THE MINUTES OF THE 433RD STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
9 September 1998

City Council Caucus, Room 401, City Hall
Wayne S. Spilove, Chair

Present

Wayne S. Spilove, Chair
David Brownlee, Ph.D.
Duane Bumb, Deputy Director, Department of Commerce
Joseph James, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Property
Shelly Merhige, Office of the City Council President
Steve Mullin, Director and City Representative, Department of Commerce
David Perri, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Licenses and Inspections
Richard Rueda, Chair, City Planning Commission
Michael Sklaroff, Esq.
Robert Thomas
Dennis Ward, III
Scott Wilds, Assistant Director for Housing, Office of Housing and Urban Development
Caroline Wischmann
Stephanie Wolf, Ph.D.

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
R. Scott Jacob, Executive Secretary
Laura Spina, Historic Preservation Planner
Elizabeth Harvey, Historic Preservation Planner

Also
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planing Commission
Christina Romano
Jack Conroy
Judith Eden, Center City Residents Association (CCRA)
James Garrison, The Hillier Group
George Skarmeas, The Hillier Group
Melissa Moore, Sign Spec, Inc.
John Thrower, Bower Lewis Thrower Architects
Robert Powers, Powers and Co.
William Schwartz, Rittenhouse Restaurant Group, LLC
Dennis Costello, Rittenhouse Restaurant Group, LLC
Alvin Bellack
Richard Thom
Joanne Phillips
Joshua Nadel
John Mc Gowan
Lenore Millholllen
Kirby Kean
Allison Kelsey, Preservation Alliance
C. Primavera
Tony Marfia
Mark Davis
Bernard Williams

Wayne S. Spilove, Chair, recognized the presence of a quorum and called the 433rd Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission to order at 10:00 A.M.

MINUTES of the 432nd Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Upon a motion made by Mr. Wilds and seconded by Ms. Wolf, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the 431st Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 12 August 1998, Wayne S. Spilove, Chair.

REPORT of the Architectural Committee, 25 August 1998, Robert Thomas, Chair

<u>City Hall</u>
Department of Public Property, Owner
Vincent Costello, Applicant
DATE: 1871-1901
PROPOSAL: Antennas on City Hall Tower

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval of the installation of a mock-up of the new scheme, painted to match the dome, and with good photographic documentation to demonstrate the amount of visibility.

Mr. Thomas explained that the Committee undertook a preliminary review of a proposal for the installation of eight antennas for the City's new public safety communications radio system. The applicant proposes to mount the antennas next to the oculus windows on the City Hall dome to comply with Federal Communications Commission requirements. He stated that Mr. Tyler recommended installing antennas within the oculus so as not to stand out from the slope of the dome, but that the applicant explained that the antennas must project out from the portholes to provide optimal transmission capacity. Mr. Thomas explained that Committee members suggested installing mock-up antennas, painted to match the dome, and with good photographic documentation to demonstrate the amount of visibility. Mr. Tyler stated that as of the date of this meeting, the applicant had yet to install the mock-ups. Commission members did not object to the installation of the mock-ups.

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

<u>123 Christian Street</u>
Chris Russo , Owner/Applicant
DATE: 1825
PROPOSAL: Legalize windows, security door

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Send the issue to the next Financial Hardship Committee meeting.

Mr. Thomas explained that this proposal calls for legalizing several alterations to this house completed without a permit. He stated that the applicant claims that a former owner:

1. Closed the basement windows with glass block.

2. Changed the first-floor windows to vinyl windows with snap-in muntins before he purchased the property in 1994.

3. Mr. Thomas added that this applicant installed the security front door for safety considerations, which the applicant outlined in a letter to the Commission.

Mr. Thomas explained that the owner claims that he does not have the money to remove the vinyl windows and he still needs the security door. Commission members shared the Committee's concern that Mr. Russo should not have to bear the cost of remedying the previous owner's errors, and agreed to recommend sending the issue to the Financial Hardship Committee meeting. Mr. Brownlee suggested that the Financial Hardship Committee could review some inexpensive means of remedying the prior changes. Ms. Wolf recommended placing a condition on any approval stating that the applicant must return to the Commission if he intends to make any changes to the windows in the future.

Mr. Sklaroff made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation to send the issue to the Financial Hardship Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

8001 Veree Road, Knowlton
Jack Conroy, Owner
Anthony Marfia, Architect/Applicant
DATE: 1879-1881
PROPOSAL: Preliminary review - large addition, parking lot, new entry

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval in concept of :
1. An addition
2. Enclosure of the main house porch
3. Parking lots, and a new driveway opening in the wall.

