a strong boundary line for the district. He also explained that the non-historic hospital buildings on the south side Spruce Street are attached to the historic buildings of the hospital; therefore, the Committee included all of the hospital buildings in the district.

Michael Willner, Esquire, spoke on behalf of his client, the owner of 200-06 and 201-05 Dock Street, the Ritz Theatre and “Lamberti” restaurant. He questioned the Committee’s classification of the two buildings as “contributing.” Mr. Willner noted that the buildings were constructed in the late 1970s; that they were built as “place holders,” and that the client does not want them listed as such. Mr. Brownlee explained that the Committee considered the buildings as “contributing” to the district for several reasons. The buildings fell under the jurisdiction of the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) and the commercial aspect of the buildings played a major role in the Redevelopment period of the district. Also, the buildings satisfy the two-third’s rule of the Committee, meaning they follow the visual appearance of the district in scale and materials. Lastly, their unique shapes help define the unusual curve of Dock Street. The Commission members discussed the difference between “contributing” and “non-contributing” buildings and the implication of these classifications. Ms. Kaplan questioned the guidelines that Mr. Brownlee presented for classifying these buildings as “contributing,” especially after seeing some of the buildings that the Committee deemed “non-contributing.” She stated that, perhaps, all buildings constructed under RDA should fall into the “contributing” category. Judith Eden of the Center City Residents Association stated that the Ordinance and Rules and Regulations do not differentiate between “significant” and “contributing” buildings with regard to the Commission’s jurisdiction, permit application process or standards. Although the Commission follows the same permit application process for “non-contributing” buildings, it has consistently held these buildings to lower standards. Ms. Harvey noted that the context of a building also played a role in its classification. Some of the buildings listed as “non-contributing” form part of a row of residential buildings. These commercial buildings have a very different context. The Commission did not resolve the issue.

Mr. Tyler noted that the next Commission meeting will be held on 23 February 1999 at 7:00 pm and a third meeting on 10 March 1999 at 10:00 am.

Norman Tissian, President of the Society Hill Civic Association, asked the Commission for a response to the Association's letter concerning 217 Delancey Street. He stated that the neighbors of the street suffered through a long construction process that included mounds of gravel blocking the street, a port-a-potty on the sidewalk and, now, a very dangerous situation in the sidewalk on Philip Street. Mr. Tyler responded that, unfortunately, the gravel and port-a-potty constitute a part of the normal construction process. He did investigate the sidewalk and admitted that it posed a problem. He has contacted the Streets Department, the contractor and the owner about the sidewalk and hopes to have the situation resolved in the next few weeks.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura M. Spina
Historic Preservation Planner