

THE MINUTES OF THE 291st STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

26 June 1985

F. Otto Haas, Chairman

Present: F. Otto Haas, Chairman

Joan Ferreira

Grace Gary

Caroline Golab

David Hollenberg

Jason Nathan

William Thompson

Christine Washington

Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning Commission

James White, Commissioner, Department of Licenses & Inspections

Kenneth Cooper, Esq., Deputy City Solicitor, Law Department

Richard Tyler, Historian

Patricia Siemiontkowski, Architectural Historian

Terry Koob, Clerk Steno II

Also: Sharon Gramby, accompanying James White

Bart Forman, representing 52 South 2nd Street

Mary Lou McFarland, Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia

Eric Braun, Philadelphia City Planning Commission Intern

Unless otherwise noted, all actions taken herein are the results of motions correctly made, seconded and carried.

THE MINUTES of the 290th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 29 May 1985, F. Otto Haas, Chairman, were reviewed and unanimously approved.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 12 June 1985, David Hollenberg, Chairman. A motion was made to accept the report of the Architectural Committee with the exception of 52 South 2nd Street, 51-53-55 North 3rd Street and Elson's Kiosk at 30th Street Station. These three items were separated for individual discussion. The remainder of the report was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the minutes of this meeting.

52 South 2nd Street, Bart Forman, Applicant. Mr. Forman appeared before the Commission to discuss his application for a permit to erect a V-shaped, vertical sign on the front facade of 52 South 2nd Street. Mr. Tyler advised the Commission members that this application had received a conditional approval on 27 March 1985 with a final approval on 10 April 1985 from the Art Commission. The Art Commission had, however, stated a preference for an horizontal, flat, painted, unilluminated sign at the cornice line of the shop front. In its letter of 20 March 1985 to Eugene Dixon, Jr., Chairman of the Art Commission, the Planning Commission staff expressed its objection to the proposed signage and recommended that the applicant consider an horizontal sign placed at the storefront cornice line.

Upon subsequently applying for a building permit, Mr. Forman was referred to the Historical Commission. At its meeting of 12 June 1985, the Architectural Committee reviewed the proposed signage and recommended that the

Commission not approve it. In his appeal from the Committee's report, Mr. Forman expressed his resentment of the City's seriatim application procedure and the hardship it caused. Following further discussion, the Commission voted to accept the Architectural Committee's recommendation calling for an horizontal, flat, painted, unilluminated wooden sign. The Commission urged Mr. Forman to prepare a resubmission that conforms to the Architectural Committee's recommendation. Mr. Forman asked that the Commission send to his client a letter of explanation that absolves him of any responsibility for the delay and rejection. The Commission agreed to do this.

51-53-55 North 3rd Street, James Timberlake, Architect. This presentation for the rehabilitation of 51-53-55 North 3rd Street was made at the meeting of the Architectural Committee on 12 June 1985 and recommendations were made at that time by the Committee to have elevation drawings revised to agree with insurance surveys on file in the Commission office. Subsequent to the completion of the Report of the Architectural Committee Meeting of 12 June 1985, revised drawings were received in the Commission office and a final approval is now recommended.

The Commission unanimously approved these plans for the rehabilitation of 51-53-55 North 3rd Street.

Elson's Kiosk, 30th Street Station, Margo Heegeman, William Martin and John Thompson presented revised plans to the Architectural Committee on 12 June 1985 for the construction of Elson's Kiosk in the 30th Street Station. At that meeting, the Architectural Committee recommended a redesign of the canopy and a change in the lettering. Subsequent to the typing of the Report of the Architectural Committee of 12 June 1985, these revised drawings were received by the Commission staff and a final approval is now recommended.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve these plans for Elson's Kiosk at 30th Street Station.

THE HISTORIAN'S report on the Staff Activities for 15 May - 15 June 1985 was reviewed and approved for filing.

OLD BUSINESS

The Historian reported that there was a problem in scheduling meeting dates for the Philadelphia Historical Commission specifically because Councilman John Street, an active preservationist and designee for Council President Joseph Coleman, cannot attend the Commission meetings on Wednesday afternoons. Following some discussion on various alternatives, the Commission unanimously voted that the Stated Meetings of the Philadelphia Historical Commission should be held in the 14th Floor Conference Room of City Hall Annex on the last Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m. preceded by an Executive Session at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Tyler also reported to the Commission that a meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation is scheduled for 2 August 1985 to consider nominations for certification. Mr. Tyler mentioned that no districts will be considered at that meeting.

REVIEW OF PAST CASES

243 South Quince/222 South Jessup Streets. Mr. Tyler advised the Commission of the latest developments in the case of the link construction at 243 South Quince/222 South Jessup Streets which was last mentioned at the 288th Stated Meeting of 7 March 1985. Subsequent to the owners receiving an approval from the Zoning Board, the community filed suit against this project and all work is now stopped pending the outcome of this litigation.

Lit Brothers. Mr. Tyler informed the Commission members that the developers for the Lit Brothers Complex received an Urban Development Action Grant for the Cast Iron Building on Arch Street and are scheduled to begin construction in the near future.

Naval Home. The Historian reported that Historic Landmarks for Living is now involved in the Naval Home rehabilitation and, in accordance with their past performance, this project is now expected to progress with greater speed.

Mr. Tyler reported that Mayor Goode will be testifying before Congress on the retention of the Federal Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation and the impact that these incentives have had on Philadelphia. Ms. Gary read from a fact sheet prepared by the National Trust for Historic Preservation listing data showing the substantial benefits of this program. A copy of this fact sheet is attached to these minutes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Koob
Clerk Steno II

Attachment

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Historian discussed the issue of conflict of jurisdiction between the Art Commission and the Philadelphia Historical Commission for signs on historic buildings. Mr. Tyler explained that the City Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Art Commission in an advisory capacity in the Chestnut-Walnut commercial area. Mr. Tyler suggested that the staff could work with the other Commissions toward the formulation of guidelines for cases where approval is required from more than one agency. Ms. Kaplan recommended that zoning, special controls and historic significance be considered as important points to be incorporated into these guidelines.

Ms. Siemiontkowski described a current application for approval for a sign installation, recorded in the Report of the Architectural Committee of 12 June 1985. Mr. Bart Forman of Forman Sign Company applied for permission to install a sign at 52 South 2nd Street, an historically certified building. After applying for zoning approval, Mr. Forman was directed to the Art Commission for their approval. Mr. Forman's first presentation to the Art Commission was rejected but conditional approval was granted at his second presentation when Mr. Forman incorporated Art Commission recommendations into his design. Mr. Forman then returned to the Department of Licenses & Inspections to apply for a building permit. At that time, Licenses and Inspections directed Mr. Forman to the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Mr. Forman may now be required to comply with Historical Commission recommendations, revise his design and begin the process again.

Mr. Tyler stated that, although sympathetic with Mr. Forman's plight, the Historical Commission should not be held accountable for the unfortunate delay incurred by Mr. Forman owing to the referral process and should not approve a design which is unsympathetic with the character of the building and the district.

The Philadelphia Historical Commission agreed that the staff should meet with staff members of the Art Commission and the Planning Commission to formulate guidelines to follow in cases where there is concurrent jurisdiction.

James White announced that this was his last appearance as a member of the Commission and added that Henry Herling, the newly appointed Commissioner of the Department of Licenses & Inspections, will be taking his place on the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Mr. White expressed his gratitude to the members of the Commission for their cooperation and friendship during his tenure. The Chairman, on behalf of all the members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, congratulated Mr. White on his promotion to the position of Managing Director of the City of Philadelphia and thanked him for his contributions to the Commission and wished him success in his new endeavor. Mr. Tyler added that James White had set a tone of support and cooperation between the Department of Licenses & Inspections and the Historical Commission. Mr. Tyler stated that he looks forward to the continuation of this relationship with Mr. White as Managing Director and welcomes the appointment of Mr. Herling with whom the Commission has had a good working relationship for the past eleven years. Ms. Ferreira also thanked Mr. White for his help with the many civic problems brought to his attention. Mr. White assured continued cooperation during his tenure as Managing Director.

The Commission unanimously approved a vote of gratitude and appreciation to Commissioner White for his service to and on the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Koob
Clerk Steno II