Mr. Thomas explained the proposal submitted to the Commission for preliminary review:

1. This proposal entails adding a large ballroom addition to this Frank Furness-designed mansion to convert it to a catering and banquet facility. Mr. Thomas stated that he recommended the applicant redesign the details of the exterior of the addition to echo the historic building, rather than the Colonial Revival style of the proposed design. The addition, which doubles the footprint of the house, wraps around the northern half of the mansion, obscuring a large portion of the house and demolishing a rear porch. Mr. Thomas explained that the Committee agreed to recommend approval of an addition in concept, but pulled back to allow greater visibility of the porch.

2. The applicants also propose a parking lot, and a new driveway and entrance in the stone wall surrounding the property. Mr. Thomas explained that Committee members asked the applicant to consider breaking up the parking lot into smaller lots with plantings between them. He stated that Committee members did not object to the new cut in the wall, and recommended approval of the proposal to build-up stone piers to stand at each side of the opening, much like the existing gate at the corner of Rhawn Street and Veree Road. Commission members agreed with the Committee's recommendations, as long as the applicant retains the original gate as well.

3. The proposal also entails enclosing more of a partially glazed porch. In the early Twentieth Century two of the porch openings were glazed. The owner wishes to fill in most of the remaining openings with similar glazing. Mr. Thomas explained that Committee members did not object to the proposal, as long as the new glazing walls match the existing.

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

34-48 South Broad Street, Girard Bank
Craig Spencer, Owner
James Garrison, Architect/Applicant
DATE: 1905
PROPOSAL: Cut door, alter door

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval of the proposal, with staff to review and approve details.

Mr. Thomas explained that this proposal involves minor alterations to the domed portion of the former Girard Bank. Grand Bay Hotel, the new occupant, plans to use this section of the complex as the main entrance lobby. The proposal entails:

1. New metal and glass doors will replace damaged, non-original doors in the Broad Street entrance. He stated that Committee members did not object to this replacement.

2. The plans also call for cutting down an existing window to create a new fire exit in an alcove of the Chestnut Street facade. Mr. Thomas explained that this location does not fall within the building's central section, and the Committee agreed that the proposal would not disrupt its symmetry.

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

1535 Locust Street
Bank Philadelphia, Owner
Melissa Moore, Applicant
DATE: 1928
PROPOSAL: Illuminated sign

Architectural Committee Recommendation: To ask the applicant to return with more details of what remains behind the existing metal box sign of the historic stone entablature. The Committee considered the application an incomplete one.

Mr. Thomas explained that this proposal entails installing a back-lit plastic and aluminum sign box above the main entrance of the building. The design of the sign involves translucent plastic letters and small star shapes laid into an internally illuminated aluminum box. Mr. Thomas stated that Committee members asked that the applicant submit more details of what remains behind the existing metal box sign of the historic stone entablature and how the new sign would fit within the opening before they recommend its approval. Melissa Moore, the applicant, distributed photographs to the Commission showing what remains behind the existing

sign. Commission members agreed that the photographs demonstrated that nothing of any historic
or architectural significance remains behind the sign. Mr. Thomas noted that the applicant still needs to submit details of how the new sign will attach onto the building. Commission members also requested the applicant consider submitting a smaller alternate design.

Ms. Kaplan asked whether the existing automated teller machine (ATM) on the facade of the building was installed with the Commission's approval. Mr. Tyler confirmed that the ATM was installed without Commission approval.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to ask the applicant to return to the Architectural Committee with detailed drawing showing how the proposed sign will attach to the building, and drawings for a smaller alternate design. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

1428-1430 Chestnut Street, Packard Building
Affirmative Equities Company, L.P., Owner
John Thrower, Architect/Applicant
DATE: 1922
PROPOSAL: Creation of a parking garage on lower floors

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Preliminary review approval of the curb cuts and new entrance on Sansom Street only; and denial of using the 15th Street pedestrian entrance as access to a parking facility, and denial of de-glazing the windows for the garage.

Mr. Spilove recused himself from the discussion and the vote owing to a professional association with the applicant, and turned over the Chair to Ms. Wolf. Mr. Sklaroff also recused himself from the discussion and the vote.

