

THE MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

22 February 1990

Present: David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman of the Committee
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect for the
Independence National Historical Park
Dr. David DeLong, University of Pennsylvania,
Historic Preservation Program
John Dickey, FAIA
Donald Stevenson, Architect

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia A. Siemiontkowski,
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary

Also: Roger T. Prichard, Old City Civic Association
Nancy Bastian, Cecil Baker & Associates
Susan Hadden, Cecil Baker & Associates
Sanderson Caesar, Franklin Institute
Julie Fabi, Franklin Institute
Allen Cornell, J.S. Cornell & Son, Inc.
Rudy D'Alessandro, J.S. Cornell & Son, Inc.
Stephen Paolantonio, Continental Bank
Jack Sickel, Continental Bank
Avra M. Gold, Empire Development Co.

SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
22 FEBRUARY 1990

Discussion

- **Security Gates in Center City Philadelphia.** Mr. Warren Huff explained the policies of the City Planning Commission regarding the installation of security grates. The Committee agreed with the principles applied by the Planning Commission intended to render the grates as unobtrusive as possible.

Approval in Concept

- **124 N. Broad Street: 234-236 Cherry Street:** The Committee recommended an approval in concept contingent upon the substitution of one-over-one sash where a tripartite configuration had been proposed. Members expressed reservations regarding the use of glass block. The Committee also noted that the specifications for cleaning and re-pointing would require staff approval.
- **427 Chestnut Street:** The Committee recommended an approval in concept contingent on the replacement of the lower bronze horizontal member with a frameless head configuration, providing only stops for the doors.
- **The Bourse, 21 S. 5th Street:** The Committee recommended an approval in concept for a canopy for the main entrance on the South Fifth Street facade. Members requested details of the method proposed for securing the canopy to the building in order to minimize the damage to the stonework.

Approval

- **City Hall Tower: Phase II Restoration:** After considerable discussion, the Committee voted to recommend a final approval of the application. The Committee, however, wished to record its profound disappointment that the Department of Public Property undertook this work without a permit or previous review by the Commission.
- **2016 Sansom Street:** Approval of a flat wall sign.

Approval, Contingent upon Conditions

- **The Franklin Institute, 20th & The Parkway:** The Committee recommended final approval, excluding the sign proposed for the main stair and the sign proposed for the Winter Street entrance. Members indicated that they would defer to the Art Commission on the aesthetics of the other signs and canopies proposed.

Disapproval

- **1535 Locust Street:** The Committee recommended disapproval of alterations to an existing masonry opening for the installation of a second ATM at this location.

DISCUSSION

Discussion of Security Gates in Center City Philadelphia.

Mr. Warren Huff, Center City Planner, City Planning Commission. Upon request of the Committee, Mr. Huff explained the policies of the City Planning Commission regarding the installation of security grates within the Center City Special Controls District, which includes Chestnut, Walnut and South Broad Streets. The Planning Commission advises applicants to install security grates on the inside of shop windows if possible, and "see-through" mesh grates in all cases.

The Committee agreed with the principles applied by the Planning Commission intended to render the grates as unobtrusive as possible.

SUBMISSIONS FOR ALTERATIONS

City Hall Tower, Phase II Restoration, R. Wayne Tomlinson, Department of Public Property. Mr. Tomlinson presented plans for Phase B of the restoration of the City Hall Tower. The scope of this work extended from the base of William Penn to the second tier of sculpture. Though originally intending simply to repair the existing metal plates of the tower, the Department of Public Property undertook a program of complete replacement of these plates, substituting cast-iron with an alloy of tin/zinc plated on steel. This material was coated with two layers of an epoxy-finish paint. Mr. Tomlinson noted that this process increased the scope of work tremendously. He also indicated that the Department replaced the panels of glass on the face of the clock. The clock, originally illuminated by one hundred and thirty-eight incandescent light bulbs, would be lit with fluorescent bulbs, as it had subsequent to alterations following World War II.

