

**THE MINUTES OF THE 372nd STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

12 May 1993

**City Council Caucus Room
Room 401 City Hall**

Present

Wayne S. Spilove, Chairperson
David Brownlee, Ph.D., Architectural Historian
James Cuorato, First Deputy Director Of Commerce Department
David Baldinger, City Planning Commission
Arlene Matzkin, AIA, Chairperson of the Architectural Committee
Susan Rabinovitch, Real Estate Developer
Louis Einhorn, Public Property
William Brown, Community Representative
Scott Wilds, Department of Housing

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Ira Kauderer, Executive Secretary
Andrew Haines, Historic Research Technician

Also

Robert W. Tomlinson, Public Property
Howard Kittell, Preservation Coalition
Melvin T. Sharpe, Jr., Smart Corporation

THE MINUTES of the 371st Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 14 April 1993, Wayne S. Spilove, Chairman.

THE REPORT of the Meeting of the Architectural Committee held on 29 April 1993, Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson.

Approval

Queen Lane Railroad Station: This proposal calls for renovations to this Victorian train station, designed by architect William B. Powell. Although most of the work involves replacement of failed floor joists, there is also some exterior restoration. Queen Anne grid-type windows, most of which are missing, will be replaced in wood. In order to combat the vandalism at this location, the upper sash will be shielded with a sheet of Lexan on the outside top sash. Wooden doors will be remilled to match the original design. A millwork railing will be replaced according to the original drawing. A set of double doors will be replaced with a single wide door and sidelights to meet A.D.A.

requirements. A low ramp will be installed to this door.

The Committee recommended that the new railing, to be turned according to historic drawings, be placed at the original level, ascertainable by the scars on the existing original posts. Since this original level will not meet present code requirements, the applicants can either obtain a variance or instead install an additional new railing, conforming to code, on top of the original looking piece. The applicants will present shop drawings of the millwork railing and doors when available.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the recommendation of the Committee.

Packard Building, 15th Street at Chestnut: This proposal calls for replacing the original wooden 1/1 sash windows on the 3rd through 18th floor with aluminum windows, in phases.

The applicants presented a prototype window, painted to approximate the original historic brown color of the Packard Building windows. This prototype lacked a reveal, which at Dr. Tyler's suggestion, will be added to the new windows. The applicants also agreed to delete screens from the new windows, since they would be out of character with the building.

At the Commission meeting, Ms. Matzkin called the new windows "almost identical" to the existing wooden ones, except for a slightly thicker meeting rail. The manufacturers will reduce the width of the meeting rail as much as possible.

Mr. Tyler stated that the Commission should be sensitive to the situation of owners of older office buildings, who need to compete for tenants with modern structures.

Mr. Baron added that the decorative windows at the top and bottom of the building will not be replaced.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the installation of the proposed 1/1 aluminum replacement windows is the 3rd through 18th floors.

1814 Delancey Street: This proposal calls for legalizing a hole cut through the front wall of this house at the second-floor level to accommodate a room air conditioner. The owner claimed that she did not know the building was historical. She proposed to pull in the air-conditioner more flush with the wall and install a painted board to camouflage the hole during the months she is not using the air conditioner. A violation has been issued.

The applicant's argument was that since the hole was cut at least five years ago, it would not be fair for a violation to be issued now.

Committee members recalled that in the past year, a property owner on 12th Street sought to similarly legalize two through the wall air conditioners. In that case, the Committee required the applicant to remove the air conditioners, and refill the hole with brick matching the rest of the facade. That work has been completed. The Committee was concerned about making this decision consistent with the earlier one. They also noted that if a building permit was obtained at the time the work was done, the owner would have been notified of Historical Commission requirements.

Ms. Matzkin explained that the 1800 block of DeLancey Street is one of the finest mid-19th century residential streets in Philadelphia, and is in a fine state of preservation.

Ms. Jane Hix, legal counsel for the Commission, stated that according to the building code, there is no statute of limitations problem here because the law provides that each day a building does not conform to code is a new violation.

Ms. Rabinovitch stated that she believed it would be unfair to legalize this illegal work based on the time it was noticed, when others have been required to repair illegal work.

The Commission voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Committee and require the hole to be patched with brick to match the rest of the facade.

4717 Fisher's Lane: This proposal calls for legalizing extensive work done to this historic house without a permit. The owner called the Commission and was told that this was not a historically certified building due to confusion about the building's address, though it was explained that he must seek a building permit. He has not obtained a building permit and a "stop work" order has been issued. The illegal work consists of removal of a front porch and wooden side wings, removal of the chimneys and dormers, reroofing, and infilling most windows and doors. This house had been severely vandalized and had sustained numerous fires that destroyed the wooden portions of the building.

