

**THE MINUTES OF THE 387th STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

9 November 1994

**Wayne Spilove, Chairperson
City Council Caucus Room
Room 401 City Hall**

Present

Wayne Spilove
Ron Barber, Commerce Department
David Brownlee
Barbara Kaplan, City Planning Commission
Arlene Matzkin
Susan Rabinovitch
John Street, City Council
Robert Vance, City Planning Commission
Peter VanderHeide, Department of Public Property
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing and Community Development
Stephanie Wolf

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Lori Plavin Salganicoff, Historic Preservation Specialist
Jeffrey Barr, Historical Research Technician
Jeffrey First, Office of the City Solicitor

Also

Eugene Dichter, Center City Residents Association (CCRA)
Ben Bernstein, Resident of District
Geraldine Bernstein, Resident of District
Stephen C. Josel, 2019 Walnut Street
Bruce Robinson, Towmed Ltd. (Medical Towers Building, 251 S. 17th St.)
Nannette George, 32 S. 22nd Street
Gretchen Worden, College of Physicians of Philadelphia
Nancy Widall, 417 S. Carlisle Street
Zelda Wolf, 1 Independence Place
Rosemarie Scarpulla, 240 S. 3rd Street
Roslyn Herchick, 220 W. Rittenhouse Sq., 11-D
Lois Brody, 220 W. Rittenhouse Sq., 14-D
Jennifer Goodman, Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Milton Marks, Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Mathew Grubel, Student, University of Pennsylvania
Joseph Straus, Jr., The Rubin Organization, Inc.
Gregory McCauley, 2101 Pine Street
Julia Haddad, 1623 Pine Street

Julie Stowe, National Society of Colonial Dames
Sinclair Ziesing, National Society of Colonial Dames
James T. Giblin, General Manager, 2101 Cooperative, Inc.
Carole Price Shanis, President, Philadelphia Art Alliance
Randolph E. Schader, 248 S. 21st Street
Seldia Blatman, 2124 St. James Place
Bill Fisher, 223 S. Van Pelt Street
Faith Lemmer, 236 Pine Street
Dana Close, 407 S. 22nd Street
Joseph Miller, 1913 Delancey Street
Margaret Dugan, 416 S. Van Pelt Street
Ajay V. Reshkoff, 1520 Spruce Street, #501
George L. Compton, 1202 Hopkinson House
Adam Schneider, 2016 Waverly Street
Neil Benson, 1514 Waverly Street
Lolly LaGreca, 2319 Delancey Street
Catharine K. Franklin, 56 West Penn
James Ingess, 48 E. Penn Street
Ricardo C. Jackson, 334 S. 15th Street
Elyssa Kane, 280 S. 23rd Street
Kathy Edwards, Director, The Print Club, 1614 Latimer Street
Walter Haase, 267 S. Van Pelt Street
Calista Cleary, Student, University of Pennsylvania
N. L. Krause, 2108-10-12 & 18 Sansom Street, 2109-11 Walnut Street
Gwendolyn B. Tucker, Joint Community Council, 6447 Sprague Street
H. Rubin, 2003 Chestnut Street
David Hollenberg, 200 Chestnut Street
William Dupont, AIA Philadelphia
Martin Jay Rosenblum, 1718 Pine Street
Robert Hartzler, 5304 Baring Street
Alison McDowell, Student, University of Pennsylvania
Christen Smith, 2033 Spruce Street
Mary Hohl, 2314 Spruce Street
Victoria Dworski, 1901 Walnut Street, #15E
Earni Young, Daily News
Louis Terme, Trinity Memorial Church
Lenard L. Wolffe, Rittenhouse Savoy
Audrey Walters, 1828 Spruce Street
Arthur J. Lendo, Peirce College, 1420 Pine Street
Matthew W. White, 1701 Delancey Place, 10th Presbyterian Church
Bettina Ricks, 328 S. 17th Street
Harriette Jaffe
Stephen J. Cantor, 1903 Pine Street
James V. Banta 4400 Pine Street
Dorothy S. Krotzer, 2314 Spruce Street
Elmus Barnard, Jr., Phila. Society for Services to Children, 415 S. 15th Street
Judith Eden, CCRA, 335 S. 16th Street
A. W. Ridgway, CCRA, 1525 Pine Street
Susan Stitt, Historical Society of Pennsylvania & 2135 Cypress Street

Isolde Popp, Fidler Square Resident
Alice Coneybeer, University of Pennsylvania, 2401 Spruce Street
Dorut Hyl Heller, 2404 Manning Street
Sherrill Joyner, Society Hill
Huch Maus, 1523 Pine Street
Nikki Marx, 2134 St. James Place
Alice Homolka, Office of Councilman Longstreth
Elizabeth Harvey, 2017 Spruce Street
Ross Wilson, Parkway Corporation
C. Lewis, University of Pennsylvania
M. Williams, East Park Historical Society, 1837 N. 33rd Street
Ellen Giacobbe Clark, CCRA
Maria Romanach, 2143 Locust Street
Ellen D. Lipscomb, 2139 Lombard Street
Robert J. Cook, 2139 Lombard Street
Ann Agee, 257 S. 24th Street
Jeanette M. Oleskaw, 2206 Manning Street
Milon Carolau, 1905 Spruce Street
Barbara S. Gilbert, 1920 Rittenhouse Square
Charles Gottesman, 251 S. 22nd Street
Howard Kittell, Chestnut Hill Historical Society
Leni Franke, The Dorchester
Jim Toney, University of Pennsylvania
Henry Magaziner
Wanda Motley, Philadelphia Inquirer
Dr. Jaipaul, 1610 Locust Street
Alison Douglas Kuot, 2025 Delancey Place
Randy Cotton, Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation
Vernon Anastasio, 2503 Naudain Street
Lenore Millhollen, 2047 Waverly Street

The 387th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Wayne Spilove, Chairperson.

THE MINUTES of the 386th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 12 October 1994, Wayne Spilove, Chairperson, were approved by unanimous vote and adopted upon a motion made by Dr. Wolf and seconded by Mr. Wilds.

At the request of Mr. Spilove, members of the Historical Commission introduced themselves to those in attendance.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, 25 October 1994, Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson:

200-216 SOUTH BROAD STREET

Charles Carter Newman, Architect

PROPOSAL: Entrance Canopy

Architectural Committee recommendation: Approval, contingent upon the submission to Commission staff of drawings showing the metal-backed canopy proposal with less retail graphics and of samples of the painted metal, adjacent awning fabric, and proposed lighting paint colors.

This submission calls for the replacement of a metal canopy which is the subject of a violation for construction without a permit. The proposed canopy would consist of colorful food and clothing graphics on 1/8" aluminum attached to a matte blue metal backing and overlaid with a metal grid. The graphics would be cut from the existing awning. The color of the metal backing would match adjacent awnings.

Dr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee which was seconded by Dr. Wolf and passed by unanimous vote.

INDEPENDENCE SQUARE GROUP OF BUILDINGS**PROPOSAL: Seismic Retrofit**

Architectural Committee recommendation: The Committee recommended agreeing with the finding of the National Park Service and its consultant, Keast and Hood, that until "a rational basis of qualifying that there is a strong credible probability of a significant event occurring in this region of the country, we advise against the type of structural intervention that would satisfy the current code requirements for new buildings." Ms. Pentz and Mr. Hollenberg abstained from voting.

The National Park Service requested Historical Commission comment on the issue of the seismic retrofitting of the Independence Square group of buildings. At the request of the National Park Service, Keast and Hood, structural engineers, studied the question and found that this alteration would necessitate significant intervention and rebuilding of the structures. Given the low likelihood of significant seismic activity in the area, the seismic retrofit was not recommended.

Dr. Wolf made a motion to support the finding of the National Park Service which was seconded by Dr. Brownlee and passed by unanimous vote.

COMMANDANT'S HOUSE, FORT MIFFLIN

Charles Evers, Tony Atkin Architects

Jean K. Wolf, Tony Atkin Architects

PROPOSAL: Conceptual Approval: Restoration and Rehabilitation

Architectural Committee recommendation: The Committee recommended conceptual approval of the project.

This proposal calls for the restoration and rehabilitation of Fort Mifflin's Commandant's House, an 18th century building with 19th century alterations which burned in 1980. In this fire, and the subsequent period of neglect, the roof was destroyed and exterior walls were structurally compromised. The Applicant undertook a great deal of documentary and physical investigation prior to submitting this

proposal.

The restoration/rehabilitation will consist of a reconstruction of the roof trusses, stabilization and some reconstruction of the walls, changes to the interior, changing the portico windows from rectangular to large arched openings, constructing a cupola with a small finial on top of the roof, and restuccoing the building.

Dr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee and approve the project in concept. This was seconded by Mr. Wilds and passed by unanimous vote.

901 SOUTH BROAD STREET, RIDGWAY LIBRARY/C.A.P.A.

Nilo Regojo, Kise Franks and Straw Architects

PROPOSAL: Addition and Rehabilitation

No vote was taken as this presentation was a progress report. The proposed material of the base has been changed from brick to concrete masonry units and an historically appropriate design for new metal windows was presented.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION

Mr. Spilove welcomed all in attendance to the hearing to consider the eligibility of the Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District for entry on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. An eligible resource would meet one or more of the criteria for eligibility described in the City's Preservation Ordinance, Section 14-2007 of the Philadelphia Code. Mr. Spilove requested from those who spoke that they address their comments to the essential question of eligibility and limit their remarks to five minutes each. Persons speaking were heard in the order in which they signed up to speak.

Mr. Spilove announced that, in order to hear those who could not attend this meeting, another hearing would be held in the community on Tuesday, 15 November 1994, in the Auditorium of the Pepper Pavilion, Graduate Hospital, 1800 Lombard Street. Hearings will continue to complete this process.

Dr. Brownlee, Chair of the Committee on Historic Designation, reported on that Committee's unanimous recommendation in favor of the establishment of the Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District.

Prior to his presentation on the character and history of the district, Mr. Tyler described that 60 days prior to this hearing, written notification of the meeting was mailed to owners of properties within the district. In addition, notice posters were placed within the district, and notice was published in a newspaper of general circulation. Also as prescribed by ordinance, the nomination was submitted to the City Planning Commission for comment, which unanimously endorsed the nomination at a public meeting held on 20 October 1994. Copies of written comments sent to the Commission offices were distributed to each Commission member and form a portion of the record of this meeting.

Mr. Tyler then described the Commission's review processes. The Department of Licenses and Inspections refers all building permit applications for historic properties to the Commission. The

Commission regulates only the exterior appearance of a building, including reroofing, masonry cleaning, pointing and the painting of exterior masonry (but not exterior trim). The staff immediately approves permit applications for interior work that does not affect the exterior of a building. In 1993, the staff approved 92.9% of the permit applications referred to the Commission without referral to its Architectural Committee. Many of these approvals occurred on the day of submission. Consultation with the staff often results in a mutually satisfactory solution and design.

Mr. Tyler also explained that the Commission works only with existing conditions and only reviews the scope of work that an owner chooses to undertake. However, in the event of demolition by neglect, the Commission may ask the Department of Licenses and Inspections to inspect a property and to order the owner to repair -- not restore -- the building. The Department has the same authority over all buildings in the City under other provisions of the Philadelphia Code.

There is an administrative appeal of Commission decisions through the Board of Licenses and Inspections Review. In addition, the Commission has no jurisdiction over use; that is a zoning issue. Finally, Mr. Tyler stated that historic designation is not a factor in the assessment of property taxes.

Turning to the nomination of the Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District, Mr. Tyler remarked that the study and preparation of the nomination have occupied many people for many years. Mr. Tyler thanked Mr. Baron, Ms. Plavin Salganicoff, those who worked on the nomination years ago, the countless volunteers of the Center City Residents Association, the Preservation Coalition, and the members of the Designation Committee.

Mr. Tyler then proceeded to illustrate the Rittenhouse Fitler district as an extraordinary historical and cultural resource for its history, architecture, and scope. It is a clearly distinguishable district of approximately 2,360 buildings which have been part of this almost exclusively residential neighborhood for nearly a century and a half. The degree of integrity of the district is extremely high; less than seven percent of the buildings within the boundaries are described as "Non-Contributing." By way of contrast, the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Office has considered districts for historic designation which have as many as twenty percent of their structures labeled "Non-Contributing."

The general boundaries were described by Mr. Tyler as being west of the Broad Street commercial corridor, where different historical uses and buildings create a different cityscape. To the north, the commercial spine south of Market Street provides a similar, wider demarkation that reaches down to create the sloping northeast corridor. The western boundary is created by a change in use and architectural type. Here, great industrial loft buildings sprang up along the Schuylkill River. The southern boundary, although straighter, is more complicated. In some places the district stops on the edge of large plots of cleared land. In others, broad bands of new construction define the boundaries. In yet others, the streetscape contains historic features but lacks the density, continuity and integrity essential for a district.

Mr. Tyler then discussed the architectural history of the district in three phases. First, speculators built housing with handsome east to west and west to east rows from the late 1820s to 1870s. Second, single architect-designed townhouses were built between c. 1870 and c. 1914 by some of the greatest architects of their day. Third, the period since World War I has seen the height of the district's skyline lifted by tall apartment buildings. Mr. Tyler went on to describe several of the buildings themselves. In conjunction with this, he noted that thousands of the City's most important people have lived in the houses of the major streets during the past 170 years, with yet more thousands of ordinary citizens in the dwellings of the small streets.

Mr. Tyler concluded his presentation by stating that this district has consistently extracted the best and most original work from Philadelphia's best architects. Their work, with all of its variety, is woven together into a single fabric whose great unifying strength is a respect for precedent and for context, which inspired rather than dampened the imagination of these designers.

Dr. Brownlee reported once again on that Committee's unanimous recommendation that the Rittenhouse Fittler Residential Historic District be added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Council President Street commended the Commission staff for work performed in preparation for this nomination. Questioning the boundaries of the district, President Street asked about the decision to eliminate the part of the area bounded by 15th Street on the east, Latimer on the south, and Sansom and Chestnut Streets on the north to 17th Street. Mr. Tyler pointed to the lack of density of historically residential buildings in the zone the district as proposed. President Street requested a color coded map showing the historic uses of this area. He later added the western edge of the boundary to this request.

President Street then asked for a clarification of the extent to which owners of non-contributing buildings within the district are bound by the requirements of contributing buildings. Mr. Tyler explained that non-contributing buildings are also subject to review, as provided in the Rules and Regulations, but such review would be performed at staff level within five days of submission. Most permits have been shown to take far less time. If the Applicant is dissatisfied with the staff's position at that time, the Applicant may go to the Architecture Committee, and if that is not satisfactory, to the Commission, and if that is not satisfactory, to the Board of Licenses and Inspections Review. The basis for this provision is that although not contributing, alterations to them could have a significant effect on the district.

President Street asked if an example of this could be a plan to place a large fast food restaurant with large plastic signage in the middle of a block. Mr. Tyler responded that the restaurant's typical design would not be considered sympathetic, but that if the area were zoned for commercial use, a discrete fast food restaurant could be acceptable. Mr. Tyler reiterated that the Commission's concern is with design; use is a zoning issue.

President Street then asked if owner notification of historic designation upon transfer of deed has been pursued. Mr. Tyler stated that the Department of Records once noted this information on deeds, and that it would be very helpful if City Council could encourage the Department to once again enter notice of designation on deeds. President Street offered to do so.

President Street stated and Mr. Tyler affirmed that every building will be designated as contributing, non-contributing, or significant to the historic district.

Beginning the public testimony portion of the meeting, Mr. Spilove reminded speakers to restrict their comments to five minutes in length. The following are paraphrased versions of the statements given:

Mr. Eugene Dichter, architect, resident, and Center City Residents Association (CCRA) President, stated that Rittenhouse is an important community and a uniquely successful mix of residential, cultural, and commercial uses. He characterized the area as culturally, financially, ethnically, and architecturally diverse and reported that the CCRA Board of Directors voted in favor of the designation.

President Street asked Mr. Dichter about the process that the Board undertook which resulted in the vote to endorse the district. After giving a brief description of the long history of the CCRA with the

Rittenhouse Fidler district nomination, Mr. Dichter stated that the vote of the 30 member board took place subsequent to an October 24th CCRA general meeting. Prior to this meeting, a newsletter was sent from CCRA to its members describing the designation, its benefits and restrictions, and residents were invited to attend the meeting with questions and comments.

Ms. Bobbye Burke was called to the speaker's desk to elaborate on the 24 October general meeting, and stated that it was a neighborhood information meeting at St. Patrick's Church Hall. She stated that the meeting had a low attendance which she thought indicated that most questions about the district had been answered through the mailings and other meetings.

Mr. Otto Sperr, architect and a 30 year resident, thanked President Street and the Commission for holding this hearing and voiced his support for the designation. He spoke of his personal experiences in the neighborhood, his positive experiences with the Commission, and the personal and professional benefits gained from the historic neighborhood.

Ms. Bobbye Burke, a 40 year resident, co-author of *Historic Rittenhouse*, past President of CCRA, and board member of the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, compared the current use of public funds for community development to the Rittenhouse area's rejuvenation with private funds over the last 40 years. Ms. Burke described the changes to the area, including the planting of over 1,000 trees, the opening of a public school, the refurbishment of Rittenhouse Square, and the formation of "Friends of Rittenhouse Square" for its maintenance. She stated her hope that a "yes" vote will result from these meetings, for that would support and recognize this ongoing effort and further the goal of improving and preserving the neighborhood.

Ms. Bernice Hamel, President of the Headhouse Conservancy and member of the Society Hill Civic Association, stated that representatives from all of the proposed districts will be speaking or otherwise submitting testimony in strong support of this nomination. She reported that Society Hill residents are strongly in favor of the designation of all six proposed districts and also spoke about the history and character of Society Hill. She thanked the Preservation Coalition for its help in coordinating the nominations of the historic districts.

Mr. Bruce Robinson, an officer of Towmed Ltd., owner of the Medical Arts Building at 251 S. 17th Street, spoke of historic designation as an undue hardship -- a taking for which the company would have to seek compensation from the City. He stated that real estate in Philadelphia recently has been selling and renting at extremely low prices and the company thinks the proposed designation will reduce the value of its property.

Mr. Street asked whether the building is listed as contributing or non-contributing, and Mr. Robinson stated that he believed the building to be listed as non-contributing. Referring to the inventory, Mr. Street stated that the building is actually listed as contributing. Mr. Street then asked Mr. Robinson to elaborate on how the establishment of this district would negatively affect the value of the property. Mr. Robinson responded that if any exterior repairs are necessary, the Commission may not agree with the most economically feasible measure and may also add additional work to the scope. Their legal counsel advised that additional costs would be incurred in maintaining a building with no historical significance to Historical Commission standards.

In the interest of answering the concerns of Mr. Robinson but also allowing the hearing to continue, Mr. Street suggested to Mr. Robinson that he confer with staff. Mr. Robinson stated that he would welcome and appreciate that opportunity and accepted Mr. Tyler's business card.

Pat Harner has lived and worked in the neighborhood for 25 years, is a board member of CCRA, and a Town Watch group founder. She also owns residential and commercial properties within the proposed district. She considers this designation and also security to be of paramount importance in establishing a good quality of life in Center City.

Mr. Street asked if Ms. Harner anticipated any change in her commercial property's value. She responded that she imagined no negative impact on the property value, and that it would in fact positively impact the neighborhood and therefore the value of the building. She added that the designation would be one more sign that people care.

Before the next speaker was called, Mr. Street requested information about the economic impact of historic designation. Mr. Tyler noted that this information has been made available to all on the Commission and is available as well to the general public.

Julia Haddad, a resident of 1623 Pine Street and one of the founders of the Rittenhouse Town Watch, characterized the Rittenhouse Fidler area as unique in the United States and stressed that it should not be taken for granted. She stated her support for the district's historic designation. She added that the residential character of the district is very important; it is safer because there are always people on the streets. She also declared her admiration for the architecture of the Art Deco Medical Arts Building.

William Fisher, spoke as a resident of the district, a practicing architect, and the representative of the Philadelphia American Institute of Architects (AIA) Preservation Committee in strong favor of the designation. Mr. Fisher lives in an 1867 vernacular carriage house which is not individually notable, but contributes greatly to the streetscape. He stated that it is the ability to designate buildings such as this that makes district designations so valuable. He then read a letter from the Philadelphia Chapter of the AIA which states that organization's strong support of the designation. A copy of the letter was given to Commission staff.

Randolph Schader, a dentist working and living in the district, also owns a building in the neighborhood on which some work has recently been performed. He stated that he had worked successfully with Randal Baron of the Commission staff on these changes, and had also sought Certified Rehabilitation Tax Credits. Dr. Schader supports the district designation, but warned that property owners should be aware that tax credits are contingent upon National Park Service approval of *interior* changes as well as the exterior work reviewed by the Commission. Mr. Tyler stated that it is standard practice in the Commission office that if an applicant informs the staff of an intention to seek the tax credit as well as a building permit, the difference is made clear and a thorough photographic record is recommended. Dr. Brownlee briefly elaborated on the differences in regulations and benefits between local and federal historic designation.

James Igess, spoke on behalf of the Penn Knox/Wister neighborhood. First describing the history and architectural character of his neighborhood, Mr. Igess declared its unequivocal support of the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District designation. He said that every citizen of Philadelphia as well as the residents of the district would benefit from the protection offered by historic designation.

Lolly LaGreca is co-owner of Midtown Realty and a 20 year resident of the district. She witnessed and participated in the district's rejuvenation, including a great increase in owner occupation of properties, and strongly supports designation. She observed that in her experience designation adds to property values.

Hugh Moss, a resident of 1523 Pine Street for 35 years, described his research into the earliest settlement history of the region. His offer to submit copies of his findings to the Commission was gratefully accepted.

Dr. Jipaul owns 1610 Locust Street, an historically significant building in which he has been an ancient art dealer for ten years. He bought the building two years ago when served with a notice to vacate owing to the building's owners plans for its demolition. With the help of Randal Baron, Dr. Jipaul restored the building inside and out utilizing Certified Rehabilitation Tax Credits. He stated his strong support for the Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District designation so that something of value would be left for our children.

Harriette Jaffe spoke in favor of the designation, adding that she had hoped the regulations could have been stronger so that they would never allow historic buildings to be demolished, would regulate interiors, and would offer some screening of preservation contractors.

Dr. Moses Williams, Chairman of the East Park Historical Society located in Strawberry Mansion, voiced the Society's strong support of the Rittenhouse Fitler designation. After describing rehabilitation efforts undertaken by the Society, he added his positive anticipation of the designation of the Strawberry Mansion Historic District.

Maria Romanach, an architect and resident/owner of 2143 Locust Street, expressed her opposition of the designation. Stating that the designation and the subsequent regulatory abilities of the Historical Commission would infringe on her property rights, she voiced concern that designation would mean freezing buildings at an arbitrary date. She stated that no specific criteria exists to guide the Historical Commission's review of proposed alterations. She suggested that if the City wants to do something to improve the area, let it pick up the trash in an orderly and timely fashion, repair the streets, make the City safer, and provide trash cans, but it should not try to dictate what is appropriate, accurate, or sympathetic when it comes to renovation. She anticipated that people will modify their buildings in appropriate, accurate and sympathetic manners without the help of the Historical Commission.

Ms. Romanach described that, working as a practicing architect, she has had to deal with the "mindless requests and interventions, all for nothing" by the Department of Licenses and Inspections. She related that innumerable delays at the Department has caused her clients to believe that Philadelphia is not a place to live and do business. She suggested the shelving of the Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District nomination, delaying hearings for several years or forever. Recalling the 8 November sweep of Republicans into several offices across the nation, Ms. Romanach stated that Americans do not want any more "mindless government interference."

Mr. Vance asked Ms. Romanach for a clarification of her position, asking her if she believes the designation would not preserve the character of the district or if the character itself is not worth preserving. Ms. Romanach responded that both are true, but that character should be allowed to evolve over time and that the City of Philadelphia does not have the richness of the architecture of Paris or Barcelona or of many cities around the world. She added that the best of Philadelphia architecture is yet to come.

Howard Kittell, speaking on behalf of the Chestnut Hill Historical Society, as president of Fifth Church of Christ Scientist at 1915 Pine Street, as a member of the Philadelphia preservation community, and as a recently former resident of the Rittenhouse neighborhood, urged the Commission to vote for the designation of the Rittenhouse Fitler Residential Historic District.

Mr. Kittell outlined the reasons for his support. First, the preservation of this area, its buildings and character, should be one of the City's highest priorities. He described the historic architecture as essential in keeping Rittenhouse Fittler a desirable living environment. He compared the Commission's review to those reviews afforded by zoning and building codes. Second, he stated that designation would assure property owners that they can invest in their buildings with a sense of confidence that their investment will be protected by a more stable community.

Third, speaking for Fifth Church of Christ Scientist, Mr. Kittell stated that he recognized that designation would mean that the Church will not be able to make any unreviewed changes to the facade. He added that had this been a designated building twenty-five years ago, the Church would not have been able to sandblast the building's facade brick, an ill-advised measure which has resulted in the need for costly repair of the now deteriorating brick. Fourth, he related the congregation's understanding of the inherent benefit the district would provide in keeping property values stable.

Henry Magaziner currently resides at 1901 Walnut Street and has been a property owner in the district since 1957. He stated his strong endorsement of the district. Mr. Magaziner described himself as an architect who has done a great deal of work on historic buildings in Philadelphia, New York, and Harrisburg without any trouble in rehabilitating historic buildings for today's uses. He also spoke of his positive experiences with the Historical Commission. He cited a Society Hill house where he extensively altered the rear and the interior and while restoring the front facade. He believes the designation will help stabilize real estate values and increase tourism. He also spoke of similar support by Eliza Chafen who was unable to attend the meeting and asked him to bring her positive endorsement.

Ann Agee, who recently purchased a property within but at the edge of the district's boundaries, expressed appreciation for the efforts to designate and support for the "foresighted" goals. She took issue with a comment made previously that building owners will not harm historic buildings if there is no Commission review, stating that a neighbor has recently punched a hole in his facade for an air conditioner. She stated that this has shown her the need for protection; without review the architecture of the district could easily suffer many insults of this sort, the accumulation of which would make a big difference.

Clara Lewis, a planner interested in preservation, registered her support personally and professionally. She stated that the design guidance afforded by this designation would be advantageous in keeping the historic character in the area. Ms. Lewis' family has lived at 1700 Addison Street for many generations and is expecting to be able to introduce a newborn grandson to the area in a few days. She stated her hope that her grandson will be able to show his grandson the history from which he has descended.

Barbara Gilbert, a resident and homeowner in the neighborhood, spoke for herself and her husband who is wheelchair bound. She stated that her experience with the Commission staff has been that they are sensitive to handicapped access matters, although the ordinance does not address this issue. She asked the Commission for assurance that the historic designation will not become an impediment to access.

Dr. Brownlee described the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which applies to new architecture as well as to the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Mr. Tyler added that the ordinance specifies that the Commission may be guided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which has recently been amended to include a section on ADA compliance. He stated that the staff's most common experience has been owners who have tried to use the Historical Commission to avoid compliance and could think of no instance where they succeeded. The staff has, in fact, approved several exterior ramps immediately upon submission to the Commission.

The Commission's having heard all those who wished to speak at this meeting, Mr. Spilove thanked Mr. Baron, Ms. Plavin Salganicoff, and Mr. Tyler for the work performed in preparation for this designation. He also thanked all those who testified. Mr. Spilove announced that the second hearing of the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District would be held at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, 15 November 1994, at the Pepper Pavilion of Graduate Hospital, 1800 Lombard Street.

REPORT of the Activities of the Historical Commission Staff, October 1994, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer, was adopted by unanimous vote.

A motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Brownlee, seconded by Mr. Wilds and approved by unanimous vote at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Plavin Salganicoff