

**THE MINUTES OF THE 407th STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
10 July 1996**

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

Present

Wayne Spilove, Chairperson
Robert Barnett, Commissioner, Department of Licenses and
Inspections
David Brownlee, Ph.D.
Duane Bumb, Deputy Director, Department of Commerce
Joseph James, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Property
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning Commission
Arlene Matzkin
Michael Sklaroff, Esq.
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing and Community Development
Caroline Wischmann
Stephanie Wolf, Ph.D.

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Jeffrey R. Barr, Historic Preservation Technician
Laura M. Spina, Historic Preservation Specialist

Also, with affiliation and/or project

Tom Ferrick, Philadelphia Inquirer
Richard Tucker
Bernard Nearey, Rittenhouse-Fitler District
John E. Eckenrode, Fairmount Park Commission
Tiffany Spilove
Richard Thom
Judith Eden, Center City Residents Association

Wayne Spilove, Chair, recognized the presence of a quorum and called the 407th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission to order at 10:00 A.M.

MINUTES of the 406th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Upon a motion made by Mr. Wilds and duly seconded, the Commission unanimously approved the Minutes of the 406th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 12 June 1996, Wayne Spilove, Chair.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE REPORT, 25 June 1996, Arlene Matzkin, Chair

1701-1705 Arch Street, Robert Morris Hotel

Peggy Walton, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Existing neon & painted sign

Architectural Committee Recommendation: No jurisdiction.

Ms. Matzkin reported that the neon sign is located behind the glass of the window. At the meeting, the Committee believed that it and the Commission did not have jurisdiction, but Ms. Matzkin now questions the validity of the assumption. If the Commission does have jurisdiction, the Committee recommends approval of the sign.

Mr. Wilds stated that the Commission had discussed the issue before, especially about the Belgravia on Chestnut Street, and the Commission determined that it would not regulate neon signs inside the window. Ms. Matzkin agreed that the Commission had followed that course of action, but, according to the ordinance, the jurisdiction of the Commission includes anything that alters the appearance of a building. Mr. Wilds noted that the Commission would regulate the adjustment of floor levels that would cut across windows because of their visibility. Mr. Sklaroff asked Ms. Matzkin to explain the discrepancy between her oral report and the submitted minutes. Ms. Matzkin stated she began to requestion the Commission's jurisdiction when she read the minutes, but the minutes show how the Committee voted. Mr. Wilds explained that Ms. Matzkin can express her questions and doubts about the Committee's decision as long as the minutes reflect the actual discussion and decision of the Committee. Mr. Tyler further explained the Commission's decision of the Belgravia, stating that the Commission rejected the application to have lettering on the exterior masonry and urged the applicant to use neon on the interior of the window. The court decision in *United Artists' Theater Circuit, Inc. v. City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Historical Commission* restricts the Commission's jurisdiction to the exterior only. Neon or any other change on the interior of the building, regardless of visibility, may not be in the jurisdiction of the Commission. Mr. Sklaroff advised the members that the Commission enforces a land use regulation and land use regulations are to be construed strictly. If there is a doubt about jurisdiction, it should be solved in favor of not exercising the jurisdiction. Mr. Brownlee noted §14-2007(8.c) that the Commission does have jurisdiction over the interiors of historic buildings to ensure they are in good repair. He also questioned the dividing line between the interior and exterior of a building. Mr. Sklaroff believed that when a doubt exists, the Commission must vote in favor of the land owner. Ms. Wolf stated that if the Commission has a doubt, the Law Department should answer the question before all decisions are given in favor of the landowner.

Mr. Barnett stated that his office received numerous phone calls questioning the neon signs allowed in the Manayunk District. Mr. Tyler explained that the Manayunk District is a separate issue, because it was created through a different ordinance, sponsored by the Commerce Department, which covers all facade work and signage. Only the staff reviews proposals for any changes and all signage is covered, so the question of interior or exterior is not raised. Ms. Kaplan stated that the Art Commission also has jurisdiction over signage on Chestnut, Walnut, and South Broad Streets.

Mr. Sklaroff made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation that the neon sign is not in the jurisdiction of the Commission.

Mr. Barnett stated that the question of jurisdiction should be explored before the Commission makes a decision. The Committee recommended approval of the sign so the Commission should vote to approve the sign, not vote on whether it has jurisdiction. Mr. Sklaroff observed that the Committee recommendation was before the Commission and any other discussion is not relevant. Mr. Barnett noted that the Commission has often had discussions on a proposal if it rejects the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Brownlee stated that if the Commission votes to reject the Committee's recommendation, then it should vote to approve the sign.

Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion. The motion carried by a vote of six to five.

1115-1145 Market Street, Reading Terminal Headhouse

Eric Rahe, Architect

PROPOSAL: Window vents, signage, reglaze windows

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin reported on the renovations to the headhouse and link buildings. Window vents will be located on the 12th and Filbert Streets facades and are not highly visible, and a directory sign will be located on Market Street. The Committee discussed the pylons, which were previously approved in conceptual form by the Commission, and stated its opinion that the reinstallation of the clock should take precedence.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation.

Mr. Bumb seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

205 Vine Street

Mark Tucker, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Shop window, door; new windows and door on side elevations

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval of the front facade alteration, with staff to approve the design of the wood muntin in the store window, and new windows and door to be cut in the former party walls.

Ms. Matzkin reported that the proposal had several parts: installation of new windows on both the east and west party walls; repair of the existing storefront with the addition of a vertical muntin; new front door. The applicant had submitted a proposal for a 48-inch door that resembled a double-leaf door, but he wants a smaller door. The architect resubmitted proposals for a 36-inch door with a sidelight, but the Committee had determined that a sidelight is not appropriate. The Committee suggested a 42-inch door installed in a jamb that has been symmetrically reduced in width from both sides.

Ms. Matzkin suggested that the Commission approve the proposal with the final design of the door to be approved by the Committee. Mr. Sklaroff asked if the Commission had enough information to make a decision. Ms. Matzkin then proposed tabling the vote for further information. Mr. Tyler suggested separating the door from the rest of the proposed work for Commission approval.

Richard Tucker, owner, testified that the 48-inch door was not practical. Time is a factor in the project and he asked the Commission not to delay its decision any longer. He wanted to keep the historic double-leaf door, but cannot because of the Building Code and the locking system that he wants to install. He is willing to install a 42-inch door.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to approve the proposal as submitted, but with a 42-inch door, symmetrically placed, with details to be approved by staff. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which carried by a unanimous vote.

3101-3199 Chestnut Street, Drexel University

John Morrissey, Contractor

PROPOSAL: Visible roof condensers

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin stated that the existing condensers are located on a link between the main building and the next building to the east. The proposed condensers are identical in size and scale to the existing ones that will be replaced.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the Committee's

recommendation. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed with 10 votes. Mr. Sklaroff recused himself.

Gypsy Lane & Lincoln Drive, Wissahickon Hall

Mark Bower, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Stucco, trim, porch repair; new railing; painting

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval of the proposal as submitted, but the Committee noted that problems may arise with the roof-deck flooring.

Ms. Matzkin reported that the project is divided among three different contracts. The Committee concentrated primarily on the water drainage because water caused most of the damage being repaired with this proposal. The roofing and drainage systems, however, are part of a separate contract and not part of the proposal. The Committee discussed at length the treatment for the roof-deck and recommended approval of all aspects of the proposal. Mr. Tyler stated that in a separate contract, the water drainage system is being revamped, including installing hanging gutters which should be more efficient than the existing box gutters.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

1811 Walnut Street

David Polatnick, Architect

PROPOSAL: Removal and storage of the front steps on Walnut Street; dropping the front doors down to grade and installing a transom above; awnings on the windows flanking the front door; a metal and glass canopy over the front door; banners on the two flagpoles; partial demolition of the rear of the building; and construction of a two-story rear addition

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Mr. Tyler stated that the applicant asked the Commission to defer its vote.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to defer action for a period not to exceed six months. Mr. James seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

2125 Chestnut Street, Unitarian Church

Chadwick Pickeral, Contractor

PROPOSAL: Cornice & dormer repair; replace cobblestone with flagstone

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin stated that the proposal includes installation of flagstone on the terraces and restoration of two dormers. The applicant will investigate the boxed cornices.

Mr. Sklaroff asked if the Law Department investigated the Religious Freedom Act and the Commission's jurisdiction. Mr. Tyler stated that the Law Department is working on the issue and should have a report in the near future.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Bumb seconded the motion which passed by a unanimous vote.

245 S. 17th Street and 1630 Locust Street

Nan Gutterman, Architect

PROPOSAL: Garage, cut second floor window, facade restoration

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Denial of Plan A (removal of a window, door and surround for a five-car garage), denial of Plan B (removal of a window and surround for a three-car garage), and denial of cutting the second floor window because of the loss of historic fabric.

Mr. Tyler stated that the applicant has asked for a deferral of the Commission's decision.

Mr. Brownlee made a motion to defer a decision for a period not to exceed six months. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion which passed by 10 votes. Mr. Sklaroff recused himself.

1625 Locust Street, St. Mark's Church

Nan Gutterman, Architect

PROPOSAL: New lights

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin reported that lights that were installed in the 1950s will be replaced.

Mr. Bumb made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. Wilds commented that the Committee and Commission did not require that the lights look new. The lights may be mistaken as old, and therefore create a false historical impression. Ms. Matzkin stated that the modern conduit is visible and shows the viewer that the lights are not original.

232-240 S. Broad Street, Academy of Music

Nan Gutterman, Architect

PROPOSAL: Water pipes on wall

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin reported that the proposal is for four 2-½-inch water pipes to be installed on the Locust Street facade.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Brownlee seconded the motion which carried by 10 votes. Mr. Sklaroff recused himself.

Mr. Wilds asked about the progress of the ramp. Mr. Tyler reported that the Accessibility Board approved the present location for the ramp and the architect will work with the Historical Commission staff and the Accessibility Board for a design.

122-124 S. 18th Street

Lanny Leibowitz, Architect

PROPOSAL: Glass connector link

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin reported that the proposal is for a glass wall to replace a brick infill link between two buildings.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Sklaroff seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Rodin Museum

Dennis Feldsher, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Steps

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval with staff to make the final approval of a stone match.

Ms. Matzkin stated that since the Committee meeting, staff has reviewed the proposed replacement stone. Mr. Baron noted that the replacement stone comes from a French quarry close to the quarry of the original stone. The original and replacement stones differ slightly because of age, but the match is very good.

Ms. Kaplan made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

777 W. Valley Green Road, Brinkwood

Mark Ueland, Architect

PROPOSAL: New barn

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin reported that the barn, used as a garage, will be located in a remote area of the property. The public will not view the barn from the road or Fairmount Park. Brinkwood is a part of Druim Moir estate, designed by the Hewitt brothers for Henry Howard Houston and his son-in-law. Ms. Kaplan stated that the site was a part of a planned development several years ago and the Planning Commission also reviewed the proposal.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Ms. Wolf seconded the proposal which passed by unanimous vote.

Ridgeland Mansion

Amy Freitag, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Porch glazing

Architectural Committee Recommendation: Approval.

Ms. Matzkin reported that the Committee reviewed and approved the final design for the glazing of the porch which was a condition of the Commission's approval. All members are made of wood and are completely removable.

Mr. Barnett stated the project is a good reuse and the Mayor attended the celebration of the opening of the center, but the site has not received a zoning variance for offices.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

**The Report of the Activities of the Historical Commission Staff,
May 1996, Richard Tyler.**

Mr. Spilove announced the death of Commission member William Brown. The Commission observed a moment of silence.

Mr. Brownlee asked about the status of the open positions on staff. Mr. Tyler stated that the Personnel Department has determined that nine applicants qualified to take the Civil Service examination. The examination will not occur before the middle of August.

Mr. Barnett reported several items. John Konick, architect for the Metropolitan Opera House, sent a letter to Robert Solvibile, Chief of Contractual Services, outlining the work done at the site. The work included: removal of vegetation; removal and storage of loose cast stone trim and brick; removal and storage of the Poplar Street canopy and Broad Street signs; restoration of parapet walls; repair of windows and openings; closure of street level openings; repainting of wood trim and walls; replacement of loose plaster trim; removal of rotted canopy gutters and downspouts, and removal of temporary barricades. The Department of Licenses and Inspections has closed all violations on the building and it has been declared safe. The Department will continue to collaborate with the architect to do further work, including replacing the roof. He emphasized that the work was performed because the violations and threat of demolition forced the owner to fix the property.

Mr. Barnett also reported that work to stabilize historic buildings using the historic preservation grant began on two properties, 832 Lombard Street and 9-11 South 2nd Street. The owner of 832 Lombard Street, Theresa Kennedy, filed for an injunction against the City which the court denied. The work will be completed in a day or two. The owner of 9-11 South 2nd Street, Ted Snyder, agreed to do more extensive renovations than the city intended to perform. If Mr. Snyder does the repairs, the fund will not be able to recoup that money for the revolving fund.

Judge Nigro had ordered the owner of the Silvo Hardware Building to pay \$100,000 into the Historic Stabilization Fund. The City has received a partial payment. The Department now intends to utilize this mechanism and the Fund to other properties threatened by demolition by neglect. It prefers building with known owners, for the program seems to inspire them to perform at least the necessary work themselves to avoid liens.

Mr. Spilove commended Mr. Barnett and the department, Mr. Tyler, and Preservation Alliance for getting the Historic Stabilization Fund started; he emphasized its importance and the need to raise additional monies for the Fund. Mr. Spilove and Mr. Barnett noted that the work being done is to stabilize the buildings and prevent further deterioration. The work will not necessarily bring the buildings up to code. Mr. Spilove announced that a program will be established to accept donations for the Fund. Mr. Barnett stated that many of the residents and the community took great interest in the buildings when it was recognized that work will be performed to preserve them. Mr. Tyler explained that the Lombard property was originally built for the Lombard Street Central Presbyterian Colored Church and was designed by William Johnston. Johnston also designed the Jayne Estate Building which has been cited as the inspiration for the Chicago style. The first pastor of the church was John Gloucester, son

of the pastor of the First African Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Brownlee questioned the status of the property on the corner of Front and Walnut Streets. He believed that the owner had agreed with the Commission that a brick and iron fence would be constructed. Mr. Barnett stated that zoning issues were not resolved and the site is being used illegally as a valet parking lot. Mr. Tyler reported that the owner asked if a living fence would be appropriate. He told the owner to create a formal landscape plan for presentation to the Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura M. Spina