

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Arlene Matzkin, Chair
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street
3 September 1996

Present

Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Tony Atkin
Herbert Levy
Suzanne Pentz

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Jeffrey Barr, Historical Research Technician
Laura Spina, Historic Preservation Specialist

Also

Stefan Metcanivc, 2123 Locust Street
Wesley Parrot, 408 South Iseminger Street
Frank Radomski, III, Frank Radomski & Sons, Inc.
Charles W. Lentz, Jr., Bell Atlantic-PA, Inc.
Joseph Slota, Philadelphia Custom Woodwork
George Thomas
John Holland, Holland Architects Ltd.
Margot Berg, Fiddlehead & Fennel
Joe Alteari, DAS Architects
Milton Marks, Preservation Alliance
Robert Virgin, R.M. Virgin Construction
Joan Ordiway
Thomas McNichol
Lenore Millhollen, Center City Residents Association
George Sfedu, 1907 Spruce Street
Vladimir Tamarkin, 21st Street Gourmet
Bernard Nearey, Rittenhouse-Fitler District
S. Fadallen, Philadelphia Planning Commission
R. Friedman, 1736 Spruce Street
Jeffery Hayes, Susan Maxman Architects
Philip Gursky, Santa Fe Foods
Raffaele Castelli, Howell Belanger Castelli, Inc.
Stanley Chow, Barnes & Noble

Ms. Matzkin called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

401 North Broad Street

Bell Atlantic-PA, Inc., Owner
Frank Radomski, Applicant
PROPOSAL: New door

Proposal: replace an inoperable fire door on the 13th Street facade with an identical door.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

907-909 Clinton Street

Joseph Warton Headley, Inc., Owner

Joseph Slota, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Facade restoration

The proposal entails various aspects to restore the two facades. Mr. Slota of Philadelphia Custom Woodwork will clean, repair or replace, if beyond repair, elements such as shutters, windows, basement window grills, and the marble door surrounds. Existing elements will guide the new work.

The Committee voted to recommend approval with staff approval of cleaning sample.

408 South Iseminger Street

Wesley Parrot, Owner/Applicant

PROPOSAL: Cleaning, pointing

The owner wishes to clean the brick and repoint the mortar joints.

The Committee voted to recommend approval with staff to approve cleaning and pointing samples.

1918, 1920, 1922 Mount Vernon Street

Philadelphia Housing Authority, Owner

Thomas Kuhar, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Cleaning, new windows and door; 1922 also repair cornice and watertable, new lintels

The Committee discussed these three properties at the same time. The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) plans to clean the brick facades, replace the windows with wood, true-muntin sash, and replace the doors on all three houses. PHA will also repair the cornice and watertable and replace the window lintels of 1922. Jeffrey Barr will monitor the work.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

2424 Pine Street

University of Pennsylvania, Owner

Willie Oliphant, Jr., Applicant

PROPOSAL: New door

Mr. Oliphant explained that the property now has a modern door. The owner wishes to replace it with a six-panel door that matches the door of the twin to this building.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

2041-2043 Spruce Street

Florence Hanker, Owner/Applicant - 2041 Spruce Street
Mark Olinger, Owner/Applicant - 2043 Spruce Street
PROPOSAL: Brownstone repair

The Committee reviewed the proposal for these properties together. The contractor, Jamison Contractors, Inc., has done work on significant properties in the city and plans to remove loose brownstone and restore the details of the facade using tinted Portland concrete-based compound called Mimic. Although preservation professionals recommend against using cement patches on brownstone because of differences in the rates of expansion, the Committee is willing to recommend approval because of the good reputation this product has with contractors in order to evaluate its effectiveness.

The Committee voted to recommend approval with staff to approve details and a patch for a color match.

127-129 Spruce Street, Man Full of Trouble Tavern

University of Pennsylvania, Owner
John Holland, Architect
PROPOSAL: Masonry repair, new roof

The proposal includes repairing and repointing the west facade, other spot pointing and a new split-shingle cedar roof.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

2017 Locust Street

George Gay, Realtor
Jennifer Carpenter, Applicant
PROPOSAL: Sign

The previous tenant in the basement store had a sign on the brownstone under the first floor window. The new tenant wishes to install a painted wood sign to reflect the new store.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

230 Market Street

J. & M. Neubauer, Owners
Margot Berg, Applicant
PROPOSAL: Sign

This storefront is designed with a sign band. The store owner wishes to put a painted wood sign in the band.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

401 South Iseminger Street

Park Huntington, Owner

Chris Huntington, Applicant

PROPOSAL: New windows, stucco, paint

This proposal has several aspects: first, the replacement of the second floor windows with wood, true-muntin sash; second, restucco the rear extension; third, spot pointing and repainting the facades a beige color.

The Committee voted to recommend approval with staff to approve pointing.

410 South Iseminger Street

Randal Baron, Owner/Applicant

PROPOSAL: Facade restoration

The proposal involves several changes. First, the replacement of the bulkhead which is rotted. Second, cleaning and pointing of the brick facade. Third, a previous owner had removed the original wood window lintels and replaced them with brick. The owner wishes to remove the brick and install cast stone lintels which will be painted to look like wood. Last, the owner would like to replace missing wood elements.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

414 South Iseminger Street

James & Mona Gallo, Owners/Applicants

PROPOSAL: Rebuild bulkhead

The bulkhead has deteriorated beyond repair. The owners will replace the bulkhead with one that matches the existing.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

1428-1430 Locust Street AKA 235 South 15th Street

Philadelphia Management, Owner

Joseph Alteari, Architect

PROPOSAL: Sign

This proposal is for the X and O restaurant. The Committee and Commission had approved a projecting sign previously. The applicant did not receive approval from the Art Commission. The projecting sign was a single, two-sided sign. This proposal is for two signs, affixed flush to the building, one on the Locust Street facade at the corner and one on the 15th Street facade at the corner.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

2123 Locust Street

Sarah DuBois, Owner
Stefan Metcanivc, Contractor
PROPOSAL: Reconstruction

The Department of Licenses and Inspections declared the rear of this building Imminently Dangerous on 2 August 1996. The owner received an emergency demolition permit. This proposal is for the reconstruction of the demolished portion of the building to match its previous appearance. The Committee had several questions because the plans presented did not accurately reflect the original.

The Committee voted to recommend approval subject to several plan changes: enlarge the projecting bay and install north and south windows; all of the windows to match the originals in number of panes, and the rear bay to have a cornice and covered with wood clapboards. Staff is to review the new plans for accuracy.

216 Monroe Street

Laura Feldman, Owner
Robert Virgin, Applicant
PROPOSAL: New windows and door

This building forms two parts of a triple on the rear courtyard. The contractor will install wood, true muntin windows without energy panels. He intends to install interior energy panels at a later date. The Committee recommended having the windows rabbeted on the interior to make the installation of the energy panels easier. The Committee noted that the lower windows are six-over-six, but the upper story should have three-over-six windows. The proposal also includes a new six-panel door.

The Committee voted to recommend approval, with the third story windows as three-over-six.

1219 Panama Street

Frank & Joan Ordiway, Owners/Applicants
PROPOSAL: Replace stucco wall

A previous owner covered the side facade of this house with cement which now has cracks and absorbs water at the base. Total removal of the cement will damage the bricks underneath. The proposal is for the removal of any loose cement at the base of the wall, removal of the cement around the windows to keep the present window profile, and the recoating of the entire wall with cement. The Committee stated that cement is too strong a coating and the surface should be covered with stucco which is half lime and half cement.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of a natural or grey stucco coating with a sand finish.

1735 Addison Street

Mae Jones, Owner

Thomas McNichol, Contractor

PROPOSAL: Permastone removal, new cornice

A previous owner removed the cornice and other details and covered the front facade of this house with Permastone. This owner, without a permit, removed the Permastone and reinstalled a cornice. The profile of the cornice does not rely on any photographic or architectural research; however, many of the houses on this block do not have their original cornices. Since it is impossible to determine the exact cornice for this house, the non-historic nature of this cornice was considered appropriate.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

1907 Spruce Street AKA 1906 Manning Street

George Sfedu, Owner/Applicant

PROPOSAL: Partial demolition, new addition

The owner wishes to demolish the first floor of the rear extension, the second and third floors will remain, and build a two-car garage. The roof of the garage will have a terrace. The garage is five feet wider than the building and will eliminate a portion of the side yard. The owner has applied for a variance for this. The Committee suggested that the proposed tile flooring of the terrace may cause problems. Instead, the Committee suggested installing a deck flooring and using Dex-A-Tex for the sealant of the garage roof, however, these suggestions were not conditions of approval. The owner stated that he will consider the Committee's suggestions.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

2051 Walnut Street

Vladimir Tamarkin, Owner

Sheldon Kauffman, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Exposed ductwork

The Committee saw this proposal last month and had asked for an accurate drawing before a recommendation was made. The owner, Mr. Tamarkin, submitted approximate drawings for the Committee's review. The Committee was concerned with the amount of exposed ductwork and did not vote to approve the proposal as submitted. Instead, the Committee stated that the ductwork should be on the interior of the building, which the space under the firestairs would allow, with only the fan on the exterior of the building, flush to the wall at ten feet above the ground. If this cannot be done, then the applicant must return to the Committee with an accurate, scaled drawing.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the exterior fan, flush to the wall, at ten feet above the ground as required by code.

1700 Spruce Street, Tenth Presbyterian Church

Matthew Weeks White, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Exposed ductwork

This proposal involves installing air conditioning in the sanctuary of this church. In order to accomplish this ductwork will be installed that will be visible from 17th Street. Mr. White showed pictures of the structure inside the attic of the church which precludes a different less visible location for the ducts.

Committee members discussed the merits of painting the ductwork and leaving it exposed versus hiding it behind a screen.

The Committee voted to recommend approval conditional upon building a screen wall. The Committee asked the applicant to come back after installation of the ductwork and before the installation of a screen to give the Committee a chance to see the ductwork and discuss whether the screen could be omitted.

1736 Spruce Street

Russell Friedman, Owner

Theodore Tsiouris, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Paint masonry

This proposal involves repainting this corner building at 18th and Spruce Streets. The building which had been modified in the mid 20th century with Colonial Revival details and a stucco base is currently painted a pale green. The owner proposes to paint the building a gold color with white trim. The Committee decided that the Colonial Gold was not an appropriate masonry color, but reached a compromise with the owner on a tan color instead.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of a tan color with the cornice and trim to be off-white or cream.

227 South 20th Street

Irv Sacks & Irv Gesoff, Owners

Philip Gursky, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Paint masonry, awning

This proposal involves repainting this building a dark red, removing a security grate and installing a dark green matte canvas awning.

The Committee voted to recommend approval.

2215 Walnut Street and 135 South 23rd Street

Office Pavilion/Spectrum, Owners
Jeffery Hayes, Architect
PROPOSAL: Mural

The Committee members noted that, although it does not form a part of this application, all of the windows had been replaced on the building since the Commission designated the property and took the record photograph in September 1994. The arched windows of the front facade have been replaced with windows with angular heads. The side 2/2 windows have been replaced with windows without muntins and the large multi-pane side windows now have applied grid muntins. They asked that the applicant apply to legalize this work.

Jeffery Hayes presented the proposal to repaint the present gray side facade with a mural that would serve both a decorative and advertising objective. He explained that the Sunoco mural on the other end of the block inspired the owners of 2215 Walnut. The side of this building unlike the one facing the Sunoco station is a fully finished side facade with windows, bays and cornices. The painted design calls for a series of bands with abstracted designs of office chairs, products sold by the company that occupies the building. In addition they would paint on architectural embellishments such as window hoods, watertable and a couple of windows. A large sign saying Spectrum Building would be painted on the taller rear portion of side of the building. Pictures were shown of sgraffittoed facades on historic buildings in Italy and Switzerland which inspired the design of the present application.

Discussion ranged widely on the appropriateness of this type of painting on an historic building and none of the Committee members recommended approval of the design as proposed. It was recognized that neither sgraffito nor murals relate to the history or traditions of 19th century Philadelphia residential architecture. Many feared that, although this design could be attractive, there would be no basis later to deny a mural of clowns or whales on Delancey Street if this were to be approved. Although some objected to the advertising sign nature of the mural most agreed that the "Spectrum Building" section was the more acceptable part. Tony Atkin argued that he liked the architectural embellishments because they related to the front facade of the building, but he thought that the bands of office chairs were too busy and unrelated to the building.

Lenore Millhollen from the Rittenhouse Community thought that the mural was completely inappropriate and unrelated to the architecture of this building.

Randal Baron said that it would seem that the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* argues against the painting of architectural details which give a false historical impression. The side of the building has a history of a less embellished area of the structure and should not steal the show from the front

facade which was designed as the show piece. In any case by removing the dull gray paint from the brick and painting a customary two tone paint on existing panelled bays and windows, the facade could be given back more of its historic character.

Jeffery Hayes said that this side faces a modern convenience store and not an historic row.

The artist, Michael Webb explained that he envisioned this design as a way of having fun or playing with the building. He saw the banding as a subtle design that would improve and not interfere with the architectural characteristics of the building.

The Committee did not reach consensus. Tony Atkin, Arlene Matzkin and Suzanne Penz would consider the idea of painted embellishments although all of them thought that this design of horizontal bands fought with the direction of the existing facade and should be revised. Herb Levy thought the idea of a mural on a finished facade was totally inappropriate. Bill Cornell said that in general he opposed the idea of murals painted all around the City but that he didn't think it was a preservation issue.

The Committee requested that the owners make application for the illegally installed windows.

1805-1809 Walnut Street, Alison Building

Hal Wheeler, Developer

Raffaele Castelli, Architect

PROPOSAL: Louvered air intake on rear, signage

The proposal calls for installing louvers in three windows on the rear facade facing Sansom Street. These louvers will vent the air conditioning and smoke from the elevator shaft in case of emergency. On the Walnut Street facade the applicant wishes to alter the previous application for signage after finding that there is a stone lintel above the windows which would be extremely difficult to remove. In response to this, the applicant seeks to install a valence box for the illuminated sign which would project from the face of the building.

The Committee voted to recommend approval for the rear vents but insisted that the sign boxes in front not project. They suggested that technologies exist, such as fiber optics, which allow for smaller signs. In case this is not possible they recommended that the sign should be non illuminated.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura M. Spina

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Historic Preservation Specialist