

**THE MINUTES OF THE 510th STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

11 February 2005

One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street

Room 18025

Michael Sklaroff, Esquire, Chair

Present

Michael Sklaroff, Esq., Chair

Warren Huff, Director of Urban Design, City Planning Commission

Joseph James, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Property

Kathleen Murray, Assistant to the President of City Council

David Perri, P.E., Department of Licenses and Inspections

Vincent Rivera, AIA

Thomas Sugrue, Ph. D.

Norman Tissian

Scott Wilds, Deputy Director, Office of Housing and Community Development

Lawrence Copeland, Esq., Senior Attorney, Law Department

Jonathan Farnham, Historic Preservation Planner

Diane M. Hughes, Executive Secretary

Laura M. Spina, Historic Preservation Planner

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Also

Hope Zoss, Smith Memorial Playground

Joe Sweeny

Shannon Yott, PWI Engineering

Robert Torres, Bellevue

Daniel Lavery, Colory Metal and Glass

John Fruneillo, Roman Catholic High School

Timothy Calligan, Chestnut Hill Academy

Jason Sieminski, Chestnut Hill Academy

Eric Rahe, Chestnut Hill Academy

David Smallets, Chestnut Hill Academy

Donald Phimister, D.M. Phimister Architects, 528 Pine Street

Robert Hotes, DPK&A Architects, Smith Memorial Playground

Henry Hauptfuhrer, Bachelor Barge Club

Peggy Conver, Chestnut Hill Academy

Frank Steel, Chestnut Hill Academy

Maksym Szpilczak, 537 Queen Street

Rachel S. Schade, Schade & Bolender Architects, 2044 Spruce Street

Tom Muldoon

Eric Rahe, Bower Lewis Thrower Architects

Lenore Millhollen, Preservation Alliance

Daniela Voith

John Gallery, Preservation Alliance

Michael del Rossi, Jr., Graboyes Commercial Windows

510th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission

Michael Sklaroff, Chair, recognized the presence of a quorum and called the 510th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission to order at 9:12 a.m.

Minutes of the 509th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission

Upon a motion made by Mr. Wilds and seconded by Mr. Tissian, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the 509th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held 14 January 2005, Michael Sklaroff, Chair.

The Report of the Architectural Committee, 25 January 2005

146-148 Bread Street

Alan Markowitz, owner

Wesley Wei, applicant

History: c. 1890; Window cut to a door in northern bay after 1960

Project: Cut openings; add garage and entry doors – in concept

The Architectural voted unanimously to recommend denial of any changes to the existing transom openings in all bays and the existing door and window openings in the southern and northern bays, but approval of the widening of the center-bay opening to make it symmetrical beneath the transom (no more than approximately 2 feet-3 inches to the south), approval of an historically appropriate garage door in the center opening, and approval of an historically appropriate pedestrian door in the existing northern opening, with staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 [New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.].

This application proposes the concept of cutting new openings and installing garage and pedestrian doors in the three-bay front façade of the former industrial building at 146-148 Bread Street. The Commission designated the building individually in 1982 and classified it as contributing to the Old City Historic District in 2003.

Mr. Farnham explained the application, which proffers two schemes for the three-bay front facade. Scheme A stipulates removing windows and doors and enlarging openings; elongating transoms; installing garage doors in the outer bays, and installing double-leaf pedestrian doors in the center bay. Scheme B removes the window and enlarges the opening in the southern bay, and installs garage doors in the southern and center bays.

No one attended the Commission meeting to represent the proposal. Commission members deemed both schemes, which propose cutting historic masonry for garage doors, inappropriate.

Mr. Tissian made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

537 Queen Street

537 Queen Development, owner

Maksym Szpilczak, applicant

History: c. 1825; third story and cornice added c. 1855; demolished and rebuilt 2004

Project: Construct rooftop addition

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, pursuant to Standard 9 [New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.]. It also suggested that the applicant apply for the rescission of this address from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places because of the total loss of historic fabric.

This application proposes the construction of a rooftop addition on the three-story rowhouse at 537 Queen Street. The Department of Licenses & Inspections declared the historic building at 537 Queen imminently dangerous in 2003 and the Commission's staff approved its demolition. In 2004, the owner rebuilt the building to match the historic building.

The proposed fourth story would be set back 15 feet from the cornice. It would be faced with stucco and fenestrated with wood casement windows.

