

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Commission Conference Room
Suite 1301, 1401 Arch Street
30 April 1996

Present

Arlene Matzkin, Chairperson
Tony Atkins
Penelope Batchelor
Suzanne Pentz

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

Also

Anthony Weber, Architect
Lenore Millhollen, Center City Residents Association
Stan Tasey, Architect
William Enley, LTB ltd.
G. Max Richards, USPS Columbia Maryland FSO
George Shmidheiser, Temple University
Matthew S. Witkovsky
George Yu, Architect
Shawn Marren, Architect
Sister Mary Joann, Convent of Divine Love
Sister Mary Caritas, Convent of Divine Love
Reverend Monsignor James J. Graham, Archdiocese
James P. Leonard Esq.
Edward Siravo, Contractor
Reverend Michael Fitzgerald
Bill Greenlee, 15th Ward Leader
Ralph J. Kelly, Esq
Oscar Soldano
Bernard Nearey
Milton Marks, Preservation Coalition
Vincent Fumo, State Senator
Dean M. Bianchini, Melrose Enterprises
Ralph Castelli, Howell Bellanger Castelli Architects
Thomas Howell, Architect
Jerry Batoff Esq.
Paul Bonvincino
David Polatnick
Eugene Mayer
Bill Wheeler
Robert Puddicombe
Ben Miller
Edward Monro
Brian Zappala, Bohler Engineering

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

Boathouses #2 and #3

Anthony Weber, Architect

PROPOSAL: Windows and skylights

Mr. Baron explained that work had been stopped on a project commenced without a permit. The project involves cutting a wider opening on the second floor porch level of the river side of the boathouse and installing french doors with sandwiched muntins that had already been purchased. This new opening was being cut in a c. 1946 link building between the two older pieces of the rowing club. The Fairmount Rowing Association also intended to install similar new doors in the c. 1860 portion of the boathouse, the former Quaker City Barge Club however those doors have not yet been acquired. The Association and Commission staff formulated a compromise proposal: install the already purchased french doors in the modern link building, and restore the arch head door opening with true muntin wood casement windows in the gable end of the former Quaker City Barge Club to match those evidenced by a former photograph. The second part of the application involved the installation of skylights in the roof of the link portion of the building. These skylights will be somewhat visible from the street.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the above proposed door compromise and of the skylights with a "flat dome".

601 Walnut Street, Curtis Center

Marshall Stoltz, Applicant

PROPOSAL: bronze plaques

This proposal calls for installing bronze plaques in three locations on the base of the Curtis Center to identify the location of the Norman Rockwell Museum. The plaques to be affixed with epoxy on the polished granite would be centered below existing plaques identifying the Curtis Center.

The Committee thought that two screws would do less permanent damage to the stone than epoxy.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the plaques with attachment by two screws drilled into epoxy filled holes.

416 S. Iseminger Street

Michele Hyll, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Windows/Chimney alterations

This application involves the replacement of five pairs of sash on the front facade of the building and the repair and lining of the highly visible end chimney. Although Ms. Hyll submitted drawings for true muntin wood windows, she brought in a sample window with applied muntins to show the Committee for possible approval. Committee members explained that the Committee and Commission have traditionally approved only true

muntin wood windows and stressed the importance of the thinness of the muntins. Committee and staff explained that it is possible to obtain wood sash with both true muntins and thin muntins at less cost than the price that Ms. Hyll quoted for the sample sash. On the subject of chimney capping, the Committee thought that the chimney could be relined and the top of the chimney parged but that it should not have the visible metal tubes with caps on them. Rather she could use terra cotta tubes at the top and leave the caps off.

The Committee voted to approve new true thin muntin wood sash in the existing frames and chimney work without visible caps with details to be approved by staff.

104 Market Street

Stanley Tasey, Architect

PROPOSAL: Storefront alteration

This proposal calls for reversing the placement of the doors with the windows on the storefront of this building in order to meet the fire code exit requirements.