Mr. Thomas stated that the applicants appeared before the Commission for preliminary review. This proposal involves renovating the empty Packard building into a hotel, with a restaurant on the ground floor and a parking garage in the third through tenth floors, within the brick portion above the stone base of the building. The proposal for the garage calls for:

1. Enlarging an opening on Sansom Street.

2. The conversion of the large and ornate arched entrance on 15th Street to a vehicle opening to accommodate just under 300 cars.

3. The removal of the glazing from every window of the seven-level parking garage.

Mr. Thomas stated that the Committee expressed concern that converting the ornate arched pedestrian entrance on 15th Street to a vehicle opening significantly alters a character-defining entrance, and does not conform with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, and that Committee members discussed the option of having both the entrance and exit for the parking structure on Sansom Street. He added that the Committee and members of the community also objected to the plan to remove the glazing from every window of the seven-level parking garage, and noted that two parking garages exist in very close proximity to the building.

David Brownlee, architectural historian on the Commission, briefly related the history of the Packard Building and of Verus Ritter and Howell Shay, its architects. He also noted the importance of the decorative iron work by Samuel Yellin on the exterior of the building.

Joanne Phillips, representing the applicant, clarified a few issues for the Commission. She explained that the proposal does not call for the removal of the windows and frames, but rather the glazing only. She also stated that new developments in the proposal have facilitated decreasing the number of floors converted to parking garage to five or six. John Thrower, architect for the proposal, explained that he explored several other approaches for ventilating the garage that would retain the glazing, but had to reject them owing to financial considerations. Mr. Tyler suggested installing screens and securing the lower half of the double-hung windows to the open position.

Mr. Thrower stated that zoning regulations require a six-car reservoir space between the entrance to the garage and the car lift to mitigate the amount of traffic lined up in the street. He explained that this restriction renders the Committee's recommendation to place both the entrance and exit on Sansom Street infeasible.   Mr. Thrower assured the Commission that bollards would eliminate any threat to the stonework surrounding the 15th Street entrance, and that the proposal will not alter, obscure or harm the decorative metalwork over the entrance. He explained that the only visible change to the entrance involves the removal of existing, non-original brass and glass doors. Commission members noted that creating a vehicular entrance with a curb cut in place of a pedestrian entrance does constitute a major physical change.

Judith Eden voiced the concerns of the Center City Residents Association. She stated that the proposal does not conform to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. She also cited several other potential problems, including the issue of vehicular back-up on 15th Street, headlights maneuvering inside upper levels, and the presence of a vacant but perhaps reusable parking garage in close proximity to the Packard Building. She also expressed reservations regarding the interpretation of zoning laws pertaining to parking structures.

Mr. Brownlee recommended the Commission vote to approve the proposal in concept, owing to the plausibility and acceptability of combining some the alternatives. He emphasized the importance of retaining glazing or a sense of glazing in the windows of the proposed garage section of the building, and careful design consideration for the alterations to the 15th Street entrance.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to approve the proposal in concept, with Architectural Committee and staff review. Mr. Mullin seconded the motion which carried with ten votes. Mr. Sklaroff recused himself.

<u>2004 Spruce Street</u>

Leroy Kean, Owner/Applicant
DATE: c. 1860
PROPOSAL: New garage an deck

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval, provided the railing be altered to allow visibility to the rear bay, with staff to review and approve details.

Mr. Thomas explained that this proposal entails attaching a new garage and deck onto the back of the applicant's house. Unfortunately, the work will hide much of an original character-defining rear bay window. The proposal does not include any structures on the deck. Mr. Thomas stated that Committee members asked architect to design the porch railings to allow visibility from the street through to the decorative rear bay of the house.

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

Mr. Spilove acknowledged that a representative of the applicant wished to speak to the Commission, and asked for a motion to re-vote after further discussion.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to re-vote after further discussion. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Kirby Kean, representing the applicant, asked the Commission to consider approving the original proposal for security reasons. Mr. Kean explained concerns that a shorter railing would afford potential burglars easier access to the rear of the building. Commission members agreed that a higher fence would mitigate the possibility for break-ins, but also noted that the solid railing in the original proposal could conceivably conceal a burglar from the street, thus facilitating a break-in. The Commission requested the applicant build an open railing of the desired height, with staff to review and approve details. Mr. Kean agreed to comply.
Mr. Brownlee made a new motion to approve the originally proposed design, but with an open railing, with staff to review and approve details. Mr. Ward seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

124 South 16th Street
Leroy Kean, Owner/Applicant
DATE: 1881
PROPOSAL: New front door, vents

Architectural Committee Recommendation: denial of the proposal as submitted.

Mr. Thomas explained that this proposal entails legalizing work done to the entrance of this store without permit. The applicant installed an aluminum door and plywood transom with vents.   The Committee thought the applicant should have an architect design a solution to allow for a transom and venting.

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

1901 Walnut Street, Rittenhouse Plaza
Rittenhouse Plaza, Inc., Owner
Robert Thomas, Architect/Applicant
DATE: 1926
PROPOSAL: Screens

Architectural Committee Recommendation: approval of single panel, half-height screens.

Mr. Thomas recused himself from the discussion and the vote owing to his association with the proposal.

Mr. Jacob explained that this proposal involves installing screens on the new windows approved for the Rittenhouse Plaza. The application calls for single panel, full-height screens. Mr. Jacob stated that Committee members preferred single panel, half-height screens, so as not to obstruct the detail and depth of the entire window.

Mr. Sklaroff made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which carried with ten votes. Mr. Thomas recused himself.

<u>1910 Spruce Street</u>
Charles Overholser, Owner/Applicant
DATE: c. 1855
PROPOSAL: Rear garage and deck

Architectural Committee Recommendation: approval, with staff to review and approve details.
Mr. Thomas explained that this proposal consists of demolishing a simple brick and cinder block rear garage and building a more elaborate one with a deck.

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

<u>220 West Rittenhouse Square Street</u>
Alvin Bellack, Owner of unit/Applicant
DATE: c. 1958
PROPOSAL: Replace existing greenhouse

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Mr. Thomas explained that this proposal involves replacing a rooftop greenhouse. He stated that Committee members agreed to recommend approval on the grounds that it sits at the top of the tower, constitutes a replacement, and as glass somewhat transparent.

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

<u>219-229 South 18th Street, Rittenhouse Regency</u>
Daniel Logan, Owner of unit/Applicant
DATE: 1929
PROPOSAL: Storefront alterations

Architectural Committee Recommendation:
1. Approval of the new window configuration and café doors,
2. A six foot, sideless awning on Locust Street and a four foot, sideless awning on 18th Street..
3. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposed granite bases.

1. Mr. Thomas explained that this proposal calls for demolishing a non-original, modern storefront and building a new storefront with café doors that open onto the street.

2. The restaurant will have outdoor seating, for which the applicant wishes to install a nine foot awning along Locust street and a four foot awning along 18th Street. He explained that Committee members preferred a six foot, sideless awning on Locust Street, so as not to

hang too far over the sidewalk, and that they expressed no objection to a four foot awning on the 18th Street.

3. The proposal also calls for the installation of a granite base within the storefronts, to match the building's existing base. Committee members asked the applicant not to install the base.

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

The Report of the Historical Commission Staff, August 1998, Richard Tyler

Mr. Tyler informed the Commission of the dates of upcoming special meetings: The Committee on Historic Designation will meet on 7 October 1998 regarding the Maxfield Parrish and Louis Tiffany mosaic mural *Dream Garden*; 1 December 1998 regarding the proposed "Street Paving District," and 18 December 1998 regarding the proposed "Society Hill Historic District." He explained that the staff will set up a date for a meeting of the Financial Hardship Committee. Mr. Tyler also asked the Commission to consider which day or evening of the week they would like to hold training sessions so that a time can be decided upon by the next meeting.

Mr. Sklaroff recommended the Commission members receive district nominations several months prior to the designation meeting, even if that entails distribution of the nomination in its draft form. Mr. Brownlee and others objected to distributing drafts, which may contain factual errors. Mr. Sklaroff acknowledged this point, but maintained that the Commission should have ample time to review a nomination.

The Report on appeals to the Board of Licenses and Inspections Review, August 1998, Richard Tyler

Mr. Tyler described the most recent and pending cases before the Board of Licenses and Inspections review. He stated that at its last meeting the Board granted the appellant for 220 Market Street another sixty-day continuance and announced that it would hear the case at the October meeting. On 15 September 1998 the Board will hear the case of 237-247 South Broad Street, Unit 17B, the Barclay Hotel.

Harry A. Batten Fund

Mr. Tyler asked the Commission to approve an expenditure of $700.00 for Ms. Harvey to attend this year's preservation conference in Savannah, Georgia.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to approve the expenditure. Mr. Ward seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Scott Jacob

Executive Secretary