

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Held in Room 1104, Courtesy of the Water Department, January 6, 1959 P. M. 3:30

Present were: Mrs. Richardson Dilworth
Mr. Harry A. Batten
Mr. R. Norris Williams, Jr.
Mr. Charles E. Peterson

Commissioner John E. Francis, Department of Public Property
Mr. Harry G. McDowell, representing Mr. McConnell
Mr. George I. Lovatt, City Architect

Dr. Margaret B. Tinkoom, Historian
Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Executive Secretary

Mr. Grant M. Simon, Chairman, absent account of illness

Mr. Harry A. Batten, presided, due to Mr. Simon's unavoidable absence

THE MINUTES of the November 25, 1958 Meeting were approved as circulated

Mr. Batten read Mr. Simon's Report:

The Commission has existed less than three years. It was appointed in March, 1956. At this meeting, it seems proper to make a brief review of work accomplished since that time.

1. SECOND STREET MARKET

Mr. Batten arranged to have Mr. Brumbaugh and Mr. Lovatt meet with Mr. Rafsky to talk over the present situation concerning the Head House and the Market sheds. As a result, an informal, verbal agreement was reached between Mr. Brumbaugh and Mr. Rafsky and the former began work on drawings for the restoration. When funds in the current Capital Budget are available, the City's agreement with Mr. Brumbaugh will be made formal.

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In a telephone conversation December 5, 1959, Mr. Brumbaugh reported that the drawings for the restoration of the Head House will be completed this week. Work on the specifications are in progress and these should be in Mr. Lovatt's hands early next week. Mr. Lovatt will then advertise for bids and once the contracts are given out, the work can begin.

It is now proposed to restore the Head House and the first three bays of the Market, immediately south of the Head House at once. Plans for complete restoration of the Market to Lombard Street have been made, including plans for paving, planting and lighting the area.

The Redevelopment Authority will have a field office in the meeting room on the second floor of the Head House and if funds are available, the Authority will contribute some money to permit the complete restoration of the Market this year.

Plans for quarters for a guard and for a small museum room, are included in the plan for the restoration of the first floor of the Head House.

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2. CERTIFICATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS.

The Commission has certified 1005 buildings. The number 1200 has been mentioned several times. When the full count of houses in Washington Square West and in Kensington have been agreed upon at the Commission's stated meeting in the near future, that number may be exceeded. At the moment, the accurate count is 1005. Broken down into geographic areas, the count is as follows:

CENTER CITY, South of Market:	Washington Square East	532
	Washington Square West (Incomplete) . .	100
	Rittenhouse Square	3
CENTER CITY, North of Market:	Franklin Square East	42
	Penn Square	2
	Logan Square North	6
FAIRMOUNT PARK		21
GERMANTOWN		81
WEST PHILADELPHIA		12
SOUTH PHILADELPHIA		4
SOUTHWARK		200
NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA:	Frankford	1
	Torresdale	1
	Kensington (Pending)	
	West Washington Square (Pending) . . .	
TOTAL		1005

3. Ninety-two HABI Forms have been mailed to Washington. Ten more are now ready, waiting for the 2½ x 2½ photographs to be made for them.

4. The Commission has had forty Submissions for interior and/or exterior work, brought into the office, referred to us by the Department of Licenses and Inspections. Of this number:

5 were submitted during 1957

5 were submitted in the first quarter, 1958

8 were submitted in the second quarter

8 were submitted in the third quarter

14 were submitted in the fourth quarter, 1958.

All Submission were approved, some with several weeks' delay, until requirements of the Commission were completely fulfilled. Two or three submissions are approved, but permits have not yet been granted by Licenses and Inspections, 126 Elfreth's Alley, 238 DeLancey Street and 238 Spruce Street.

5. The following buildings have been recommended for preservation and/or rehabilitation:

The Physick House
Schuylkill Arsenal

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The Physick House	Girard's Gentilhommeière	Bannaker School
Schuylkill Arsenal	Bel Air	Cannonball Farm
Kirkbride's	Matthew Newkirk Portico	Guthbert St. houses
Busti Mansion	Loxley Court	Second Street Market
Fort Mifflin	Benjamin Rush House	
Shoomac Park		
722-730 Spruce St., Pennsylvania Hospital Nurses' Home		

6. SUMMARY

I believe the Commission can feel that it has more than justified its existence. The current redevelopment of Society Hill and Washington Square East has been actuated only by the existence of the National Historic Park and the incomparable collection of buildings adjacent to it. The fact that the Commission has certified and authenticated the certification, of 532 buildings east of 8th Street, has prevented, to a large degree, the construction of high rise buildings within the area. The data which the Commission has assembled in this short time, will doubtless be the basis of criteria in the restoration of these buildings.

It will be remembered that just before the end of 1957, the Commission recommended that the area encompassed by Front and Sixth Streets and from 220 feet south of Walnut Street to the north side of Lombard Street, be rezoned. The letter addressed to the late Commissioner Regalbuto in January 1958 received no ~~official recog~~ official recognition, nor has any official notice of the Commission's recommendations been forthcoming from other quarters. I believe that ~~this historical area~~ it is important that this historical area be defined at the earliest moment.

Grant M. Simon, Chairman for the Commission

After this report was read, Mr. Peterson reported that there ^{are two} ~~is another~~ copy of plans for the Head House somewhere in City Hall. He thought that Mr. Brumbaugh may not have seen them.

DR. TINKCOM'S REPORT:

Up to this point, the major business of the research staff has been to survey the City and recommend for preservation the buildings of historic interest in it. During 1958 field surveys were made in Southwark; Kensington; Washington Square West; and Franklin Square.

Subsequently, the Commission certified 200 houses in Southwark; and in Washington Square, the majority of the houses on Spruce Street between Ninth and Tenth Streets, and those on Clinton Street, as well as a few on Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Streets. The balance of the report on Washington Square West is now ready for the Commission's consideration. So too, is the report on Kensington. No photographs have been taken in the neighborhood of Franklin Square. The report on this section and the review of the City-Owned buildings will be postponed until the spring.

The revised list of certified buildings has been sent to the duplicating department of the Department of Public Property for mimeographing. The part relating to the Center City has been completed. The rest will be run off as quickly as Mrs. Gordon can manage it.

Briefs of Title for the Society Hill section are almost completed and should be finished within the next six weeks.

During 1958, I made special reports to the Commission on the following buildings: Schuylkill Arsenal; Kirkbride's and the Busti mansion; the Benjamin Rush house; the George house, the Bannaker school; Cannonball Farm; and the two little houses at the corner of Spruce and Mattis Streets; and the Latour warehouse.

One hundred and two HABI Forms were filled and out and 92 mailed to the AIA office in Washington. The remaining ten will be sent when we obtain the necessary photographs. In addition, nine special studies were made for the HABS photo-data books. These include: St. Mark's; Holy Trinity; St. Andrews; Walnut Street Theater; 707 Walnut Street; Hatfield House; Schuylkill Arsenal; Mechanics Bank and the Contributionship.

The Commission has been listed in the current issue of the Bulletin Almanac

In January 1958 I attended the meetings of the Society of Architectural Historians in Washington D. C.; and in December 1958, the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in the same city. I also spoke on two occasions on the work of the Commission; On September 2, 1958 at the meeting to celebrate the birthday of Henry George; and on November 24, 1958, at the annual meeting of the Friends' Historical Society. And in February, I was sent by the Commission to Providence, R. I., to talk with Mrs. Downing and the Blair Associates, who are working on plans for restoring that old city. We discussed mutual problems and useful procedures for gathering and recording information.

Up to this point, the research staff has been engaged primarily in fact gathering. We have field reports on the certified buildings, briefs of title principally in Society Hill and Germantown, verifax copies of most of the available insurance surveys; notes from tax records, directories and newspaper advertisements. Our files also contain current photographs and some prints of old drawings and old photographs; and maps - both old maps and the appropriate plates of the Sanborn fire insurance maps - are available.

So far this information has been used chiefly to identify and date specific buildings. During 1959, I hope that it will be possible to begin some more general studies relative to the growth and architectural development of Philadelphia.

Our records have now been arranged so that they can be used by outsiders as well as staff members. The owners of any of the certified houses are welcome in the Commission's office and Mrs. Maurer is always glad to make available to them the information in our files on their houses. Other qualified persons, engaged in research which can be furthered by examination of the Commission's files, will also be encouraged to use them.

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During the year there has been an increasing amount of cooperation between the Commission and other public and private agencies interested in the preservation of the City's old buildings. We have traded information with the National Park Service and with the Redevelopment Authority, and have supplied information to the Landmark Society, the Germantown Historical Society, the Historical American Buildings Survey and other similar organizations.