In response to questions regarding plans for maintenance, Mr. Tomlinson indicated that the Department believed the present work would last for another century. Regarding proposed treatment of the sculpture, Mr. Tyler informed the Committee that a conservator, Andrew Linn, had undertaken a study of various patches of one sculpture. After a year of examining the effectiveness of various methods of conservation on this piece, Mr. Linn would present the range of alternatives for long-term maintenance. Mr. Tyler commended this effort to defer substantial financial investment until this study would provide the information necessary for an informed decision.

Mr. Hollenburg abstained from the discussion and the voting. After considerable discussion, the Committee inquired into particular elements of the project and voted to recommend a final approval of the application. The Committee, however, wished to record its profound disappointment that the Department of Public Property undertook this work without a permit or previous review by the Commission.

124 N. Bread Street; 234-236 Cherry Street, Nancy Bastian and Susan Hadden, Cecil Baker & Associates. This proposal entails substantial rehabilitation of the buildings at 124 North Bread Street and 234 and 236 Cherry Street for expansion of the Diagnostic and Rehabilitation Center at 229 Arch Street. Ms. Bastian presented a photographic study of the properties, as well as a rendering and plans for the alterations to these properties. The plans indicate the demolition of a one-story modern garage and the construction of a four-story addition abutting 124 Bread Street. The masonry block which fills the openings of the building at 124 Bread Street would be removed, and new aluminum windows with infill of glass block and wood panel were proposed. The applicants proposed opening infilled bays on the buildings at 234 and 236 Cherry Street and replacing them with aluminum windows and wood doors with some area of wood panel infill. Stone lintels would replace existing wood lintels.

Following inquiry into several aspects of the proposal, the Committee recommended the substitution of one-over-one sash where a tripartite configuration had been proposed. Members expressed reservations toward the proposed use of glass block. The Committee did not object to the proposed demolition of the one-story garage.

The Committee voted to recommend an approval in concept of this application, and reminded the applicants that issuance of a building permit would require final approval. The Committee recommended submittal of final plans to the staff, who would determine whether the plans warranted further review by the Architectural Committee. Final approval also would be contingent upon staff approval of specifications for cleaning and re-pointing.

The Franklin Institute, 20th & The Parkway, Sanderson Caesar, Director of Design, and Julie Fabi, Graphics Artist, Franklin Institute. Mr. Caesar informed the Committee that the Franklin Institute had developed a comprehensive sign program in conjunction with the Future Center expansion. The

exterior signs proposed included a large Identification Sign, Group Welcome Signs, Parking Signs, Handicapped Signs and Banners. Mr. Caesar presented a site plan of the proposed location of these signs and two canopies intended to designate two museum entrances. The Institute intends the sign program will identify the building and its amenities more clearly, will communicate the mission of the museum to the public, will facilitate access to the building, and will present a unified image of the Museum and Futures Center.

The Committee discussed the sign program and addressed concerns with the individual elements. Though several members conveyed their disappointment with the design of particular signs, they agreed that aesthetic judgments regarding the free-standing signs exceeded their jurisdiction. Having deferred aesthetic concerns to the consideration of the Art Commission, the Committee limited their recommendation. Members agreed that the sign proposed for the main stair of the building would diminish the historic character of this Classical facade. The Committee also objected to the placement of the sign proposed for Winter Street, which appeared to impact on the historic building material.

Accordingly, the Committee recommended final approval, excluding the sign proposed for the main stair and the sign proposed for the Winter Street entrance. Members indicated that they would defer to the Art Commission on the aesthetics of the other signs and canopies proposed.

- 427 Chestnut Street, Allen Cornell, and Rudy D'Alessandro, J.S. Cornell & Son, Inc. At its meeting of 26 October 1989, the Architectural Committee reviewed a proposal to install new iron security gates with transom and decorative mesh to an existing entrance. The Committee recommended disapproval of that application and encouraged the applicant to explore alternative treatments.

