

THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, April 29, 1958

Held in Room 813, City Hall Annex, 3:30 PM

Present: Mrs. Richardson Dilworth
Mr. Harry A. Batten
Mr. R. Norris Williams, II.
Mr. Charles E. Peterson
Mr. Grant M. Simon Chairman

Also present: Mr. Edmund M. Bacon, Director, City Planning Commission
Mr. James D. Murphy, Planning Director, Old Philadelphia
Development Corporation
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkoom, Historian for the Commission
Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Executive Secretary

The Minutes of the March 25th Meeting were approved.

The Chairman introduced Mr. Bacon, who read in outline a proposal for creating an historic zone in the Society Hill area. He will send a copy of this to each member of the Commission. In general the ordinance will give the agency administering it, the right to pass on all exterior alterations made to existing buildings, and the design of all new buildings in the area from Front Street to Seventh and from Walnut to Lombard Streets. Mr. Bacon proposed that the historic zone be placed under the jurisdiction of the Art Commission, being under the impression that the Historical Commission did not want to undertake the responsibility. Mr. Bacon announced that on Tuesday May 6th, there will be an open meeting held by the City Planning Commission, and that members of this Commission will be welcome to attend.

Mr. Batten objected to the plan that the Art Commission administer the district. He maintained that the Art Commission is not qualified to act on historical architectural details. Mr. Williams and Mr. Peterson agreed. Mr. Bacon said he would recommend to Dr. G. Holmes Perkins that the Historical Commission be named to administer this historic district instead of the Art Commission. It was pointed out that the Commission will need to expand its technical staff and consequently will need a larger budget if it is to take on these new duties.

PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL NURSES' HOME

Mr. Simon asked that the letter from Mr. Ralsky be read, which urged the Commission to maintain its original position of opposition to the demolition of the Spruce Street houses (722 to 730) to make room for a new Nurses' Home until the use of an alternate site on the north side of Pine Street can be considered by the Hospital and the City. The Commission endorsed this proposal. Mr. Simon was directed to decide for the Commission which group of houses, those on Spruce or those on Pine, the Commission preferred to save. He was also asked to report the Commission's resolution to Mr. T. Truxtun Hare, Jr.

MR. CANADAY'S HOUSE, SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON SQUARE

An informal discussion relative to the possibility of saving this house, revealed the fact that Mr. Canaday has expressed his desire to do anything necessary to preserve it from demolition.

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THE MATTHEW NEWKIRK HOUSE

Mr. Peterson commented that he had seen a photograph of the newkirk house in the first history of architecture published in this country. Mr. Simon reported on correspondence between Mrs. Boden, a descendant of Matthew Newkirk, her attorney and himself. Mrs. Boden is prepared to finance the removal of the portico from Princeton to Philadelphia if a suitable location can be found for it.

KIRKBRIDE'S

Mr. Simon read two paragraphs from Mr. Baker's letter of April 22nd. Mr. Charles A. Baker, Commissioner of Records, wrote regarding the use of Kirkbride's as a city records' building, in such a way that Mr. Simon's reply had to stress the fact that the Commission was not critical of the way the records are presently being kept, but that the intention, in a letter to Mr. Donald C. Wagner, written by Mr. Simon on April 7, 1958, was to endeavor to find a use for Kirkbride's in order to preserve it. The members of the Commission agreed that Mr. Williams might speak to Mr. Hughes, the City Archivist, and report the results of his conference. Mr. Williams suggested that the Pennsylvania Hospital be advised that the Commission is postponing a decision on this matter. Mr. Simon reported that the Rusti Mansion is scheduled to be preserved under the direction of the City's Recreation Department.

SOUTHWARK

Tabled for a future meeting

EAST FRONT OF THE CAPITOL

Mrs. Tinkcom reported that letters had been written by the Commission to Senator Clark and to the five Representatives of this district. The matter is to rest.

108 ELFRETH'S ALLEY

The executive secretary was directed to ask the department of Licences and Inspections whether a permit has been given for restoration, and whether work is being continued in spite of the rejection of submitted drawings of the facade.

308 DELANCEY STREET

It was suggested by Mr. Williams that a letter be sent to the owner, saying in effect, that on the basis of the application, the Commission would not approve the alterations, but that it would have to see the plans before a final decision could be given.

Mr. Simon left the Meeting early to attend the Mayor's Quarterly Commissioner's Meeting at the United States Naval Base; he asked Mr. Williams to take the Chair.

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 P. M.