Some very special mention should also be made of the help we have had from the Department of Public Property, particularly from the administrative officers of that Department and from Mr. Widdop's photographic division.

The Commission received a letter from the President of City Council, James H. J. Tate, reporting that the following appropriation has been made for the Commission's use in 1959:

Class 100	Personal Services	\$ 4,300
Class 200	Purchase of Services	12,166
Class 300	Materials, Supplies &c	<u>1,350</u>
Total		\$ 17,816

Contracts for the research staff (Corrigan, Fuller, Kirkbride and Tinkcom) have been processed.

Markaret B. Tinkcom

After Dr. Tinkcom's report was read, Mr. Batten suggested that Mr. Simon write to the Department of Public Property, thanking Mr. Gennetti for the cooperation which this Commission has enjoyed ever since its inception. Particular reference was made to mimeographing and other services, for which the Commission does not as yet have the equipment.

Mrs. Dilworth asked what is now going to happen to the 532 houses in the Society Hill area. Mr. Batten replied that all that can be saved will be. The question was asked, "Who will decide which will be saved and which will not?" From these questions came the recommendation that the newly revised list be sent formally to the Redevelopment Authority, The City Planning Commission and the Old Philadelphia Development Corporation, asking for information on what is going to happen to the houses on the list. The same report to be requested from each agency. Mr. Batten said that the Commission has a right to expect cooperation, freely giving its own. It was suggested that the List not be given to individuals until a week after sending it to the three important agencies.

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Messrs. McDowell, Lovatt and Francis agreed that this would be the proper courtesy and protocol. The Members agreed that Mr. Simon should write the letter when he is able to do so.

Mr. Batten reported that the firm of Wright, Andrade and Amenta, Architects, has been hired to do the work in Area A & B., and expounded on the authority and power of the Redevelopment Authority, saying among other things that it is expedient to be as courteous and cooperative as possible, that nothing can be gained in any other way.

ELFRETH'S ALLEY

Mr. Peterson reported that much research has been done on the building and that it is determined that the facade shall be restored to its original period; that for the present, only the first floor is to be restored as funds for the entire building are not available. Mr. Langley-Smith in Mr. Stonorov's office is drawing the plans.

Mr. Batten read Mr. Wagner's letter regarding Kirkbride's. He asked Mr. Williams to speak to Mr. Hughes as soon as possible.

THE BENJAMIN RUSH HOUSE

Mr. Peterson reported that a photographer is available now. The National Park Service will extend the services of their photographer if the Historical Commission will write the report.

The secretary was asked to read the resume of the month's correspondence

NEW BUSINESS

The Commission's first request for a variance, supporting that of Mr. L. Arnold Nicholson, for his property on Drinker's Court, 238 DeLancey Street was discussed. It was reported that the point at issue is winding stairs. Mr. Peterson observed that the people who apply for permits to restore their houses are hampered by the Code of Building Standards, which have been written for houses built in recent years, but that people who do not apply for permits,

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are hampered by the Code of Building Standards, which has been written for houses built in recent years, not for the Colonial or Federal periods, but that people who do not apply for permits, but who ~~do the work they wish to do~~ *Nothing at all, but maintain* ~~without this formality~~, appear to "get away with it". Mr. Battan concurred. *Sub - Standard premises*

SUBMISSIONS:

Submissions for the month of December were discussed in detail. There were no objections to approval granted by the Commission for work on the interiors of properties submitted, nor for demolition of 532 South Water Street and two houses at the corner of Bainbridge and Hancock Streets.

Dr. Tinkcom read a paragraph appearing in the Report to the Mayor, for the current week, presented each week by the Department of Public Property, in which Mr. M. O. Anderson, Superintendent of the Independence National Historic Park agreed to submit all Federal building projects to the Art Commission before they are bid, in order to forestall the installation of such sculpture and landscaping as might not be in harmony with the area. Mr. Lovatt reported that it was thought that the Art Commission could thus become a buffer to cushion Mr. Anderson from pressure in the event that undesirable "works of art" were made available at any time in future redevelopment. It was suggested by Mr. Williams that it be made exceedingly difficult for any group to install any statues in the National Historic Park.

The Meeting was adjourned at five o'clock.

Respectfully submitted &c...

SUBMISSIONS

Excerpt From Minutes - January 6, 1959

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