The Committee voted to recommend approval

100-118 South Broad Street

William Enley, Engineer

PROPOSAL: Transom vent

This proposal involves installing a louver in the transom panel of a Sansom Street door in order to provide ventilation to a new space for a branch of the Post Office. This door is deeply recessed and near the side loading area of the building.

The Committee voted to recommend approval

229 Race Street

Richard Maimon, Architect

PROPOSAL: Window restoration

This proposal involves installing new wood 2/2 true muntin sash in the upper floor windows to match an historic photograph. The building would also be repointed.

The Committee voted to recommend approval subject to staff approval of details and a pointing sample.

276 S. 20th Street

Bill Clay, Applicant

PROPOSAL: Roofing, cleaning, repointing, cornice repair

This proposal involves installing new asphalt shingles to

replace those already on the mansard of the building. The building would have the paint removed and the walls repointed as well as missing pieces of the cornice replaced.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of this work with staff review of samples and details. The new shingles should be grey to mimic slate.

1834-1838 Park Avenue, Shusterman Hall

Shawn Marren, Architect

PROPOSAL: South wall - masonry & windows, ADA access, & roof

This proposal involves converting this former church into a conference center for the Temple Law School. In order to provide accessibility to those in wheelchairs, the architects propose raising the ground level in the front of the building covering the watertable level of the building. The two leaf front doors would be converted to a single leaf with a fixed side panel but a new panel design would retain the symmetry of the opening. The original slate roof will be replaced with slate if money allows or with a hard slate substitute. The south wall, formerly a stuccoed party wall, would be covered with stone to match the rest of the building with a new monumental window cut into the wall.

The Committee voted to approve raising the grade and installing a new door pending the receipt of a detail that allows for retaining the visibility of some of the watertable coping and a vapor barrier to avoid damaging the floor joists. The Committee recommended approval of a new slate roof but not a substitute slate. They thought that the money to install stone on a wall that never had such a finish should be allocated to the highly visible roof. The Committee also worried that the stone might create a false historic impression but agreed to reexamine the issue if the University restudies the design to avoid this appearance. Committee members recommended approval of the new window.

2204-2216 Green Street, Convent of Divine Love

Edward Siravo, Builder

PROPOSAL: Rebuild Brandywine Street wall

The sisters of this cloistered order seek to rebuild the high wall at the rear of their convent. Staff signed a permit for the demolition of the wall owing to an "imminently dangerous" determination by the Department of Licenses and Inspections. Although the wall itself is relatively recent, it forms a large part of the north side of Brandywine Street faced by many neighbors in historic houses. The contractor submitted a drawing calling for rebuilding the wall in split face cinderblock with horizontal bands of light and dark grey with a white coping. The lowest part would receive a graffiti coating. Mr. Leonard, one of the lawyers for the convent, said that he was not sure that

the whole wall was under the jurisdiction of the Commission because only the church was particularly old and the wall also extends behind the more recent cloister building. The sister's rules require this high wall to maintain privacy and they would like to erect the new wall to present a better appearance to the street than the present stuccoed block wall. Time is of the essence because of the potential for the earth to shift now that the retaining wall has been removed. Senator Fumo reiterated these points and stressed the need for a speedy approval of this issue.

Committee members concurred that there was a need to maintain the height of the wall and to reach a quick solution that would respect the convent's financial limitations as well. They thought that this huge part of this historic street however deserved the services of an architect to come up with a design. Even using variations of block they thought that the wall could be given some vertical variety that could break up the long bands. They recommended a Catholic architect who it was thought might take on the project pro bono.

A neighbor, Jim Havilock, speaking on behalf of himself and other neighbors, while not wishing to see delay or cost added to the project, asked if a design professional couldn't look at the project to improve the design of the wall.

Committee members agreed to help the sisters achieve an improved design in time for approval at the May 8th Commission meeting.

