

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street
28 March 1995

Present

Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson, Architectural Committee
Tony Atkins
J. William Cornell
David Hollenberg
Suzanne Pentz

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer

Also

Scott Hoffman
Marianna Thomas
Reyhan Larimer
Doris Fanelli
Bill Brookover
Ira Upin
Charles Ludwig
Peter Bruhn
Matthew White
Debra L. Gruenstein
Alan Turner
Anthony Miksitz

College Hall, University of Pennsylvania
Marianna Thomas, Architect
PROPOSAL: Facade Restoration

The applicants brought in further details of the long-term restoration of College Hall. The central door, currently modern, would be restored in large part to its Gothic original. A new hand rail would be installed to meet code. The leaded front central windows would be releaded/reframed. Two mansard dormers would be restored where they are missing to approximate the originals. Several Gothic finial caps would be installed where spires were removed many years ago.

The Committee members unanimously recommended approval of this application. David Hollenberg abstained.

Independence Hall Complex
Doris Fanelli, Bill Brookover INHP
PROPOSAL: Accessibility Ramps

The first part of the proposal involves covering several wooden portions of Independence Hall tower with lead coated copper cladding. Several areas of the original wood have started to rot and it was argued that this would be the best means of preserving the original fabric. The second part of the proposal comes in an effort to make the Independence Hall Complex wheelchair accessible with ramps. This solution is seen as an interim measure to be restudied later. The ramps would be paved with blue stone and have a metal rail with simple vertical balusters. The location would be on the south door of Independence Hall and the side doors of the flanking buildings.

The Committee recommended approval in concept with details to be approved later. The Committee asked that a mock up of the cladding be seen before the project is approved. David Hollenberg and Suzanne Penz abstained

18th and Spruce Streets
Beth Zion Beth Israel Synagogue
Ira Upin, Designer

This proposal calls for a handicap ramp on the rear side of this corner building. The ramp would have a metal rail to match an existing one on that portion of the building. A wire mesh will be used to shield the open lower portion from collecting debris.

The Committee recommended approval.

1839 Spruce Street
Diner on the Square
Peter Bruhn, Owner

The owner has received a legal threat and wishes to install a ramp on the Spruce Street facade of his restaurant. The condominium owners will not allow him to use the grade entrance on 19th Street.

The Committee recommended approval of this ramp but also suggested looking into the possibility of using four inch wire mesh instead of balusters.

Tenth Presbyterian Church
1700-1708 Spruce Street
Matthew White, Manager

This proposal calls for installing two hanging banners from the front facade of the church. The discussion revolved around the best method for attachment.

The Committee recommended in favor of approval of the banners.

2035 Spruce Street
Debra Gruenstein, owner

This proposal involves removing the fishscale slate mansard roof on a house in a row of intact original mansards and replacing it with rectangular grey asphalt shingles. The neighbor who has just replaced his mansard used fishscale slate at the recommendation of the Commission staff. The Commission having just designated its first district full of mansards will be setting a standard for roof replacement materials with its decision. The homeowner expressed frustration at the difficulty in getting slate roofers to come into the City. She got an estimate of \$4,360 for asphalt and \$9,230 for real slate.

In an attempt to find a compromise the staff has been looking into slate look alike products which are due to arrive later in the week. Committee members looking at the estimate noted that the roofer seemed to attribute the leak to a gutter/cornice problem. The Committee recommended that an unbiased roof specialist be hired to determine whether the problem couldn't be solved with replacement of the flashing and gutter rather than the slate. Mrs. Gruenstein said that if such a repair would be a long-term solution it would be okay with her, but that she didn't want to repair the gutter now and have to replace the slate in a couple years and pay for new scaffolding. General agreement was reached to use the next couple weeks to visit the property and try to determine what needs fixing and to find a good substitute material that better mimics the shape, color, and look of the slate.

1725 Spruce Street
Alan Turner, Owner

This proposal calls for removing the modern stone facing from the ground floor of this rowhouse. It would be restored with arch openings and grade level door to match its earlier appearance based on a photo and the house at 1721 Spruce Street.

The Committee recommended approval of this proposal but asked that the applicant work with the staff on the details once the facing has been removed.

410 S. Camac Street
Anthony Miksitz, Owner, Architect

This proposal calls for the construction of a new dormer to create a new useable room within the house. Many of the other identical buildings on the block already have them and indeed the Commission has approved more than one of them on this block.

The Committee unanimously voted to recommend approval of the new dormer.

Arnest Mansion
33rd and Diamond Streets
Fairmount Park

This proposal calls for the demolition of this c.1800 Park house. Demolition was first proposed for the building several years ago and was turned down by the Commission. Since that time the Fairmount Park Commission has allowed water through holes in the roof and vandals to cause further deterioration. The Recreation Department is now proposing to build a swimming pool, in time for this summer, right next to the building and to make renovations to the nearby modern building for bathrooms, chlorine tank, and a caretakers office. They fear that the Arnest Mansion will be a dangerous attractive nuisance. The Park staff asserted a number of 1.8 million dollars to restore the Arnest home. No breakdown of costs, site plans or plans for new work were provided to the Committee.

The Committee stressed the uniqueness and importance of this house. They explained that this seems to be a case of demolition by neglect and that it would be hypocritical of the Commission to excuse in the City government what is not excused for the public. Committee members also said that the \$ 1.8 million number seemed greatly overblown even for restoration and that the Commission would consider a much less expensive stabilization and sealing of the building. Given the neighborhood interest in a community center the Committee recommended trying to reuse and raise money for the project in conjunction with the new pool. They also said that no information other than an assertion had been provided regarding costs or feasibility of reuse and that given this they unanimously recommended denial of the demolition request.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Randal Baron
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer