

THE MINUTES OF THE 367TH STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

14 October 1992

City Council Caucus Room
Room 401 City Hall

Present

Wayne S. Spilove, Chairman
William Brown, Community Organization
David Brownlee, Ph.D., Architectural Historian
James Cuorato, First Deputy Director Of Commerce
Department
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning Commission
Scott Wilds, Executive Assistant, Office of Housing & Community
Development
Stephanie Wolf, Ph.D., Historian
Carmen A. Torres-Rodriguez, Community Organization
Arlene Matzkin, AIA, Chairperson of the Architectural Committee

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Ira Kauderer, Executive Secretary

Also

Kate Sherwood, Dan Peter Kopple & Associates
Richard B. Marion, Philadelphia Council, Boy Scouts of America
Nan Gutterman, Vitetta Group
Ted Garrison, Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority
A. Lehrer, Philadelphia Business Journal
Bob Williams, Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority
Harry M. Perks, Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority
Henry Magaziner, Preservation Coalition Of Philadelphia

The Minutes of the 366th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia
Historical Commission, held 9 September 1992, Wayne S. Spilove,
Chairman. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Dr.
Brownlee, seconded by Mr. Wilds and approved by unanimous vote.

The Report of the Architectural Committee of the Philadelphia
Historical Commission held 24 September 1992, Arlene Matzkin,
Chairperson.

Approval

Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, 18th and the Parkway:
This proposal calls for the construction of a one-story
meeting room addition along the rear of the rounded apse of

the Cathedral. This addition would be somewhat visible from Race Street, and more visible from 17th Street.

The Committee expressed dismay that the addition and its handicapped accessible entrance ramp would hide so much of the apse. Members wondered whether the additional space could be found in existing buildings. If the church does decide to proceed with these plans, the Committee agreed with the architects that the addition should be faced with a random-coursed hammer-faced brownstone that matches that of the Cathedral.

The Committee unanimously recommended approval of this project, contingent on review of a stone sample.

Ms. Matzkin moved that the Commission grant final approval for this proposal. Dr. Brownlee seconded the motion.

The Commission voted unanimously to adopt the motion for approval contingent on review of a stone sample.

312 Market Street: This application appeared before the Commission last month and was disapproved. Since then, Mr. Baron met with the applicant's architect on the site. The resulting plans call for saving and restoring the existing storefront in its entirety, but installing a new centrally located double door in a portion of the storefront that was once a large plate of glass.

Committee members requested that the transom run across the central double doors, and that these new doors be constructed to match the existing original one in the recessed entrance. The architect and applicant agreed to these requests and have submitted plans reflecting these changes.

The Committee unanimously recommended approval of this proposal.

Ms. Matzkin moved that the Commission approve this revised proposal. Dr. Brownlee seconded the motion.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve this revised proposal.

University Barge Club, #7 Boat House Row: This application calls for the partial restoration and alteration of the river facade of the building. A large glass sliding door had been cut into the second floor several decades ago. The proposal calls for restoring this wall, and installing French doors to match an existing historic condition on the southernmost bay. The new French doors will be doubled, however, to provide more light and air. The transom windows

above will be restored. The rounded wooden shingles of this whole facade will be replaced in kind. The missing gable end trim will be restored.

The Committee unanimously recommended approval of this project.

Dr. Brownlee thought that this proposal fails to meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards since the applicant proposes to replace an originally existing single door with double doors. Mr. Baron replied that since the original treatment no longer exists on the left side of the facade, the double doors will not involve widening the opening and the original door on the right side will be retained.

Boy Scouts Building, 22nd and Winter Street: This proposal involves a series of small alterations to the building plus a major piece of landscape furniture to be added in the courtyard. The structure is to be cleaned and repointed. The existing handicapped ramp will receive a new railing. The area below this ramp is to be walled in to create a storage area. Facing Winter Street, new iron gates based on existing ironwork will close off the front portico. At the rear, new entryways will be cut into the parking lot wall and old openings will be infilled. A new ramp for the disabled will be established to the basement.

At the front, two low semi-circles of granite will enclose a new space where the names of donors will be carved. Granite pavers in a herringbone pattern will replace the current flagstone paving in the courtyard. The Boy Scout Statue in the forecourt will be removed and conserved during construction, and will be replaced when the project is completed.

In response to questions by Dr. Brownlee, Kate Sherwood of Dan Peter Kopple and Associates, architects for this project, briefly described the semi-circular granite monument that is to be placed in the forecourt. She explained that it would not rise above 18 inches at its highest place. She added that after conservation, the Boy Scout statue will be sited slightly forward of the center of the new partially enclosed space.

The Committee unanimously voted to approve the plans as presented. Ms. Matzkin moved that the Commission approve these plans as presented. Dr. Brownlee seconded the motion.

The Commission unanimously approved the plans as presented.

Disapproval

907 Race Street: This came to Committee as the result of a

violation issued by the Department of Licenses and Inspections for work done without a permit. The illegal work consists of a new brick storefront wall built in front of an existing modern tiled storefront. The new illegal brick storefront projects further into the street, rather than being built at the plane of the facade.

The Committee unanimously agreed that the applicant should take off the new brick storefront and get an architect to work with the staff to design a more appropriate and legal storefront for this earliest of "Chinese style" Chinatown buildings.

The Committee unanimously recommended disapproval of this proposal.

At the Commission meeting, Mr. Spilove urged that the illegally constructed wall be taken down for safety reasons, as well as for architectural and historical ones.

Mr. Wilds noted that this kind of problem has come to the Commission before. Mr. Spilove and Ms. Kaplan responded that it might be useful to contact this community through the Chinese Benevolent Association and the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Association. Mr. Tyler thought it advisable to have an architect that works within the Philadelphia Chinese community to work with the applicant and staff to come up with a better solution to this problem.

The Commission unanimously approved a motion to disapprove this illegal work, and will contact the applicant, owner, and contractor in an effort to arrive at an acceptable solution.

Also

Reading Terminal Trainshed, 1115-1141 Market Street:

Proposals

Trainshed interior: This application calls for a change in the scheme approved by the Committee and the Commission for the treatment of the intersection of the trainshed ceiling truss with the glass wall separating the ballroom from the forecourt. At a previous meeting there was approval of the idea of a glass wall which would reach nearly the height of the truss and then cantilever northward under the truss and continue to rise to the ceiling behind the truss. This would have allowed the truss to be seen from the public forecourt and allow light to shine through the truss from behind. This proved to be about \$44,000.00 over budget. The new proposal is to either bring the glass wall up in front of the truss, or to make a cantilever arrangement

using drywall instead of glass. The drywall would be painted to match the color of the ceiling, and would cost about \$7,000.00 over budget. The drywall alternative, it should be noted, will not allow light to pass through the truss.

The Committee met with project architects at the trainshed to analyze these alternatives. After considerable discussion, the Committee could not come up with what they considered a desirable and cheaper solution to this problem. The Committee argued that the original idea to preserve the sense of the long train shed was about to be lost.

Committee members noted that the architects originally had \$120,000.00 in the contract for covering all sides of the building with birdnetting. This money was returned to the Authority as a credit when the birdnetting scheme was scaled back. Committee members asked whether the Authority could use \$44,000.00 out of the \$120,000.00 for the glass/cantilevered solution. Mr. Garrison explained that this would present a problem because the Authority would still be liable for the unsolved bird problem. Mr. Baron pointed out that the real need for the birdnetting was over the entrances and Filbert Street, where people walk below. Committee members further noted that the new Convention Center Building walls will not be netted.

The Committee members thought that the Commission needed to review the budget and consider shifting funds from some other area of the project to allow the building of the glass cantilever solution. They made no recommendation on this part of the project and expressed the opinion that a larger and more public body needed to make the decision.

Ms. Gutterman, of the Vitetta Group, presented the Commission with a drawing that graphically represented the sight lines into the area above the ballroom from the forecourt. Discussion centered around the effects of light entering from the skylight on the visibility northward from the forecourt through the glass curtain wall that will separate the ballroom from the forecourt. Mr. Cuorato reminded the Commission that it is only because of the Convention Center that the trainshed is being preserved at all. He urged members to take the limited budget available for this work into consideration when arriving at a recommendation.

Henry Magaziner, representing the Preservation Coalition of Philadelphia, suggested that applying a mullion pattern on the glass could help duplicate the look of the truss. Architects for the Convention Center explained that this was already part of the original "glass in front of the truss" proposal.

After further discussion Dr. Brownlee concluded that the best solution to this problem would be to build the glass curtain wall straight up and to the south of the truss in question. He stated his opinion that the cantilever solution would only pull the view of one truss into the forecourt whereas the goal is to see more of the space behind the glass. He recommended that the architects manipulate the mullion pattern of the glass near the ceiling and arrive at a lighting scheme to increase visibility through the glass as much as possible. Dr. Brownlee made a motion to that effect. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion.

The Commission unanimously approved this proposal.

Bird Netting: The Committee looked at several schemes of bird netting. Of the options presented the most favorably received was mesh netting which presently covers the eastern facade of the train shed spanning the bays over Filbert Street. The Committee recommended this option because it seemed most effective and least visible.

The Commission unanimously approved the proposal for the mesh bird netting option.

New Storefront: Mr. Myers asked the Committee to consider the replacement of a modern metal and glass storefront in the northernmost bay of the 12th Street facade of the Market. Engineers have discovered that the existing storefront does not adequately carry the wind load that it safely should. Mr. Myers proposed replacing the existing storefront with one that looks virtually the same, but would have deeper metal mullions. The Committee recommended approval.

The Commission unanimously recommended approval of this proposal as presented.

Rear wall: The Committee expressed their disappointment, that the historic integrity of the first-floor facade along Arch Street was to be compromised. At that location plans call for replacing damaged molded patterned brick with rectangular brick. The Committee asked for information on the cost of possible restoration in order to help plan restoration.

At the Commission meeting, Mr. Garrison estimated that it would cost \$225,000.00 to replace the molded brick in kind. Ms. Kaplan stated that she believed it would be difficult to raise that sum of money in the near future. Mr. Perks added that if people felt strongly enough about this issue, they could work on long range fund raising to support the restoration of this facade as well as other parts of the building.

The Commission concluded that work should proceed as previously approved, with the understanding that proposals for restoration of various parts of this building could arise in the future.

Down Home Diner: Mr. Perks stated that the Convention Center Authority originally planned to retain this building. Closer examination revealed that it was structurally unsound. The Authority disassembled the building and removed it from its original location. Nothing currently remains except for interior fixtures and some metal panels that have been stored.

After considerable discussion, Commission members agreed that the Authority retain the "idea" of a free-standing enclosed restaurant building in the Market at the location of the Down Home Diner, even though such a building might be incompatible with recently adopted guidelines for future development.

The Commission unanimously approved a motion to recommend that the Convention Center Authority approve the construction of an enclosed restaurant in the Market if proposed in the future. The Commission members and staff ask that the Market authorities and Commission Staff work on trying to find a way to rebuild the diner.

The Report on Staff Activities, September 1992, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer.

*Certified Local Government, Educational Session of Colonial Architecture in Philadelphia, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer.

To maintain Certified Local Government status the National Park Service requires the Philadelphia Historical Commission to present eight hours of preservation education per year. In partial fulfillment of this obligation Mr. Tyler presented Commission members with a lecture on Colonial Architecture in Philadelphia. Because of the arrival of members of the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority and the many involved issues that the Commission considered during the discussion that ensued, this lecture was interrupted. Mr. Tyler will conclude the presentation at the next Commission meeting on 11 November 1992.

Respectfully submitted,

Ira Kauderer,