The Committee voted to recommend approval pending receipt of drawing with a modified design. It was noted that work should continue pouring the foundation for a new wall in the mean time.

2411 Spruce Street

Zvi Barzilay, Owner/Applicant
PROPOSAL: New windows/capping

This proposal involves work undertaken without a permit. Several weekends ago Mr. Barzilay's contractor removed the wood windows of 2411 Spruce Street and replaced them with white vinyl windows. Work began on capping the decorative wood brick molding. Mr. Barzilay explained that he has owned the building for many years and has not received notice of the designation of the district. He and his contractor thought that windows did not require a permit and that his building now looks better than the others on the block. It was pointed out that his contractor is not licensed to work in the City of Philadelphia.

Bernard Nearey a Rittenhouse resident said that neighbors approached the contractor and asked if he had gotten Historical Commission approval and were told that they did not intend to seek that approval. Richard Tyler and a building inspector also asked that work stop on the project.

Committee members said that the windows should not be capped and that wood windows were appropriate for this building. They explained that they could not recommend approval for something already accomplished that they would not normally approve.

The Committee voted to recommend denial

1534 Pine Street

Dean Bianchini, Contractor
PROPOSAL: Brownstone repair

This proposal involves repairing both carved and flat areas of brownstone on this Havilland designed rowhouse using a portland cement based patching material called Mimic. Committee members and staff expressed some reservations about the water transmission and density characteristics of portland cement versus a lime and natural cement based material such as Jahn Cathedral Stone. The contractor who has used both materials said that he prefers Mimic because he can work the material more easily to produce the leaves and other shapes that are necessary for this project.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposal as presented with the condition that staff approve test areas for color and form.

1900 Pine Street

Allan Baumholtz, Applicant
PROPOSAL: Cut new windows

This proposal involves work performed without a permit to enlarge two window openings on the ground floor side of the building and install bronze colored aluminum windows. This nineteenth century building has been severely altered in the past with removal of the building cornice, stucco on the whole first floor and wide bronze colored aluminum windows throughout the building. Pictures of the building show that the building did have wider windows where Mr. Baumholtz recently widened them. The bronze windows that he installed match those in every other opening on the side of the building.

Loose plastic signage has been installed in the last two years on the side of the building in addition to more permanent signage existing at the time of designation.

The Committee voted to approve the proposal of the new windows contingent upon removal of the loose plastic signage on the side of the building.

1714 Walnut Street

Kathryn Walker, Applicant

PROPOSAL: New storefront

This proposal involves a ground floor storefront for a pizza parlor. The applicant proposed a wood and glass classical storefront with arches and pilasters in wood. The existing two story limestone metal and glass store front was designed and built in 1945 by Architect Armand Carroll. Committee members thought that the existing storefront possessed significance both because of its age and Bauhaus design. Owing to this, they expressed the opinion that the proposed design completely ignored the Secretary of the Interior's Standards used by the Commission for its review. Mr. Batoff, council for the applicant explained that he had spoken to staff and was seeking advice on how to direct the architect to proceed with a redesign of the storefront. He asked whether the older storefront shown in a 1927 picture of the building could be used to guide the design. It was explained that to create that design had two major problems in terms of the Secretary's Standards. First, existing historic fabric would have to be destroyed, and second, because the tenant does not control the second floor or even all of the first floor they could at most only recreate a small portion of the earlier storefront. This would create a mishmash of design elements from periods that never existed together on this building. The Committee advised that the architect propose a design that uses the existing masonry envelope of the storefront and creates something with thin metal and glass elements that would harmonize with the rest of the two story storefront. Staff offered to work with the designer to develop a design.

The Committee voted to reject the storefront as submitted and review a new design that Mr. Batoff explained would be forthcoming.

1805-1809 Walnut Street, Allison Building

Thomas Howell, Architect

PROPOSAL: Storefront alterations, awnings, signage

This proposal calls for converting the first floor to a Barnes and Noble bookstore. The existing storefront with individual recessed entryways will be reused at the transom level, but rebuilt at the lower levels, mimicking the details of the existing bronze storefronts. In addition, green matt canvas awnings would be installed over the windows and banners hung from the existing flagpoles.

The Committee voted to recommend final approval with shop drawing of the metal storefront details to be reviewed by staff to match existing.

1811 Walnut Street, Rittenhouse Club

Mario Zacharjasz, David Polatnick, Architects

PROPOSAL: Front doorway, Demolition of rear 2/3 of building, new two story construction and, loading dock

For the front facade, this proposal calls for filling in the area over the newly lowered doors with a simple rectangular wood and glass transom matching the old frame moldings. New matt canvas shed awnings over the windows and a balloon type awning over the door were shown. For the rear facade the architect showed a preliminary two story building set back fifteen feet from Sansom Street. The building as drawn has a strong horizontal orientation.

Committee members had no reservations about the awnings except for the balloon type at the door which they said hid the arch of the door transom. The suggestion was made that the applicants consider a see through metal and glass canopy which the architect agreed to study.

On the rear facade there was strong objection to the idea of treating Sansom Street as a service alley with a loading dock. Arlene Matzkin showed pictures to demonstrate that most of the existing structures are built to the front property line and the building across the street has recently been restored for a shoe store. Committee members also thought that the facade needed real windows that people would look out to give the street face some life.

The applicant explained how they need the loading dock for the trucks to service the store, but explained that they could improve the look of the facade. In addition, they thought that they could help reestablish the street face with a second floor cantilever that would extend part of the way back out toward the street over the trucks.

For clarification, Mr. Baron asked whether the Committee was reviewing the concept of demolition for the rear as part of this proposal. Arlene Matzkin responded that the demolition of the rear had already been approved in concept and so it was agreed that the Committee would not discuss that issue. It was then asked whether a new facade had been developed for that rear portion of the five story building that would now be exposed by the demolition and would be visible over the top of the two story rear addition. The answer was no. The Committee asked that the applicant return with a detailed proposal of the rear facade showing the possibility of the cantilever, the rear facade of the remaining historic piece of the building, and the awning over the front door.

The Committee voted to recommend approval of the transom over the front door and the tabling of consideration of all the other matters until receipt of sufficient information to review.

1428-30 Locust Street, Vida Apartments

Joseph Altieri, DAS Architects

PROPOSAL: New Storefront on Locust and 15th Street facades for
MAC machine and coffee house.

This proposal involves the conversion of a former bank space in the base of the Vida Apartment building into a new coffee house. The former MAC machine in a vestibule will be brought to the face of the building and surrounded by blue enameled metal enframent. Several bays of the thin metal storefront will be altered, one on each street frontage to create folding doors for open air dining, and the two at the corner to create an open "walk through" corner with a ramp tucked into the envelope of the building. A large new metal and neon sign would be attached at the very corner of the building into the stonework and very tall steeply pitched signage awnings would be installed over the windows. The applicant has proposed lighting over the windows and colorful tiles on the panels below each window. Staff had recommended to the applicant that they consider leaving the corner glazed except for the portion necessary for the ramp in order to maintain the solid sense of the corner and to protect against people living in the alcove. Committee members thought that the statement of the corner was maintained through the remaining pier, and the architect said that the applicant would like to install open metal roll down grates inside the openings. Committee members did think that the tile work below the windows should be restudied to fit more the classical light colored character of the building. They also thought that the opening storefront doors should be made of metal and thinned down to match the character of the remaining fixed areas of the storefront.

The Committee voted to accept the proposal as submitted with alterations described above to the opening doors of the storefront and the tile work. Method of attachment for lights signs, awnings and grates could be reviewed at staff level.

Respectfully submitted,

Randal Baron
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer