

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Robert Thomas, Chair

Commission Conference Room, One Parkway, 13th Fl., 1515 Arch St.

31 August 1999

Present

Robert Thomas, Chair

Penelope Batcheler

Daniel McCoubrey

Suzanne Pentz

Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer

R. Scott Jacob, Executive Secretary

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Also

Madeline Shikomba

Peggy Pentz

Byron Whiting

Ilan Seidenwar

Aliko Strakes, Preservation Alliance

Rebecca Stoloff, Society Hill Civic Association

Ronald Gross, Granite Penn Square, LLC

Harry Gross, Granite Penn Square, LLC

Nobutaka Ashihara, Nobutaka Ashihari Associates

Naoki Fukui, Nobutaka Ashihari Associates

Neale Quenzel, Milner Associates

Philip Yocum, Milner Associates

Lawrence Snyder, Old First Reformed Church

Mary Marshall, Central Philadelphia Development Corporation

Anthony Forte, Saul Ewing Remick and Saul Attorneys

Robert McCauley, Ueland Junker McCauley and Nicholson, Architects

Barry Ginder, B & G Architecture

Lenore Millhollen, Center City Residents Association (CCRA)

Richard Pandolfi

Judith Eden, CCRA

Reed Axelrod, Reed Axelrod Architects

Carl Zucker, Esq.

Sara Forster

Rosa Marino

Michael Onyiah

Harvey Levitan

The Architectural Committee meeting began at 12:15 p.m. The meeting began without quorum. Prior to achieving a quorum, applicants and attendees were asked if they objected to review without quorum. No one objected.

2304 Madison Square Street

Madeline Shikomba, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1865

PROPOSAL: Cover front and rear cornices in aluminum

This proposal involves installing aluminum covers on the front and rear wood cornice of a row house. Both cornices have visibility from a public right-of-way. The soffit of the rear cornice has fallen off, and the subject property has sustained internal water damage. Madeline Shikomba, the owner, explained that she wants to install the capping to protect the cornice from further water damage. The committee explained that this procedure will not solve the problem, and recommended replacing the rotted pieces and repainting the cornice. The applicant expressed concern over any costly repairs that would also require continual maintenance.

Ms. Shikomba stated that she replaced the roof about three years ago. Ms. Batcheler speculated that the new roof may not cover the cornices sufficiently to keep water drainage from damaging the cornice. Ms. Shikomba said that the damage to the internal plaster has worsened since the roof repair, and believes that the damage may be primarily caused by water runoff from the roof of the church next door. Indeed, the plaster damage is located at the meeting places at the front and rear with the neighboring church.

Upon examining photographs of the damage, the Committee agreed that the water runoff is probably coming from the church, and perhaps through the chimneys located at each corner. The Committee and staff discussed the possibility of having an inspector from the Department of Licenses and Inspections examine the situation. Ms. Batcheler also offered to visit the site.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of covering the front cornice in aluminum, and to defer judgment on the rear cornice until an inspector from the Department of Licenses and Inspections has examined the situation to determine if the damage is caused by water runoff from the roof of the church next door.

17 North 3rd Street

Byron Whiting, Tenant/Applicant

DATE: 1840

PROPOSAL: Legalize installation of aluminum and glass doorway

This proposal involves legalizing the installation of an anodized aluminum door and door surround installed without a permit. The applicant explained that he replaced the door and surround for security reasons, as the old wood door could no longer provide the needed protection. He claimed that the owner told him to check with the Historical Commission after he finished the work. The Committee discussed possible compromises, but ultimately decided to recommend against legalizing the work. Ms. Batcheler suggested having an old photograph of the building enlarged to show the details and dimensions of the old door. The Committee also thought the owner of the building shares the responsibility with the applicant.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal.

227 Market Street; 216 Church Street

Ilan Seidenwar, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1840

PROPOSAL: Facade work; legalize new vinyl windows

The proposal involves alterations to the two storefronts, some of which the Commission has previously approved. Although the owner had committed to retaining his existing aluminum windows in the modified openings on Market Street, he replaced them with new vinyl windows, which he now seeks to legalize. In addition he wishes to cut down the doorway and install a ramp to provide handicap accessibility.

The second- and third-floor window openings on the Market Street elevation were greatly reduced some time ago, and the recently replaced aluminum windows appeared to date from the 1950s or 60s. The neighboring building matched the subject building, and still retains the original appearance. If the applicant is asked to replace the new vinyl windows with true divided, wood windows, they would go into non-original openings, thus executing a false historic appearance. Mr. Baron suggested that a compromise could be reached to restore the fourth-floor window openings by installing six-over-six, wood windows, while legalizing the rest of the vinyl ones. The Committee agreed with this compromise, but also wanted the current soldier course brick lintels on the fourth-floor replaced with stone or wood sills to match those on the neighboring building.

The Committee did not object to the other aspects of the proposal, with the exception of the glazing details of the Church Street storefront. An old insurance survey describes a "fancy transom" over the storefront. The Committee and staff preferred installing a simple transom with one vertical divider. The Committee also discussed possible ways to recreate the lights of the storefront door and window panels as described in the old insurance survey. Ms. Batcheler showed some drawing for a similar treatment she worked on, and offered to copy the plans for the applicant and his architect. The Committee agreed to recommend approval, with 7/8 of an inch muntins, and staff to review and approve details.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of:

- 1. the restoration of the fourth-floor window openings by installing six-over-six, wood windows, and legalizing the rest of the vinyl ones;*
 - 2. cutting down the doorway and installing a ramp to provide handicap accessibility; and*
 - 3. the storefront alterations, with a simplified transom with one vertical divider, and 7/8 of an inch muntins on the door and window panels as described in the old insurance survey,*
- With staff to review and approve details of all aspects of the proposal.*

1629 West Diamond Street

Louise Clark Smith, Owner/Applicant

DATE: c. 1885

PROPOSAL: Legalize aluminum windows and non-historic door

The applicant seeks to legalize the installation of six vinyl windows and a single leaf non-historic door. The applicant's now deceased husband installed the windows and door without a permit several years ago. The historic doors of this Furness-designed row house have not been stored, according to the applicant. The applicant explained that she could not afford the work. The Committee and staff discussed possible funding options and referring the issue to the Committee on Financial Hardship.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal, but with the recommendation to explore funding options or referral to the Committee on Financial Hardship.

Hedge Street, between Bridge and Brill Streets

City of Philadelphia, Owner

Joseph Syrnick, Department of Streets, Applicant

DATE: 19th century or early 20th century

PROPOSAL: Pave over brick street in asphalt

The proposal seeks to pave over this brick street. Apparently, ten percent of the bricks are missing, and thirty percent are in poor or unsalvageable condition. Department of Streets claims it cannot adequately match the historic brick to fill in the patches currently paved with asphalt. Plans to repair utilities lines under this street instigated the Department of Streets request to pave over this street. There is concern that this brick will not withstand the relocating and resetting necessary with the digging up of this street. The Committee did not agree, and wanted the remaining bricks consolidated into one stretch of the street, perhaps the middle section, with the possibility of laying new brick at the ends.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal, and to approve consolidating the remaining historic bricks into one stretch of the street, perhaps the middle section, with the possibility of laying new brick at the ends.

1-21 North Juniper Street, aka 1325 Market Street

Granite Penn Square LLC, Owner

Nobutaki Ashihara, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1930

PROPOSAL: Renovate building for hotel; HVAC; marquee

The proposal involves conversion of the former Market Street National Bank into a Marriott Hotel. The proposal includes:

1. restoring the mezzanine level window areas, and replacing the windows on the upper floors to match the sight lines of the existing;
2. installing new, simple butt-joint glazed storefronts in place of the existing non-original storefronts;
3. placing large HVAC units on the upper roof that will provide for the removal of the air conditioning units from the windows of the rest of the building;

4. a steel and glass marquee at the front entrance;
5. signage;
6. flagpoles in two existing and one new location;
7. up lighting the building; and
8. a new paving scheme.

The Architect plans to remove the many window air conditioning units, and to install large HVAC units at the top of building. The Committee agreed that the rooftop HVAC units would be minimally visible from the street, and a major improvement over the existing condition. The architect showed the Committee a revised design that further reduces the visibility of the proposed rooftop HVAC units, which it approved.

The proposal involves the replacement of the existing casement windows with new windows that will match the site lines and profiles of the existing. The plans also include installing new, simple butt-joint glazed storefronts in place of the existing non-original storefronts, and with open-ended, shed-type awnings as seen in early photographs. The original storefronts had a three-part design with stainless steel joints. The Committee did not object to the windows replacement or the new storefronts. Plans also call for the installation of a new steel and glass marquee, of a relatively delicate design at the front entrance. The Committee did not object to the proposed marquee.

Ms. Batcheler noted that the red medallion signs bearing the initial "M" for Marriott should not go next to the keystones over the windows that flank the front entrance. She explained that the medallions detract from the design of the window surround, and would look better placed on the proposed new sign board over the entrance. The architect agreed, and offered to ask his client if they will comply with this request. The Committee did not object to the other signage aspects, which include two red medallions at the top of the eastern facade, and the new sign board over the main entrance. The Committee suggested placing signage on the blank wall of the adjoining building at the east side of the main building, facing the parking lot.

The Committee did not object to the proposed paving scheme, the flagpoles in two existing locations and one at the new marquee, or up lighting the building.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve:

1. *restoring the mezzanine level window areas, and replacing the windows on the upper floors to match the sight lines of the existing;*
2. *installing new, simple glass storefronts in place of the existing non-original storefronts;*
3. *placing large HVAC units on the upper roof that will provide for the removal of the air conditioning units from the windows of the rest of the building;*
4. *a steel and glass marquee at the front entrance;*
5. *the proposed signage, but with the red medallion signs bearing the initial "M" for Marriott placed on the proposed new sign board over the entrance;*
6. *flagpoles in two existing locations and one near the proposed marquee;*
7. *up lighting the building; and*
8. *the new paving scheme, all with staff to review and approve details.*

Mr. Thomas arrived, and the Committee reached quorum.

153 North 4th Street, se corner at Race Street, Old First Reformed Church

Old First Reformed Church, Owner

Michael Hauptman, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1836

PROPOSAL: Replace window with a door

This proposal calls for converting a window into a door. The door will include a transom. The Committee members agreed that the proposed location is on a secondary facade, and significantly obscured from the public right-of-way by a wall.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

401 North Broad Street

401 North Broad Street Associates, Owner

Robert McCauley, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1929

PROPOSAL: Master plan for louvers

This proposal creates a master plan for the installation of louvers at 401 N. Broad Street. The applicant showed new louvers in three bays of the side facades of the headhouse and the upper portion of all windows on the warehouse portion of the building below the fifth floor. The fifth floor and above have access to a central light well.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of allowing staff to review for approval new louvers located in three registers on the sides of the headhouse and in the transom portion of already altered windows in the warehouse section of the building below the fifth floor. The Committee thought that alterations to historic windows in the warehouse section should return to the Committee and Commission.

201 South 18th Street, se corner at Walnut Street, Rittenhouse Claridge

Commerce Bank, Unit Owner

Stephan Talbott, Vice President of Commerce Bank, Applicant

DATE: 1955

PROPOSAL: New storefront; illuminated signage

This proposal calls for renovating several storefronts at the corner of 18th and Walnut Streets to house the new Commerce Bank branch. The bank is not satisfied with the condition of the bricks, and is concerned that more damage will become visible when the existing signs are removed. The bank also wishes to establish a "sleeker" presence in this location, and maintains that the proposed black granite cladding will provide that. The proposal also call for inserting a doorway near the corner. The Committee did not object to the new doorway or the shopfront alterations.

The Committee did object to the cladding aspect of the proposal, and found that *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* prohibits covering historic fabric.

The Committee discussed the possibility that new signage would conceal the damaged bricks. The Bank does not want sign bands, as its "stacked" logo requires greater height. The Committee suggested installing a long sign band on each facade, but with taller sections where they approach the corner of the building to accommodate the logo requirements. The architect seemed amenable to this suggestion, and showed the Committee an alternate plan that closely follows the plan devised by the Committee.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the new door, storefront alterations and installing a long sign band on each facade, but with taller sections where they approach the corner of the building to accommodate the logo requirements, and denial of the cladding proposal. The sign band should have a frame and remain separate from the piers of the storefront.

2100 Spruce Street, sw corner at 21st Street

Joseph Friedberg and Jo Buyske, Owners

Barry Ginder, Architect/Applicant

DATE: 1880

PROPOSAL: Install louvers in former window openings

This proposal seeks to install louvers in two currently boarded up windows in the carriage house to accommodate the new HVAC units. The applicant explained that the sash, jamb and sill will still match those of the historic house. The Committee did not object to the proposal.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposal.

2033 Spruce Street

Israel Kimberg, Owner

Richard Pandolfi, Contractor/Applicant

DATE: c. 1875

PROPOSAL: Shave loose brownstone details and patch without details

The applicant has already shaved the loose brownstone from the building facade including the details on the window and door lintels. He now seeks to patch the stone using a brown colored mix, restoring the detail only on the lintels of the first floor openings. The applicant explained that he removed the material to remedy a safety issue. The Committee discussed the possibility of reconstructing the details using existing lintels within the same row, or actually making casts from them. As several houses in this row have damaged or missing details, the Committee suggested the applicant ask other neighbors if they may be interested in having a cast made to repair or replace damaged details. The applicant said he would confer with his client.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial.

251 South 18th Street, Philadelphia Art Alliance

Philadelphia Art Alliance, Owner

Bryan Marton, Applicant

DATE: 1906

PROPOSAL: Ramp on Rittenhouse Square

This proposal seeks to build a ramp for handicapped accessibility to the garden dining area at the rear of the Art Alliance. The Committee did not object to the proposal.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

2406-08 Delancey Street

Dieter and Sara Forster, Owners

Reed Axelrod, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1860

PROPOSAL: New design for addition

This proposal involves a modification to the proposal approved last month. The applicant now seeks a larger rectangular two-story addition. The Committee did not object to the modified proposal.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval.

120-122 South 18th Street

Neil Stein, Owner

Carl Zucker, Applicant

DATE: 1898

PROPOSAL: Café doors; storefront alteration; internally-illuminated projecting sign

This proposal calls for the installation of sliding doors, a large mirror-covered flower box and an externally-illuminated projecting sign on the front facade of the building. The Committee did not think the mirrored flower box appropriate for this building, and also objected to the proposed alteration of the first-floor "storefront."

Mr. Thomas noted that the proposed projecting sign would butt up against the second-floor bay window as presented. The Committee thought the applicant should use non internally-illuminated signage, installed in a manner that avoids damaging or competing with the elaborate details of the facade.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal.

1516 Spruce Street

Harvey Levitan, Owner/Applicant

DATE: 1865

PROPOSAL: Legalize sign

The owner has received a violation for his signage that he claims has existed for over eighteen years. The relatively small flat wall sign consists of a metal backing with applied plastic strips containing the names of numerous tenants. The Committee did not think the Commission should exercise its jurisdiction to deny legalization of this signage. The Committee thought the Commission should continue to look at legalization applications such as this on a one-by-one basis.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposal.

1924-1928 Delancey Street

Rosa Marino, Owner

Michael Onyiah, Architect/Applicant

DATE: c. 1920

PROPOSAL: Cut garage door, windows and door in front facade

This proposal calls for extensive alterations to the front facade of this contributing building in the Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District. The changes include cutting a garage door opening, a new french door type window and a double door main entry. The applicant seeks to close existing openings on the first and second floors. The plans also show the enlargement of the balconies on the second floor.

The applicant stated that a number of former carriage houses exist on this block with garages. The Committee members noted that in the early 20th century many Spanish style Arts and Crafts houses and apartments were created on this block. Some of these may have been new construction, while others converted from existing buildings.

The Committee and staff strongly objected to this proposal, as it violates *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Mr. Baron cited the guidelines of *The Standards* relating to windows and doors, which do not provide for alterations such as these on a primary facade, even in cases of change of use (see p. 81, 85 of *The Standards*). The applicant offered to eliminate the changes to the second floor. The Committee members told the applicant that they still could not recommend approval of any of the alterations. The Committee did concede that the front door may need to be expanded slightly to meet current code requirements.

Although the property has remained vacant for many years, even prior to designation, there is no evidence that the building had been marketed or of an effort to reuse it as apartments or a single family residence. The Committee explained that there is a procedure to demonstrate financial hardship if the owner wishes to pursue that option.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend denial of the proposal.

312 South American Street

Edward Plachter, Owner/Applicant

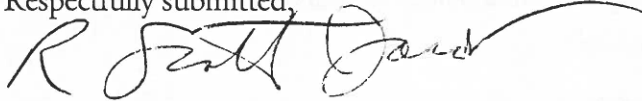
DATE: 1846

PROPOSAL: Rear addition

The applicant proposes a two-story rear addition that has visibility across a parking lot. Committee members urged that the applicant to retain the wooden doorframe at the rear of the house. The Committee did not object to the proposal.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Scott Jacob", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

R. Scott Jacob

Executive Secretary