

**THE MINUTES OF THE 382nd STATED MEETING OF THE  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**11 May 1994**

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

**Present**

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Wayne Spilove  
Ronald Barber, Commerce Department  
William Brown  
Stephanie Wolf  
David Brownlee  
Bennett Levin, Commissioner, Department of Licenses & Inspections  
Arlene Matzkin  
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing and Community Development  
Robert Vance, City Planning Commission  
Susan Rabinovitch

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer  
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner  
Lori Plavin Salganicoff, Historic Preservation Specialist  
Jeffrey Barr, Historical Research Technician  
Robert W. Tomlinson, Department of Public Property

**Also**

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Alicia Davis, Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young  
Grace Labouchere, 314 Catherine Street  
Marki Briggs, Shep Houston AIA  
Scott Duenow, Vitetta Group  
Tom Hine, Philadelphia Inquirer  
Jennifer Goodman, Preservation Coalition

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The 382nd Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission was called to order at 10:15am by Wayne Spilove, Chairperson.

**THE MINUTES of the 381st Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 13 April 1994, Wayne Spilove, Chairperson, were approved by unanimous vote and adopted.**

**THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, 26 April 1994, Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson:**

**City Hall**

Marki Briggs, Shep Houston AIA

**PROPOSAL: Fire Doors**

*Architectural Committee Recommendation (26 April 1994): The Committee recommended to approve the replacement of historic wood single- and double-leaf doors with arched-top fire-rated single-leaf doors faced with five and six wood panels, respectively. Applicant should be required to insure that all original doors and hardware be safely stored for reuse in the building and to provide more details of door closure and finish for staff review. Proposed exit signage should come before the Commission.*

The Applicant originally proposed to replace 6th and 7th floor historic wood single- and double-leaf doors with arched-top fire-rated doors faced with five and six wood panels, respectively. However, the doors' manufacturer has since declared that the as-yet untested arched-top version of the door will not be produced; instead the Applicant proposes to use the fire-rated flat-top version of these doors and to infill the arch with a fireproof panel.

After some discussion of available options, Commissioner Levin stated that since City Hall will soon be sprinklered, the existing historic doors may be retained. Ms. Matzkin added that the money saved by following this option would allow for the refurbishing of damaged doors and hardware as well as the replacement of existing modern metal doors with historic replicas. Mr. Levin assured the Applicant that the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L & I) would likely allow a variance for the doors, but urged them to submit an application for a group of variances desired for the building rather than asking for variances in a piecemeal fashion.

*The Commission voted unanimously to accept the motion made by Dr. Wolf and seconded by Dr. Brownlee to allow the existing historic doors to be retained, with the understanding that City Hall will soon be sprinklered both inside and outside of offices and that L & I would likely grant a variance for non-fire rated doors. Modern doors should also be replaced with either stored historic doors or historic replicas.*

**City Hall**

Lisa Soderberg, Scott Duenow, Hyman Myers, Vitetta Group, Inc.

**PROPOSAL: Conceptual Approval, Various Projects**

*Architectural Committee Recommendation (26 April 1994): The Committee recommended approval in concept of the planned restoration/rehabilitation of facade stone, cast iron, gutter, roofing, and windows. The Applicant should, however, return with better and more graphic facade lighting proposals.*

Briefly stated, the Applicant proposed to do the following:

- Clean the building's stone facade using a dry, low pressure glass-powder blasting system called Facade Gommage; an additional water soak would be used at the architrave entablatures
- Blast clean cast iron ornamentation, anchors, and dormers using walnut shells. Very deteriorated elements not located on primary facades will be replaced with differently shaped elements and the few anchors that are severely deteriorated will also be replaced.

- Replace lead-coated copper gutter liner and bituminous sheet below.
- On flat roofs, after determining optimal method of eliminating water pooling in pitch pockets, replace built-up bitumen roof and wood fiber insulation board with a modified bitumen roof more flexible than the built up bitumen. Insulate lower-level flat roofs.
- Restore two windows as samples -- one with lead paint completely removed and finished with a natural varnish, the other scraped and repainted.
- Light the eastern pavilion in a manner that does not overlight City Hall or damage the appearance of other historic buildings. Consultants to the Applicant will produce a mockup of the building to test and demonstrate quality, type, and color of lighting.

*Dr. Brownlee made a motion accepting the Committee's recommendation to approve the proposal in concept that was seconded by Mr. Wilds. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the motion for conceptual approval.*

**200-216 South Broad Street -- Bellevue Hotel Tenant Space**

Charles Gifford, Meyer and Gifford Architects

**PROPOSAL: New Signage for Rizzoli Bookstore**

*Architectural Committee Recommendation (26 April 1994): The Committee recommended approval of this proposal.*

The Applicant seeks to install two 4'x5-1/2' flags on poles, seat lit brass and acrylic signs at interior window sills, and replace the pin mounted brass "GUCCI" lettering and the current awning signage with its own. The Applicant further proposes to locate awnings at the top of each paired window opening, rather than between the paired windows as is the case with all current first floor awnings.

*Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and approve the project. This motion was seconded by Dr. Brownlee and approved by unanimous vote.*

**#1 Boathouse Row -- The New Plaisted Hall**

Lisa Armstrong, Fred Kaulbach, Armstrong Kaulbach Architects

**PROPOSAL: New Construction**

*Architectural Committee Recommendation (26 April 1994): The proposal was recommended for approval with the request that the final design for the observation tower return to the Committee and Commission for review.*

This proposed new public boathouse consists of a main building with a gymnasium, event space and concessions sited along the axis of the Art Museum and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, a concrete deck bent in plan to respond to the rest of Boathouse Row, and a free-standing observation tower -- the base of which is funded.

*Dr. Wolf moved to accept the recommendation of the Designation Committee and approve this recommendation. This motion was seconded by Dr. Brownlee and unanimously approved.*

**#10 Boat House Row – Vesper Boat Club**

Lisa Armstrong, Fred Kaulbach, Armstrong Kaulbach Architects

**PROPOSAL: Porch Alteration**

*Architectural Committee Recommendation (26 April 1994): This proposal was recommended for approval.*

The Applicant seeks to remove failing porch structural columns and carry the porch on large new brackets, owing to the movement of the river retaining wall and ground previously supporting the columns.

*Dr. Brownlee moved to accept the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and approve this recommendation. This motion was seconded by Mr. Wilds and unanimously approved.*

**#2 Boathouse Row – Fairmount Rowing Association**

John J. Kieffer, Fairmount Rowing Association

**PROPOSAL: Roof Replacement and Skylight Removal**

*Architectural Committee Recommendation (26 April 1994): The Committee voted to have Mr. Tyler and Mr. Hollenberg visit the site and make a recommendation to the Commission. After visiting the site, Mr. Tyler and Mr. Hollenberg recommended approval of both aspects of the project.*

This project, begun without a permit and brought before the Commission by Commission staff, entails the replacement of a slate roof with "slate-line" asphalt shingles and the removal of a skylight.

*Dr. Brownlee moved to accept the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and approve this recommendation. This motion was seconded by Mr. Wilds and unanimously approved.*

**103-105 Walnut Street (aka 140-142 Front Street) and 107-109 Walnut Street**

Alicia Davis, Esq., Stradley, Ronon, Stevens and Young

**PROPOSAL: Complete Demolition of Both Buildings**

*Architectural Committee Recommendation (26 April 1994): With a strong urging that every effort be made to save the buildings, the Architectural Committee recommended that the Commission refer this proposal to the Financial Hardship Committee. Decision of the permit should be deferred for six months while the matter is under consideration.*

The Applicant proposes to demolish these mid 19th-century buildings, based on Financial Hardship. Purchased in 1988 for \$1.1 million, the buildings are currently valued at \$246,000 according to the Applicant. The buildings are located within the Old City National Register Historic District, and are adjacent to the lots on which the recently demolished 115 and 117 Walnut Street buildings once stood. The loss of these buildings would leave 4 empty lots, 2 parking lots, 149 South Hancock Street, and Bookbinder's Restaurant on the block.

