

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**Harris Steinberg, AIA, Acting-Chair
Commission Conference Room, One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 13^h Floor
16 May 2002**

Present

Harris Steinberg, AIA, Acting-Chair
Warren Huff, City Planning Commission
Janet Klein, Chair, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Bruce Lavery, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia

Diane M. Hughes, Executive Secretary
Laura M. Spina, Historic Preservation Planner
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Larry Copeland, Senior Attorney, Law Department

Also

David W. O'Donnell, Queen Village Neighbor's Association
Larry Weintraub, AIA, Martin J. Rosenblum Architects
Vanessa Zeoli, Klodner Straw Kise Architects
Virgil Procaccino, 229 Fitzwater Street

Harris Steinberg, Acting-Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

229 Fitzwater Street

Virgil and Norma Procaccino, Owners/Applicants
DATE: c. 1859, new façade, c. 1950
PROPOSAL: Rescission of historic designation

Mr. Tyler explained that the Commission individually designated this property, under the old Ordinance. The Commission minutes of the designation do not have any detailed information about the property. Ms. Klein said that at the time of designation, there were a very large number of buildings worthy of designation which was solely based on staff recommendations. The property is situated on a block with a mixed context. The façade of this property was re-built in the 1940s, thus removing the historic brick; however, all of the fabric behind the front façade is historic and dates to c. 1840.

Virgil Procaccino, the applicant said that he proposes to develop two dwellings, and he and his family will reside in one and sell the other. Owing to time constraints, he said that he applied for the demolition permit to move the process along. However, he proposes that the new design will be sympathetic to the historic buildings on the block in regards to its height, scale and cornice line.

Ms. Spina explained that at the Commission meeting the applicant was offered two options, one rescission of the designation or proceeding with the demolition subject to the Commission's review of the new design. At that time the applicant agreed to proceed with the demolition and

have the Commission review his design. Mr. Tyler stated that he believes that once the resource is demolished, then the Commission's jurisdiction should cease. The Committee asked David O'Donnell of the Queen Village Association about the association's position on the new construction. Mr. O'Donnell responded that it opposed the demolition; however, now that the property is demolished, it has no position on the new design. It was noted that the Commission did not make a decision regarding the new design because of the absence of elevations and detailed drawings of the proposed design.

Mr. Huff expressed concern that a pre-judgement is being imposed on the architectural and urban design of the building, and that he can't find any reason not to rescind the designation. He also believes it is important to make provisions to accommodate contemporary needs and encourage new residences in the city. Ms. Klein concurred with Mr. Huff in his support of the rescission. Mr. Lavery noted that the building has been demolished, and it is not in a district, therefore he also supports the rescission.

Mr. Tyler stated that before the meeting, he expressly discussed the options with the applicants, which were further reiterated in the Historical Commission meeting. Ms. Spina said that she believed that the Commission's focus was on the lack of historic fabric. Mr. Steinberg noted his expressed opposition to the demolition at the Commission meeting and reiterated Mr. Hack's suggestion of building on the non-historic property and the rehabilitation of the historic property. Mr. Steinberg also said that a hardship application does not exist and that the public interest factor does not fall within the guidelines. In addition, he believes that by changing the agreed upon process, that this will set a precedent. Mr. Tyler disagreed, stating that the resource has already been demolished.

Mr. Huff made a motion to approve the rescission of the designation. Ms. Klein seconded the motion which was approved by three members. Mr. Steinberg opposed the motion.

Ms. Klein made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Huff seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Hughes
Executive Secretary