

THE MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

28 June 1990

Present: David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman of the Committee
Herbert W. Levy, Architect

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Daniel W. Simcox, Executive Secretary

Also: William Burke, Philadelphia Art Commission
James Cuorato, Commerce Department
Craig Shelter, Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp.
Avrum Kantor, Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp.
Emmanuel Kelly, Kelly/Maiello Architects
Edward Palisoc, Kelly/Maiello Architects
John Romano, Kelly/Maiello Architects
John Bower, Bower Lewis Thrower/Architects
Eric Rahe, Bower Lewis Thrower/Architects
Lonne Rice, resident architect, Drexel University
Terry Graboys, Graboys Commercial Window
Larry Grabyll, Graboys Commercial Window
Sal Spano, Hartmarx Corporation, Wallach's
R. Trevlyn, American Historic Venture II
Cecil Baker, Cecil Baker & Associates
Ann LaBoue, Cecil Baker & Associates
Michael F. Young, Classic Management Incorporated
Steven Brooks, Penn-Knox Neighborhood Association
Catharine Franklin, Penn-Knox Neighborhood Association
Sydelle Zove, Penn-Knox Neighborhood Association
Drayton S. Bryant, Germantown
Deborah Kelly,
Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Bud Ross, architect for 1329 Pine Street

A Summary of Architectural Committee Recommendations
28 June 1990

Recommendation to Retain Independent Consultant

5324, 5326, 5328 Germantown Avenue: The Committee recommended that the Commission retain an independent consultant to assess this application for demolition based on claims of financial hardship.

Approval in Concept

Reading Terminal, Pennsylvania Convention Center: The Committee voted to recommend approval in concept of the introduction of a pedestrian bridge at this particular location.

235 Chestnut Street, Independence Park Inn: The Committee recommended approval in concept of a proposal to install awnings and canopy, but encouraged further study of a plan for banners.

Approval

Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, 320 South Broad Street. The Committee voted to recommend approval of the installation of a simple gate with thin vertical posts.

342 South 2nd Street: The Committee recommended approval of plans to relocate an ATM, to introduce a night depository, to remove a drive-in teller station, and to provide for handicapped access.

Conditional Approval

Wallach's Clothing Store, 1610 Chestnut Street: The Committee recommended approval of this proposal to install security grates. It also recommended approval of an awning, contingent upon the revision of its design. Finally, the Committee recommended disapproval of a proposed canopy.

1329 Pine Street: The Committee recommended approval of plans to alter this building contingent upon revision of the transom proportions.

Tabled

Drexel University, Drexel Institute: The Committee indicated that the drawings submitted were insufficient for review of this important building and requested more complete drawings including details of existing conditions and proposed replacements. The Committee voted to table the application.

RECOMMENDATION TO RETAIN AN INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

5324, 5326, 5328 Germantown Avenue. Michael Young, owner, requested approval of a demolition permit application for these three buildings. Previously, he applied on the basis of their deteriorated condition. At that time, the Committee indicated that the application was inadequate. In a subsequent inspection, the Department of Licenses and Inspections assessed the buildings as public nuisances. In a later inspection, the Department determined that all three were "imminently dangerous." Informed of this determination, the Commission staff approved an application for demolition. The Department, however, did not issue the permits until it verified the previous determination. After this third inspection, the Department acknowledged that the "imminently dangerous" finding was an administrative error, that 5326 is dangerous, and that 5224 and 5228 are public nuisances. Subsequently, Mr. Young submitted a pro forma in conjunction with his request for demolition under the financial hardship provision of the ordinance.

Mr. Hollenberg indicated that, as in all applications for demolition based on claims of financial hardship, the Committee would recommend that the Commission retain an independent consultant to analyze the report and the economic viability of these properties. This recommendation implied a deferral, for a period not to exceed six months, of the request for demolition in order to allow the Commission to assess the report submitted by the applicant. Mr. Tyler indicated that he would contact the owner with regard to the selection of the consultant to ensure an impartial assessment by an independent party.