Mr. Farnham presented the application. Mr. Sklaroff asked for clarification of the absence of historic fabric. Mr. Wilds expressed concern about the potential rescission of this property. He noted that the Commission reviewed and approved the reconstruction of the historic rowhouse that once stood on the site. Other Commission members also questioned the rescission of this property from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Farnham informed the Commission that, despite the Committee's suggestion of rescission, the owner would like to maintain the designation. Upon clarification that the proposed fourth-floor addition would be set back 15 feet from the front facade, the Commission judged it appropriate.

Mr. Sugrue made a motion to approve the fourth-floor addition. Mr. James seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

1550 N. 33rd Street, Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse

City of Philadelphia and Smith Memorial Playground, owners

Robert Hotes, DPK&A Architects, applicant

History: 1899, James Windrim, architect

Project: Construct gatehouse, dismantle pavilion, rehabilitate slide, add playground, landscape grounds

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposal with the third slide option, raising the building 12 inches, pursuant to Standard 9 [New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.].

This application proposes renovations and additions to Smith Playground, an historic playground in Fairmount Park.

It stipulates the renovation of an historic slide and its adaptation for accessibility. The renovation would include the demolition of later additions, the removal of an unsafe interior stair, the addition of safety enhancements, and the construction of a large boardwalk linking the top and bottom of the slide. The boardwalk would include two structures called tree houses.

The application also proposes the disassembly and storage of an historic octagonal pavilion; it would be re-erected within five years at a new location on the grounds.

A gateway building to house restrooms and other facilities would be constructed. The building is designed in a style reminiscent of turn-of-the-century park pavilions.

The application also proposes several modifications to the landscape including the laying of new paths to improve accessibility; the addition of playground areas; the partial reestablishment of an historic oval in front of the main building; the relocation of the parking area away from the play areas; the creation of a picnic area; the demolition of a non-historic pool; the addition of fencing, and the addition of an historic gatehouse salvaged from elsewhere in the park.

Mr. Farnham presented the proposal. Mr. Sklaroff inquired if the entire playground site is listed on the Register. The staff noted that the entire site is listed on the Register. Commission members asked Hope Zoss, the director of the playground, and Robert Hotes, the architect, if they accepted the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Hotes acknowledged that they did.

Mr. Sugrue made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Tissian seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

2044 Spruce Street

David Nazarian, owner

Rachel Schade, applicant

History: c. 1880, perhaps G.W. and W.D. Hewitt, architects

Project: Demolish chimney; add elevator tower, deck, roof hatch, HVAC equipment; replace windows

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the application as submitted, with staff to review details.

This application proposes several alterations and additions to the grand late nineteenth-century mansion at the southeast corner of 21st and Spruce Streets. It proposes the demolition of a chimney and the construction of an elevator tower in its place. The chimney appears to be visible from 21st and Cypress Streets. It also proposes the construction of a large roof deck with access from the new elevator and a roof hatch. Two railing options are offered for the deck: a wrought iron railing based on historic railings on the building and a contemporary cable railing. New rooftop HVAC equipment is proposed. Finally, the replacement of first-floor rear windows with French doors is planned. The deck with railing, roof hatch, HVAC equipment, and French doors would not be visible from any public right-of-way.

Mr. Farnham presented the proposal. He explained that the architect, Rachel Schade, submitted drawings to the staff stipulating a larger roof deck a few days after the Architectural Committee meeting. Six feet would be added to the north edge of the deck, increasing its visibility from 21st and Spruce Streets. As Ms. Schade explained in the letter included with the new drawings, she brought the revised drawings of the larger deck to the Committee meeting, but did not point out the change to the Committee. The Committee based its recommendation on the initial drawings that specify the smaller deck. The applicant would like the Commission to consider the larger deck, not the deck reviewed at the Committee meeting. Mr. Farnham noted that the revised deck would potentially be highly visible.

Ms. Schade stated that the revised deck design would extend six feet farther to the north. She offered that the roof has three sections, a steep mansard closest to the street, a middle section with a shallow pitch, and a flat portion at the top. She also noted an extant, large skylight in the center of the roof. She concluded, stating that the deck would be positioned behind the mansard with an eight-foot setback and a 42-inch railing, which would extend 32 inches above the parapet. Ms. Schade said that she is willing to consider amendments to the design of the deck to render it more appropriate.

Mr. Sklaroff asked if the prominent chimney seen in many of the photographs of the building was slated for demolition. Mr. Farnham stated that it was not. As the plans show, the chimney to be demolished for the elevator shaft is at the southeast corner of the building. Mr. Wilds and other Commission members expressed concern about the visibility of the proposed deck. They noted that it would have a jarring impact. Mr. Sugrue thought that the applicant should submit a visibility study. Mr. Sklaroff said that the building is remarkable and inquired about the historical precedent for a deck on such a building. Mr. Tyler responded that this building would not have had a deck historically. Mr. Sklaroff suggested that Ms. Schade use the Commission's comments for guidance in the redesigning of the deck. Mr. Rivera expressed concern that the chimney would be encircled by the proposed deck.

Lenore Millhollen, Center City Residents' Association/Preservation Alliance, adamantly opposed the deck.

Mr. Sugrue made a motion to deny the proposal. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Sklaroff passed the gavel to Mr. Sugrue.

200-216 S. Broad Street, Bellevue

Bellevue Associates, owner

A. Robert Torres, applicant

History: 1904, G.W. and W.D. Hewitt, architects

Project: Add pedestrian bridge between hotel and adjacent building

The Architectural Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval, pursuant to Standard 9 [New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with

the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.].

Mr. Farnham presented this application, which proposes the construction of a pedestrian bridge across Chancellor Street, an alley separating the historic Bellevue Hotel from a non-historic building to the south. The bridge would be added at the fourth-story level of the Bellevue to connect the hotel with the fitness center. It would be built of metal and glass. Its construction would require the removal of a paired window with decorative stone surround and a small amount of stone cladding. The bridge would be set back 131'-6" from the Broad Street façade of the building.

Ms. Murray inquired about the reason for the bridge. Bellevue general manager Andrew Speizman and architect Robert Torres represented the project. Mr. Speizman said that the proposed bridge would provide access to the Sports Club. The bridge would be positioned behind the elevators of the club.

Mr. James made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Huff seconded the motion, which carried with 8 votes. Mr. Sklaroff abstained.

Mr. Sugrue returned the gavel to Mr. Sklaroff.

Boathouse Row

City of Philadelphia, Owner

Karen Borski, Interim Director of Fairmount Park Commission, Applicant

DATE: History: # 2 Fairmount Boat Club: 1904, Walter Smedley, architect

3 Quaker City Barge Club: 1860; rear addition, 1874

4 Pennsylvania Barge Club: 1892, Louis Hickman, architect; addition, 1912, C. E. Schermerhorn, architect

5 Crescent Boat Club: 1869-71; addition, 1891, Charles Balderston, architect

6 Bachelors Barge Club: 1893-94, Hazelhurst & Huckle, architects

7 & #8 University Barge Club: 1870; enlarged, 1893

9 Malta Boat Club: 1873; enlarged 1901, Hewitt Bros., architects

#10 Vesper Boat Club: 1873; addition, 1898, Howard Hagar, architect

#11 College Boat Club: 1874-75, addition, 1920; addition 1938

#12 West Philadelphia Rowing Club: 1878, addition 1968

#13 Undine Barge Club: 1882-83, Furness & Evans, architects

#14 Philadelphia Skating Club: 1860, James Sidney, architect

#15 The Sedgeley Club: 1902-03, Arthur Brockie, architect

PROPOSAL: Replace exterior lighting

The Architectural Committee voted to recommend conceptual approval, subject to a mock-up, with the attachment details to return to the Committee.

This application calls for replacing the incandescent lights that outline the boathouses with LED lights.

Equipment: The information says that the nodes will be of the dome type, .74" in height. For every 100 nodes a junction box is required. These junction boxes range in size from one-foot square to two-feet by two-and-one-half feet. The specifications do not note which size is required in each location. The cables come in several colors to match

the background, but the application does not specify that this will be done.

Mounting: The cables can either be affixed with tubing or clips. By inference the application says that clips will be used, but does not say how often the clips will be laid. However, it is unclear how many of the existing holes from the existing lighting can be reused for the new clips. All clips and nails (or screws) will be stainless steel. The application does not specify the mounting for the junction boxes. For lights on chimneys, the papers detail that a "bonding material" will be used, but offer no other information.

Patching: No details of existing holes from the previous lighting have been included.

Ms. Spina presented the proposal. She informed the Commission that the mock-up did not demonstrate the true appearance of the new lighting. It was noted that all the boathouses have approved the new lighting and have submitted permission letters to the lighting consultant.

Although LED has the capacity to change colors, the Commission discussed if the proposed lighting should mimic the incandescent in color. Mr. Sugrue noted that the incandescent lights were installed in 1979. Mr. Sklaroff remarked that 21st century lighting should be a consideration. He pointed out that each boathouse owner should be a part of the dialogue. Mr. Tissian emphasized that boathouse row is an integral part of the city and he believes it important to receive clarification about the changing colors of the lights. Mr. Sugrue thought that the changing color is a temporary situation, which would preclude the Commission's jurisdiction; however, the attachment details would be guided by the Commission's jurisdiction. Mr. Wilds disagreed owing to the Commission's jurisdiction to regulate the appearance of historic buildings. Mr. Sklaroff commented that the city is entitled to freedom of expression. Mr. Rivera said that the Committee discussed at length the impact of the new lighting on the historic appearance.

Karen Borski of the Fairmount Park Commission and Shannon Yott, the lighting consultant, attended the meeting. Ms. Borski expressed concern for the safety of the person changing the existing bulbs.

Joe Sweeney spoke in support of the proposed lighting. He believes that the current lighting is primitive and a fire hazard and that the new lighting will be an enhancement.

Thomas Muldoon supports the new lighting with its flexibility to change.

Mr. Tyler disclosed that the mock-up white lights read as blue and were positioned too close. He thought that the new lighting should emulate the existing with the color change only for special occasions.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to approve the lighting in concept, with the Committee and staff to review attachment details. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

301-313 North Broad Street, Roman Catholic High School

Trustees of Roman Catholic High School, Owner

John Fruneillo, Applicant

DATE: 1886, Edwin F. Durang, architect; addition, 1997, Ueland Junker McCauley,

architects

PROPOSAL: Add exterior lighting

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the revised proposal with staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 [New additions, exterior alterations, or new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a property.] and Standard 10 [New additions and related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.].

As a part of the institutional lighting along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and North Broad Street, Roman Catholic High School would like to illuminate the outside of its building. The proposal includes installing single and double-headed light fixtures at the second and third floor sills on the Vine Street and North Broad Street façades and two at the corner turret. All of the fixtures and electrical cable will be mounted on the exterior in the mortar joints of the stone. Except for one double-headed fixture at the second floor, all of the fixtures will be mounted on the sills or belt-course to limit their visibility and all of the equipment will be painted to match the color of the stone.

Ms. Spina presented the proposal. Mr. Sugrue asked if the school was using the same lighting firm that was used for the lighting of City Hall.

John Fruneillo, the applicant, said that the Lighting Practice produced the design. He noted that new lighting will have an additional benefit of adding light to the sidewalk.

Mr. Sugrue made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Ms. Murray seconded the motion, which carried with 8 votes. Mr. James dissented.

528 Pine Street

James Lokoff, Owner

Donald Phimister, Applicant

DATE: c. 1805 by Benjamin Woolston; rehabilitated, 1971 – significant in Society Hill Historic District

PROPOSAL: Demolish part of rear ell, build rear addition, add roll-up gate and parking pad

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the proposal with a flat roof and parapet, instead of a hipped roof.

This building has the historic configuration of a four-story main section with gabled roof, piazza with curved wall, and three-story rear ell. The proposal entails the demolition of thirty-five (35) feet of the rear ell and a one-story addition that wraps around the newly truncated ell. The addition will widen the rear ell to the full width of the property so that the family room measures 16' by 24'. The addition will have large glass doors leading out to the yard, brick walls and a hipped, standing seam copper roof. The new rear wall for the rear ell will be brick and the window at the second floor will have a balconette.

At a previous meeting, the Committee asked that the applicant return with additional information concerning the additions to the rear ell. The only new information about the rear ell that has been included is a plot plan that explains that the first addition measures 16'-10" and the second addition measures 19'-9". No historical research has been included. Both of these will be demolished completely and over half of the original rear

ell will be demolished at the first floor to accommodate the wider room.

The proposed gate at the rear of the property will be of tongue and groove wood with a wood trellis.

Ms. Spina explained the application. In response to the Committee's recommendation, the applicant submitted a revised design.

Ms. Murray made a motion to approve the revised submission. Mr. Rivera seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Sklaroff passed the gavel to Mr. Sugrue.

227 South 6th Street, Lippincott Building

Frank Binswanger, Owner/Applicant

DATE: 1900, William Prichett, architect; penthouse addition, 2004, Cecil Baker, architect

PROPOSAL: Modify approved screen walls at rooftop terrace

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the modifications, provided that the screen's slope follows the slope of the roofline. Mr. Levy recused.

When the Commission originally approved the penthouse on this building the terraces for the different units were divided by wood walls. These walls sloped so that they were six feet at the building and sloped down to four feet at the railing to minimize their appearance from the street. One of the penthouse unit owners wants more substantial walls separating his unit from his neighbor's. The three walls would slope from eight feet at the building wall to six feet at the railing and would be covered in stucco rather than wood.

Ms. Spina explained the proposal. Mr. Wilds expressed concern about consistency throughout the building and asked for written assurance that the proposed alterations would be the prototype for the entire building. He inquired if the width and color are remaining the same as approved. The width would remain the same but the color would be different.

Daniela Voith, the architect, offered that her client's alterations would be the standard for other units. Steve Verner disclosed that the owner supports the Binswanger alterations; however, the owner is not willing to use these alterations as the standard for the rest of the building, owing to the additional cost. Mr. Verner believes that the proposed alterations are minor and they would not have visibility from the street.

Mr. Rivera made a motion to approve the Committee's recommendation. Ms. Murray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Mr. Sklaroff recused.

Mr. Sugrue returned the gavel to Mr. Sklaroff.

1217 Pine Street

1215 Pine Street Partners, Owner

George Acevedo, Applicant

DATE: 1826-34, Jesse Came, house carpenter; storefront added, c. 1870

PROPOSAL: Rehabilitate façade, alter storefront, replace roof deck

The Architectural Committee recommended approval but with double-leaf doors at the storefront instead of paneling and with staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 6 and 9.

This early 19th century building has a later 19th century storefront that has been altered considerably. The proposal calls for rehabilitating the front façade with new six-over-six windows on the upper floors and installing two casement windows, a four-panel door and some paneling in the storefront. The storefront originally would have had another set of doors and the paneling should be reconfigured to reflect that. On the roof, the deck will be removed and reinstalled at the rear of the property so that it will not be visible. On the rear of the property the façade will be restored with new six-over-six windows, six-panel door and two nine-light windows. The rear is not visible from a public right-of-way.

Ms. Spina explained the proposal. Mr. Sklaroff inquired about the Pine Street elevation. In response to his query, Ms. Spina said that the panels would be constructed as double-leaf doors.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation. Ms. Murraray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Mr. Rivera recused.

436 Walnut Street

ACE-INA, Owner

Daniel Lavery, Applicant

Date: 1915; addition, 1972-73

PROPOSAL: Replace windows

The Architectural Committee recommended approval of the proposed replacement windows on both the north and south sections of the building subject to the modification of the molding on the central mullion to match the original better with the Committee to review the detail pursuant to Standard 6 [Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.].

This proposal, similar to one seen last month, involves an application to install simulated-divided-light metal windows in this two section office building. Last month's submission resulted from staff's working with the applicant's architect and another window manufacturer using old photographs and surviving window pieces to find the design of the original windows. In the present proposal the panning for the most part will match the original brick mold and none of the dimensions vary by more than a quarter of an inch, except the sill which is ½ inch. This application is similar to the one the Commission approved in December.

Ms. Spina explained the application, which had been revised to reflect the Committee's recommendation. Ms. Murray asked about the cost differential. In response to the query, Daniel Lavery, the applicant, informed the Commission that there is approximately \$40,000 difference in cost. Ms. Murray commented that \$40,000 was a

negligible amount for a company with a \$25 million profit.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to approve the revised proposal. Mr. James seconded the motion, which carried with 7 votes. Ms. Murray dissented. Mr. Tissian abstained.

Mr. Sklaroff passed the gavel to Mr. Sugrue

500 West Willow Grove Avenue, Chestnut Hill Academy

Chestnut Hill Academy, Owner

Eric Rahe, Architect/Applicant

Date: Wissahickon Inn: 1882-84, Hewitt Brothers, architects, and William Mackie, builder; Commons Building: 1905, Frank Miles Day, architect; Kingsley Gymnasium: c. 1907, Frank Miles Day, with major additions, 1956 and 1959, Martin & White, architects; Kline Sciences Building c. 1950, Martin & White architects.

PROPOSAL: Demolish Buildings; construct two buildings and parking lot – in concept The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the proposal in concept based on architectural grounds and the Secretary of the Interior Standards but agreed to recommend that the Commission send it to the Financial Hardship Committee.

This is an in-concept proposal with three phases. Phase one includes the demolition of the Commons building and the construction of the new Commons building in its place. Phase two calls for the complete demolition of the Kingsley Gymnasium and the construction of a new gymnasium on the site. Phase three is the demolition of the Kline Science Building and the construction of a new science building and the expansion of the existing parking lot on the opposite side of the former Wissahickon Inn.

The Commons Building houses the school's cafeteria with the original gymnasium to the east; Frank Miles Day designed both buildings. The Kingsley Gymnasium was added to these in the 1950s. The school added squash courts, the only portion of the building that will remain, to the southwest of the complex. The building footprint of the proposed Commons and Woodward Gymnasium would wrap around the existing circular drive and a large wing would extend toward the Wissahickon Inn. The steep slope of the Wissahickon watershed limits the development of the site as documented by letters from the Planning Commission and Department of Licenses and Inspections.

The application argues that the three existing buildings do not meet the school's programmatic needs.

The hearing was attended by Frank Steel, Headmaster for Chestnut Hill Academy, and Eric Rahe, of Bower Lewis and Thrower architects. Mr. Steel gave an overview of the history of the school. He said that there is a shift in education which requires a shift in the classroom; he noted the competitiveness among schools, which dictates the updating of the facilities and the importance of program delivery for boys. Mr. Rahe gave an illustrated presentation to show that the historic nature of the buildings is being respected. Mr. Rahe described the three phases of the master plan and explained that they cannot proceed without in-concept approval for all phases. He explained that in developing the plan they had five priorities:

1. the preservation of open space
2. respect for the Wissahickon Inn and the historic district

3. the concerns of the neighbors
4. preservation of the watershed
5. Chestnut Hill Academy's programming and fundraising needs.

He outlined the consideration of five options which did not involve the demolition of the Frank Miles Day buildings. Mr. Rahe said that historic preservation was a consideration, but that for them this meant the preservation of the open space and the views to the Inn. He said that the Commission should also consider the additional operating costs when making its determination. He noted that the master plan would happen in three phases.

Maxine Dornermann, president of the Community Association, said that Chestnut Hill Community Association unanimously approved the proposal. The association believes that the project is good for the community.

Commission members discussed at length the open space issue. It concluded that the Community Association's guidelines on open space have no legal standing. Mr. Wilds inquired about the percentage of space on the land covered with buildings. It was disclosed that it is approximately 25%. Mr. Rahe said that it is important to preserve the balance of open space with respect given to the Wissahickon Inn, the most dominant architectural building on the property. He asserted that the new buildings as proposed fit the property's envelope. Commission members offered options for re-configuring the layout of the school grounds. Mr. Sugrue questioned whether the loss of open space outweighs the loss of the historic buildings.

Tim Calligan, representing Chestnut Hill Academy, stressed that the open space is historically significant.

Ms. Murray opined that open space is an important issue in Chestnut Hill, and the buildings, although important, do not scream significant. She reminded the Commission of the support letter from Councilwoman Miller.

Commission members thought that the same consideration should be given to the retention of the historic buildings as to their replacement. Mr. James acknowledged the need for the school's expansion, but thought that other options should be explored which would require minimal demolition. He suggested that the applicants use the Commission's discussion for guidance in the re-designing process. Mr. Sugrue commented that the applicant has not demonstrated the existence of a hardship.

John Gallery, Preservation Alliance, offered his support of the Architectural Committee's recommendation. He believes that a hardship has not been demonstrated. Mr. Gallery opted to withhold any further comments until the financial hardship meeting has occurred.

Mr. James stressed that the approval sought is conceptual and that a denial does not preclude the applicant from re-submitting. Ms. Murray asked about the proposed starting date. Mr. Rahe said that the school hoped to begin construction sometime in 2005. Mr. Gallery pointed out that the school has not raised the required monies for the project. Commission members concurred that it is the applicant's decision whether to seek a review by the Committee on Financial Hardship.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to deny the conceptual approval of the proposal. Mr. James seconded the motion, which carried with 7 votes. Mr. Sklaroff recused.

Mr. Sugrue returned the gavel to Mr. Sklaroff.

THE REPORT of the Activities of the Historical Commission Staff January 2005

Commission members had no questions about the report.

HARRY A. BATTEN MEMORIAL FUND

Mr. Tyler asked the Commission to approve the expenditure of \$23.05 for the Architectural Committee lunches.

Mr. Sugrue made a motion to approve the expenditure. Mr. Wilds seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Wilds made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Murray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

The Commission held an executive session to discuss pending litigation and a personnel matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Hughes
Executive Secretary