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MINUTES OF THE 191st STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

6 March 1975

Dr. F. Otto Haas, Chairman

Present: F. Otto Haas, Chairman  
Charles R. Tyson, Vice Chairman  
Mrs. James C. Gramlich, Jr.  
The Hon. John B. Kelly, Jr., Councilman-at-Large  
Edward Pinkowski  
Joseph W. Hickey, Deputy Director of Finance  
Barbara Liggett, Archaeological Consultant to the Commission  
David Rosenblum, Assistant City Solicitor  
Richard Tyler, Historian  
Patricia Sieniatkowski, Executive Assistant to the Chairman

Guests: Marge Scharnacke, President, Queen Village Neighbors Association.  
Conrad Weiler, Chairman of the Zoning Committee of the Queen Village Neighbors Association.  
Ellen Lareviere, Queen Village Neighbors Association.  
Carol Vento, Queen Village Neighbors Association.  
Tom Hine, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER.  
Jim Smith, THE PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS.  
Theodore T. Bartley, Jr., A.N.A., Member of the Philadelphia Historical Commission's Architectural Committee.  
Amy Jendell, South Central Project Area Committee.  
Cindy Guyer, Philadelphia Historical Commission student intern.

Unless otherwise noted, all action taken herein is the result of motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES OF THE Stated Meeting, 6 February 1975, were approved and directed to be filed.

## REPORTS

The Report of the Architectural Committee for 25 February 1975 was approved by the Commission and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

Nominations for the Certification of Buildings, Richard Tyler, Historian.

The Commission reviewed the request of the Chelten Hills Cemetery situate at 1701 E. Washington Lane to certify the cemetery's crematory as being historically or architecturally significant. It was agreed that the new addition to the nineteenth century building substantially altered the structure's architectural character so as not to justify its certification.

## REPORTS ( Cont'd)

The Spring Garden Civic Association Proposal was tabled until the next meeting.

Commission Staff Activities, 1 February - 1 March 1975, Richard Tyler, Historian. Mr. Tyler's report was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

## OLD BUSINESS

Decertification of 526 South Front Street, Architectural Committee and Richard Tyler, Historian. Mr. Tyler reported to the Commission members previous Historical Commission and Architectural Committee action concerning the renovation of the building situate at 526 South Front Street, including the recommendation of the Committee that the Commission decertify the building. Mr. Tyler explained to the Board the National Register's provisions for the deletion of a building from that Register and noted that 526 South Front Street clearly meets those standards. While the Committee and Mr. Tyler support the decertification of the building because of its loss of historic integrity resulting from recent alterations to the structure, the neighborhood does not. Conrad Weiler, Chairman of the Zoning Committee of the Queen Village Neighbors Association, testified that although the building had, indeed, lost its integrity, the effect of decertification on public opinion should also be taken into consideration in making a decision. Marge Scherneck, President of the Queen Village Neighbors Association, expressed her concern for the precedent that decertification of this building would set. Ms. Scherneck noted the struggle of many area residents, on limited incomes, to maintain their buildings and comply with the standards of the Historical Commission. Mr. Kelly, excusing himself from the meeting, informed the Chairman that he would vote in favor of the Architectural Committee's recommendation. After a lengthy discussion concerning the effect of decertification on a neighborhood, provisions for decertification, and the establishment of precedents, the Chairman called for a vote. Mr. Pinkowski presented a motion to table the matter for further information and neighborhood consideration of the problem. The Chairman noted that, in his opinion, nothing further could be accomplished by a delay in action. The motion was not seconded and the Chairman asked for another motion from the floor. Mr. Tyson made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation for decertification. This motion was seconded and carried with Mr. Pinkowski opposing and Mr. Hickey abstaining.

Relocation of the Cannonball Farm House, Richard Tyler, Historian. At the request of Commissioner Guarino of the Water Department, the Historical Commission was asked to consider permitting the removal of the Cannonball Farm house from its present site to a new location near Fort Mifflin. Specifications for the relocation have been forwarded to the Commission staff. The building can be relocated and its exterior restored at a cost of approximately

## OLD BUSINESS (Cont'd)

\$262,000. Mr. Tyler related to the Board the importance of the building noting that it is one of the oldest houses extant in the City and that it reflects unique design elements in Philadelphia domestic architecture. After some consideration, the Board agreed to allow the relocation of this structure.

220 South Broad Street, Richard Tyler, Historian. Mr. Tyler reported to the Board on his visit to the Art Club with members of the Commission's Architectural Committee, the Preservation Committee of the American Institute of Architects, Philadelphia Chapter, and others interested in the building's preservation to view the interior of the building and to discuss ways of insuring the structure's preservation. As noted in the Report of the Architectural Committee for 25 February 1975, it was agreed to ask the Commission to consider petitioning the Board of Revision of Taxes to grant tax relief to the owner of the Art Club in return for the preservation of the entire structure or the facade and first bay. The Board will be asked to consider taxing only the land and not the structure so as to alleviate the economic hardship being claimed by the owner. Mr. Rosenblum noted that it was not legally possible for the Board to grant such relief since exemptions from tax are based only on the use of the building. Although the Commission may petition the Board for such a variance, the members agreed that little hope existed for the Board's support, for no legal provision existed for the granting of such a variance. Finally, the Commission's counsel was directed to draw up proposed legislation providing tax relief to support historic preservation activities in the City. Mr. Tyler agreed to forward a memorandum to Mr. Rosenblum outlining the problems and asking for a legislative solution. Mr. Rosenblum also agreed to consult with Mr. Mickey on the matter.

## NEW BUSINESS

U. S. Department of the Interior Survey of Facade Easements, Richard Tyler, Historian. The Board considered the proper response to this questionnaire and determined to reply positively so as to encourage further study of facade easements.

Sigma Delta Chi Proposal for a Marker at the Site of John Dunlap's Printshop, Richard Tyler, Historian. Since the text of the marker had been reviewed by several historians, including Mr. Tyler, and was found to be historically correct, the Board voted to approve it.

Fort Mifflin, Richard Tyler, Historian. Since alterations are being planned for a number of buildings within the Fort Mifflin complex in the near future, Mr. Tyler asked the Board if the Commission might not require adequate controls to insure that no unsuitable alterations would result from these proposed renovations. The Board voted to allow Mr. Tyler to arrange for the implementation of architectural and archaeological controls over this project.

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## NEW BUSINESS

Request for support in rezoning of the 3200 block of Powelton Avenue, Richard Tyler, Historian. The Commission members agreed that the Historical Commission was not concerned with the use of buildings and directed Mr. Tyler to inform the petitioner of the proper channels he must follow.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Szymonkowski  
Executive Assistant to the Chairman