Mr. Tyler recommended that the issue be referred to the Financial Hardship Committee, noting that the Commission's ordinance specifies the minimum of information necessary and the Rules and Regulations describes further desirable information. Previous such proposals have required the submission of a detailed 10-year pro-forma on reasonable reuses for the buildings. Mr. Tyler suggested that the Commission request this documentation, and that upon receiving the information Commission staff will call a Financial Hardship Committee meeting.

Dr. Brownlee noted that the development of these buildings could be part of a larger development given the buildings' location within several adjacent open lots. The idea of "reasonable rate of return" was emphasized by Mr. Wilds, in contrast to highest investment return, as the ultimate criteria for a judgement of financial hardship. Dr. Wolf, concerned about demolition by neglect, asked whether the Commission had any control over the maintenance of the building during this six-month period. It was noted that a violation does exist that tells the owner to repair a wall condition and that this application does not free the owner from that obligation.

Jennifer Goodman noted that the Hardship Committee has in the past hired an independent consultant and asked that the Commission consider this early in order to afford sufficient evaluation time within the six month period. Ms. Goodman also asked about the status of the violation on 103-105 Walnut Street and restated Dr. Wolf's query about maintenance. Mr. Tyler stated that the use of outside counsel is advisable and therefore probable.

Members of the Hardship Committee are as follows:

|                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Historical Commission Chair     | Wayne Spilove     |
| Developer                       | Susan Rabinovitch |
| Architectural Historian         | David Brownlee    |
| Historical Architect            | Arlene Matzkin    |
| Chair, City Planning Commission | Robert Vance      |
| or Designee                     | Barbara Kaplan    |
| Director, OHCD                  | John Kromer       |
| or Designee                     | Scott Wilds       |

*Dr. Brownlee moved to accept the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and refer the matter to the Financial Hardship Committee. A meeting of this Committee will be called by Commission staff upon the receipt of the information required by the Commission's Ordinance and Rules and Regulations as well as the ten-year pro forma financial studies for reasonable review. No demolition permit shall be issued for at least six months while the issue is under consideration. This motion was seconded by Mr. Vance and approved by unanimous vote.*

**THE REPORT of the Designation Committee of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, 13 June 1991, Dr. David Brownlee, Chairperson:**

**401-421 North Broad Street**

**Terminal Commerce Building**

This building possesses significance in several areas, including:

1. Unique transportation-related commercial structure built by the Reading Railroad
2. Engineering as an extraordinary reinforced concrete structure
3. Association with designer William Steele and Sons, a leading design engineering firm in early 20th century Philadelphia.
4. Art Deco architectural style

*Mr. Wilds moved to accept the recommendation of the Designation Committee and approve this nomination. This motion was seconded by Dr. Wolf and approved unanimously.*

**314-320 Catharine Street****Central Talmud Torah & Yeshiva Mishkan Yisroel**

This building possesses significance in several areas, including:

1. History as a Jewish cultural landmark
2. Association with important Philadelphians
3. Beaux Arts architectural style

*Mr. Vance moved to accept the recommendation of the Designation Committee and approve this nomination. This motion was seconded by Mr. Wilds and approved unanimously.*

**THE REPORT** of the Activities of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff, March and April 1994, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer. To the Report submitted to Commission members, Mr. Tyler added the appointment of Jeffrey First as the Commission's new council from the City Solicitor's Office.

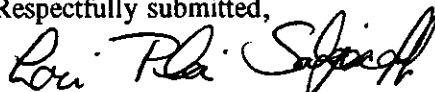
**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Levin provided an update of the activities of the Early Warning Committee, stating that the Committee will be funded with an initial grant of \$50,000 from a legislative initiative supported by Mayor Rendell and Senator Fumo.

Mr. Tyler requested an expenditure from the Harry A. Batten Memorial Fund of \$79 for a technology upgrade of the designation notification process to owners of district properties. With this disbursement the signature of Chairman Wayne Spilove may be digitized and stored in a computer file, and letters of notice may be more easily produced by the Mayor's Office of Information Services. *A motion to approve the expenditure was made by Dr. Brownlee, seconded by Ms. Matzkin, and approved by unanimous vote.*

There being no further business, Dr. Wolf asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion made and seconded, the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lori Plavin Salganicoff