Given the deteriorated state of the building when the owner acquired it, Committee members decided not to require complete restoration. They recommended that a simple horizontal cornice be constructed across the front of the building. Also, the owner indicated that he was willing to comply with the Committee's request to reopen all windows on the second floor level. These the Committee agreed could be aluminum 1/1 windows. Gable ends should be treated with barge-board capping.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the Committee's recommendation.

City Hall: This proposal is a restudy of the fire doors to be added at each stair tower of City Hall from the basement to the 7th floor level to create fire safe exits from the building.

The Committee addressed three issues: door height, molding and graphics.

Door height: The arches that the doors would be installed under are of one height on all floors except the first and sixth, where they are higher. Installing standard size doors would require transom panels that would fill the space between the top of the doors and the spring point of the arches.

Committee members agreed that larger doors that would reach the spring point themselves would be less awkward. These larger doors would require a variance from the Department of Licenses and Inspections. The Committee reached a consensus that the architects should attempt to get a variance and install doors that reach the spring point of the arches on each floor. If such a variance was not obtainable, transom panels of varying sizes would be required to fill the variable spaces between the tops of the doors and the spring point of the arches.

Molding of the Door Surround: Committee members debated whether an angular functional molding or a curvilinear molding that references the more elaborate historic ornament of City Hall would be more appropriate. Dr. Tyler stated that he believed that the former choice was more desirable because it would clearly express that the fire doors are not original fabric and would draw less attention to this necessary intrusion. Other Committee members countered that a curvilinear molding would similarly not appear to be original. Such a molding would also be less jarring and more sympathetic to the overall design of the building. A vote was taken and the curvilinear molding proposed by the architects won, 3-1 with Mr. Hollenberg abstaining.

Graphics: The architects proposed postponing a decision on lettering until an overall graphics package is formulated for City Hall. Committee members unanimously concurred.

At the Commission meeting, Mr. Einhorn stated that attempting to install the larger doors would result in higher cost and untenable time delays. Commission members responded that given the importance of this building and permanence of these alterations, it is worth making a special effort to achieve the best result. Mr. Tyler said that he could be in contact with the Department of Licenses and Inspections and would attempt to expedite consideration of the needed variances.

The Commission approved the Committee's recommendation. This includes 1) installing the taller doors, contingent on obtaining a variance from the Board of Building Standards and the Fire Department; 2) using curvilinear molding on the door

surrounds; 3) and deferral on the graphics until an overall scheme for City Hall is developed.

126 Chestnut Street: This proposal calls for legalizing a brick platform built along the front facade of the Middle East Restaurant. An ordinance has been passed by City Council allowing for this platform conditional upon the applicant seeking and receiving approvals from all Commissions and agencies with jurisdiction. Legal counsel has informed that this means that the Commission reviews this application like any normal application.

Warren Huff of the Planning Commission told the Committee that while that Commission is willing to approve a sidewalk cafe at this location, they oppose legalization of this permanent incursion into the public way. Bill Burke added that the Art Commission opposed the construction of this platform when it was originally proposed, as did the Historical Commission.

The Commission approved the Committee's recommendation, and required removal of the platform. Mr. Cuorato voted against the motion.

THE REPORT of the activities of the Historical Commission Staff, April 1993, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer.

Mr. Tyler stated that the ongoing City Hall Master Plan Project is progressing. Also, the Getty Grant Program has awarded \$50,000. to the Historical Commission to spend on for conservation studies of Eastern State Penitentiary. The grant is especially important because the Getty Grant Program has a history of following through on projects once it provides support. The City is beginning to develop policy for the future of the Penitentiary. To that end, the Mayor has appointed a Committee charged to consider alternatives. Ongoing discussions continue with the Pennsylvania Prison Society, a group interested in management of the facility.

The Designation Committee met in April to consider a new group of historic nominations. Mr. Tyler stated that he thought that it is important for the Commission to continue this important function. The nominations will be considered by the full Commission in July.

Mr. Tyler stated that he participated in the selection of paving material for the "Avenue of the Arts" project. In Fairmount Park, a sec. 106 review of a proposed bicycle path resulted in a finding of "adverse effect" in that the path would disturb areas that are potentially rich in archeological resources. This resulted in a redesign of part of the project.

Howard Kittell of the Preservation Coalition addressed the Commission. He stated that the unclear legal status of Philadelphia's preservation ordinance is affecting many members of the preservation community. Dr. Tyler invited Mr. Kittell and other preservationists to meet with him to discuss how the Commission should proceed in relation to the ordinance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ira Kauderer".

Ira Kauderer