

THE MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

26 July 1990

Present: David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect for
Independence National Historical Park
Dr. David DeLong, University of Pennsylvania,
Historic Preservation Program
Herbert W. Levy, American Institute of Architects

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Sara Jane Elk, Historic Research Technician
Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary

Also: Irv Shapiro, architect, Shapiro Petrauskas Gelber
Gianne Conard, architect, Shapiro Petrauskas Gelber
Bob Levy, Valley Green Inn, proprietor
Howard Kittell,
Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Roger S. Pratt, Charles E. Broudy & Assoc., Architects
Warren B. Cheston, 406 S. Van Pelt Street
Hyman Myers, Vitetta Group, Curtis Institute of Music
Ron Wormser, business manager, Curtis Institute
Glenn Smyth, contractor, Diamond Street

APPROVAL IN CONCEPT

Valley Green Inn. Irv Shapiro and Gianne Conard, architects,
Shapiro Petrauskas Gelber; and Bob Levy, proprietor, Valley
Green Inn. The applicants proposed to demolish later
additions to the Valley Green Inn in Fairmount Park and to
construct a new banquet facility and kitchens at the rear of
the historic inn. The proprietor planned to expand the
restaurant based on considerable demand for banquets. The
architects presented several alternative designs for a
banquet room and adjacent porch.

The Committee indicated its preference that the proposed
addition appear as a background structure rather than as a
distinct element competing with the historic character of
the Inn. The Committee also expressed its preference for
the elongated design for the banquet room, which
complemented the linear form of the Inn and its existing
garden walls. The Committee recommended an approval in
concept of the design alternative (#1) which presented the
addition as an elongated, stone structure with an open-air
porch. The members noted that the landscaped, open-air
porch with trellises served well to incorporate the new
construction into the walls and garden of the historic site.

APPROVAL

406 S. Van Pelt Street, Roger Pratt, Charles Broudy & Associates; Warren B. Cheston, owner. The applicants proposed to rebuild the facade of this carriage-house in the proposed Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District. Before this building came under the jurisdiction of the Commission, it had been covered with perma-stone on the ground floor and wooden siding on the second floor. This earlier work also altered the window and door openings. The perma-stone has been removed and the new wall will be built based upon dimensions discerned from the recently exposed original wall.

The Committee tried to determine the fenestration of the building from the photographs presented by the architect. The original configuration remained indeterminable despite excellent photographic documentation submitted by the applicant. Consequently, the Committee indicated that, after the applicant removed the second floor wood sheathing, he should await staff review and approval for the final shape of the second floor windows.

With this condition, the Committee recommended approval of the proposal to restore the facade of this carriage house in the pending Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District, retaining as much of the original brickwork as possible. Given the scarring of the brick and the difficulty of matching the existing brickwork, the Committee recommended that the applicant could paint the facade a brick-red color with white paint to suggest the joints.

1724-1732 Locust Street, Hyman Myers, Vitetta Group, and Ron Wormser, business manager, Curtis Institute. Mr. Myers presented plans to alter the main entrance door on Locust Street. This alteration would entail the removal of wooden panels in the paired doors and their replacement with glass. The applicant based this request on existing safety problems posed by the intensity of use, often with competing entry and egress, of this opaque door placed between two stairs. The proposed alterations would allow clear sight-lines from both inside and out. Mr. Myers suggested, as a second phase, the installation of a decorative wrought-iron grate which would duplicate the design of those on the interior vestibule doors.

The Committee recommended approval of this proposal to alter the main entrance door of this building. Further, the Committee registered its preference for leaving a clear glass pane without the proposed ironwork at this time.

The ensuing recommendations emerged from an application by Glen Smyth, contractor, for 1716, 1718, 1727 and 1733 Diamond Street. The Philadelphia Housing Authority awarded Mr. Smyth a contract for exterior alterations on each of these properties. The Committee examined each property individually and voted to forward separate recommendations for each building.

1716 Diamond Street: The Committee recommended approval of a proposal to restore this existing brick facade using details characteristic of this row in the Diamond Street Historic District. This recommendation, however, was made contingent upon:

- the correction of both the placement and dimensions of the windows on the plan of record; and
- the revision of the sash to follow the arch of the lintel.

1718 Diamond Street: The Committee recommended approval to demolish the existing stuccoed brick wall of this facade and to rebuild the wall in brick to match adjacent buildings which reflect its original condition. The Committee stressed that it did not consider this proposal as the most desirable treatment of this facade. The members further emphasized that they would not require removal of the stucco.

TABLED

1727 & 1733 Diamond Street: The Committee tabled a proposal to demolish these existing brick facades and to rebuild with new brick because of insufficient information about their structural condition. The Committee recommended that the Philadelphia Housing Authority retain a structural engineer with experience in historic preservation to determine the viability of the front walls of these two brick dwellings. The Committee also requested, if the walls could be saved, that the engineer recommend a treatment for stabilizing them.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel W. Simcox
Executive Secretary