Ms. Batcheler abstained from the vote on this application. This revised proposal entails the installation of Herculite-tempered glass doors at the fore of the existing entrance in front of the existing doors. The glass doors would be eight feet high, framed above by a bronze horizontal member. A tempered glass transom would fill the space to 10'2", above which the applicants proposed a second bronze horizontal member. The highest portion of the entrance would be filled by an arched, tempered glass transom. The applicant informed the Committee that the elements depicted as bronze would be made of Muntz metal, an alloy-wrapped aluminum.

Mr. Cornell presented a rendering of the proposal, addressed the problems with alternative treatments and stressed the merits of the present proposal. The design would preserve the magnificent vestibule and immense, decorative doors of the former Farmers' and Merchants' Bank, maintaining them in a permanently opened position. This treatment would display these doors while offering a more manageable portal and more secure vestibule for the patrons of the American Philosophical Society.

The Committee discussed the proposal as well as an array of suggested alternative treatments. Acknowledging the virtues of the proposed design, the Committee recommended the replacement of the lower bronze horizontal member with a frameless head configuration, providing only stops for the doors. Contingent upon this revision to the design, the Committee voted to recommend approval in concept. The applicant acknowledged his assent to the suggested revisions. The Committee informed the applicant that final plans incorporating these recommendations required review before issuance of a building permit.

1535 Locust Street, Stephen Paolantonio and Jack Sickel, Continental Bank. This building has been recommended for placement on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places by the Designation Committee. This property enjoys the protection of the Ordinance until the Commission votes on its adoption. Upon notification of the pending designation, Mr. Sickel requested review of a proposal to install a new Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) on the Locust Street facade of the Continental Bank at this location. At present, the bank maintains an ATM on the southern end of the South Sixteenth Street facade.

Mr. Paolantonio presented the plan to install an ATM in an existing masonry opening on the Locust Street facade. Accommodation of the proposed ATM would entail alterations to an existing window. To afford access to the proposed ATM, the applicant sought approval for the construction of a raised step bordered with iron railings.

The Committee recommended disapproval of the proposed alterations, and suggested alternative locations for a second ATM. Members discouraged opening another hole in the building, and submitted that the applicant consider placement either next to the existing ATM or incorporation of a machine within a vestibule of the Locust Street entrance. While Mr. Paolantonio indicated that technical requirements for the equipment limited possible locations,

the Committee encouraged further scrutiny of the viability of these spaces.

The Bourse, 21 S. 5th Street, Avra Gold, Empire Development Co. Mr. Gold informed the Committee that this application comprised a change in design from drawings previously approved for the Bourse. He presented a plan of the new design for a canopy above the main entrance on the South Fifth Street elevation of the building.

The Committee discussed their reservations with the proposals for substantial alterations to The Bourse. Members indicated their preference for the simplified design of the canopy presented and recommended an approval in concept of this proposal. Members requested that the application for final approval include details of the method proposed for securing the canopy to the building in order to minimize the damage to the stonework. Mr. Hollenburg reminded Mr. Gold that final approval was required before a building permit would be issued.

The Committee also discussed an application proposed for a new entrance on the northern portion of the South Fifth Street facade of The Bourse. At its January meeting, the Committee recommended an approval in concept for the replacement of a proposed double-leaf door with a single-leaf glass door with butt joints. Mr. Hollenburg indicated that the recommendation for that application was contingent upon a similar treatment of any entrance proposed for the southern portion of that facade. Mr. Gold acknowledged the importance of retaining the symmetry of the building and accepted the Committee's recommendation. He noted, however, that stairs to the ground level of the building on the southern end may pose design problems in meeting this recommendation.

2016 Sansom Street. This property is within the boundaries of the proposed Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District. Applicants submitted a plan for a wooden flat wall sign spanning the facade of this building.

The Committee commended the applicants for a handsome sign appropriate to the historic facade, and recommended final approval of this application.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary