

THE MINUTES OF THE 186th STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

1 August 1974

Dr. F. Otto Haas, Chairman

Present: Dr. F. Otto Haas, Chairman
Mrs. James C. Cramlish, Jr.
The Hon. John B. Kelly, Jr., Councilman-at-Large
John Taxin
James L. Ferguson, Deputy Director of Finance
David Rosenblum, Assistant City Solicitor
Richard Tyler, Historian
Patricia Sienkowiak, Executive Assistant to the Chairman

Unless otherwise noted, all action taken herein is the result of motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES of the Stated Meeting, 6 June 1974, were approved and directed to be filed.

REPORTS

The Reports of the Architectural Committee for 11 June 1974, 25 June 1974, and 23 July 1974, were approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

Recommendations by the Staff for the Certification of Buildings, Richard Tyler, Historian.

The Spring Garden Civic Association's request for the certification of a number of buildings within the area was tabled for further study. At the request of Mr. Robert Alotta, the Commission staff will review a list of structures owned by the Philadelphia Housing Authority--some of which are located in the Spring Garden area--to determine what buildings have been certified or are presently under consideration by the Board. The Housing Authority is requesting that the Commission not certify any buildings owned by the Authority until that agency can study its ability to restore structures in accordance with Historical Commission standards.

Commission Activities, Report on, Richard Tyler, Historian. Mr. Tyler's report on staff activities for June and July was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

Van Rensselaer Mansion, Richard Tyler, Historian. The Historical Commission Board members were informed of the Commission's approval, in September 1973, of the proposal of DESIGN RESEARCH for the renovation of the structure at 1801-03 Walnut Street for use as a retail store and of the recent concern of the Mayor's Office and interested citizens for the building's preservation and restoration.

OLD BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

At the request of the American Institute of Architects Committee on Historic Preservation and Conservation, the Historical Commission was asked to support that Committee's recommendation to Design Research calling for the retention of the center dome, the Doges Room, and the Walnut Street facade of the mansion. This, the Board unanimously agreed to do.

Mr. Kelly proposed entering the Design Research establishment through the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund building if a Walnut Street entrance is desired.

NEW BUSINESS

Certification: social, economic, and legal questions, Richard Tyler, Historian. Mr. Tyler spoke at length to the social, economic, and legal problems facing the owners of historically certified buildings and the Historical Commission. He informed the Board of his desire to restudy the basis for certification and to explore the possibility of acquiring money for facade ornaments, of introducing legislation for tax benefits for owners of historic buildings, and other such preservation tools. His findings will be presented to the Board for consideration.

Pulaski Highway, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Richard Tyler, Historian. Mr. Tyler reported the staff's continuing work on the Pulaski Highway study and asked the Board if the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation might not be asked to reimburse the staff for its services. The money could be deposited either in the City Treasury or in the Harry A. Ratten Memorial Fund.

The Board agreed to allow Mr. Tyler to request payment and noted that in the future an agreement with the agency requesting the services should be entered into beforehand.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Sienicki
Executive Assistant to the Chairman

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