

**THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street**

29 April 1993

Present

Arlene Matzkin, AIA, Chairperson
William Cornell, P.E., Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia
Herb Levy, FAIA
Penelope Batcheler
David Hollenberg, National Park Service

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

Also

Nicholas Irwin, The Window Associates, Inc.
Sam Wharton, EFCO
Michael Roberts, The Window Associates, Inc. Lewis Thrower
Warren Huff, City Planning Commission
Calvin Hou, Garrison Architects
Dan Yentz, Binswanger
Victor Spiotto, Septa
Bruce Osborne, Septa, Facilities Engineer
Patricia Bonan
Carroll Barnes
Edmond Tayoun
John P. Sabatina
Richard S. Burns
Peter C. Benton, John Milner Associates, Inc.
Robert Wayne Tomlinson, City of Philadelphia, Public Property
Bill Burke, Art Commission
Hyman Myers, Vitetta Group

Proposals

Queen Lane Railroad Station: This proposal calls for renovating this Victorian train station. 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 first discussed the replacement of the millwork railing on second story porch. Committee members agreed that the new railing, to be turned according to historic drawings, should 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, either a variance should be sought or an additional new railing, conforming to code, should be added, on top of the original looking piece. Mr. Levy requested that shop drawings of the millwork railing be presented when available.

The Committee unanimously applauded Septa's decision to improve this historic structure. The plans were approved as presented. Shop drawings for the railing and new doors should be presented to staff for approval.

Packard Building, 15th & Chestnut Streets: 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. At a preliminary meeting Dr. Tyler advised the applicants that the prototype lacked a reveal. The applicants advised the Committee that this detail could be achieved in the new windows.

Mr. Levy noted that the drawings show screens, which being out of character with the building, should be deleted. Next, Mr. Levy asked whether the meeting rail could be made narrower and closer to the size of those on the original windows. Sam Wharton, a representative of the window manufacturer, advised the Committee that the manufacturers could reduce the size of the meeting rail by about 3/8s of an inch.

Mr. Baron confirmed with the architects that the new windows would be divided exactly in half as they are presently. The architects added that windows would be replaced floor by floor, as new tenants are obtained.

Mr. Hollenberg encouraged the representatives of the building to retain several of the original windows in a non-tenant space.

The Committee voted to approve the replacement of the original wooden windows on the 3rd through 18th floors with 1/1 aluminum windows constructed to approximate the originals. Revised drawings reflecting the Committee's recommendations must be presented to the staff for final approval.

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 claims 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.

Ms. Patricia Bonan, owner, addressed the Committee. She stated that the hole was cut in the masonry wall six years ago. Since others on the block have not done the same thing since, she claimed that legalizing the through wall air conditioner would not encourage others to follow suit. Ms. Bonan acknowledged that the contractor who installed the air conditioner neglected to get a permit for it.

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 members explained to Ms. Bonan that she may appear before the Commission to voice her concerns about the six years that elapsed between the time she commissioned the illegal work and issuance of the violation. They also noted that if a building permit was obtained at the time the work was done, she would have been notified of Historical Commission requirements.

The Committee voted unanimously to disapprove the illegal work.

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.

The owner of the house, Mr. Burns, appeared with his lawyer, Mr. Sabatina. They explained that Mr. Burns would like to open a driving range on the site. Committee members noted the deteriorated state of the building and therefore decided not to require complete restoration. They recommended that a simple horizontal cornice be constructed across the front of the building. Secondly, the applicant 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.

Mr. Baron that this house was just down the block from another historic house where the owners worked without a permit and had been required to restore the building. Mr. Baron added that the Commission could take a position different from that of the Committee due to input from community groups, and a final decision will be reached by the Commission on May 12th. Dr. Tyler apprised the applicant that even if the Department of Licenses and Inspections removes the "stop work" order, any work that occurs between now and the Commission meeting would be done at the risk of the owner.

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.

Architect Peter Benton 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.

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 addressed the Committee. He stated that Planning opposes legalization of this incursion into the public way. That Commission is, however, prepared to support a sidewalk cafe at this location, as long as it was not a permanent structure. Bill Burke of the Art Commission stated that the Art Commission opposed the construction of this platform when it was originally proposed, as did the Historical Commission.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend removal of this illegal concrete platform.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ira Kauderer