APPROVAL IN CONCEPT

Reading Terminal, Pennsylvania Convention Center. Emmanuel Kelly, Edward Palisoc, and John Romano, Kelly/Maiello Architects, consulting architects; John Bower and Eric Rahe, Bower Lewis Thrower/Architects; James Cuorato, Commerce Department; Craig Shelter and Avrum Kantor, Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation.

Mr. Hollenberg introduced this proposal to construct a pedestrian bridge to connect the proposed Marriott Hotel to the link portion of the Reading Terminal Headhouse. The application is part of an on-going, conceptual design review of plans for the Pennsylvania Convention Center. At this time, Mr. Hollenberg announced that he had worked with Bower Lewis Thrower/Architects on another, unrelated project for this building. Mr. Hollenberg, having consulted with the City Solicitor, stated that his deliberation on this matter would not constitute a conflict of interest, as his

previous involvement was not related to the present application.

Emmanuel Kelly provided background information for the project, stressing that the location had been determined by an ordinance of City Council which approved a transfer of air rights over Twelfth Street. The ordinance establishing this transfer determined that the bridge would be sited at the link between the Reading Terminal headhouse and the train shed. The architects designed the bridge as a simple element rather than as a prominent third structure. The design, therefore, is light and transparent, and strives to retain an unobstructed view of the PSFS Building. Its curved roof and truss are intended to relate to the Terminal. Further, it will be cantilevered in order to keep the load off the Terminal walls. Mr. Kelly indicated that the Architectural Committee of the Art Commission considered the design favorably, though its members encouraged further exploration of the lighting and the appearance of the bridge at night.

After considerable discussion, the Architectural Committee made several comments regarding the design:

- that the design of the entry to the bridge align with the meeting rail of the Terminal sash;
- that the underside of the bridge should not fall below the top of the granite on the Terminal;
- that the Committee preferred a flat roof rather than a vaulted roof which seemed to contradict the architects expressed interest in a simple design,
- that the treatment proposed for the Terminal side of the bridge receive special care as to materials and design;
- that the architects consider placing the glazing behind the truss to prevent pigeon roosting; and
- that the architects consider butt glazing to reduce the number of mullions rising through the structure.

Following further discussion, the Committee voted to recommend approval in concept of the introduction of a pedestrian bridge at this particular location.

235 Chestnut Street, Independence Park Inn. Richard Trevlyn, owner of the building, presented a rendering of his proposal to install awnings, banners and a canopy on this 19th building. Having alluded to the historical precedent for such adornment of buildings of this period, he added that his present business would benefit from the use of these features.

The Committee expressed reservations regarding the banners,

as proposed, and suggested that the applicant explore other means of achieving the same effect with smaller pennants. With regard to the awnings and canopy, the Committee recommended an approval in concept.

APPROVAL

Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, 320 South Broad Street. The University of the Arts submitted several designs for the installation of a gate between the two buildings at the western end of this property, the site of the former boiler house. The Committee voted to recommend approval of "design option A," a simple gate of thin vertical iron posts.

342 South 2nd Street. Cecil Baker and Ann LaBoue, Cecil Baker & Associates, presented plans to relocate an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) from the rear to the Pine Street facade of an addition to this historic building. The plan also would introduce a night depository next to the ATM, remove a drive-in teller station, and provide for handicapped access on the north facade. The application also includes interior alterations.

Mr. Tyler noted that these plans had been approved in concept previously by both the Committee and Commission. The Committee voted to recommend final approval of the application.

CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Wallach's Clothing Store, 1610 Chestnut Street. Sal Spano, represented Hartmarx Corporation, the owner of this property. He presented plans for the installation of an awning, canopy and security grates.

Mr. Tyler discussed this proposal with staff of the Planning Commission and the Art Commission, both of whom indicated that they would not approve the canopy. Mr. Tyler expressed reservations regarding the installation of security grates, but acknowledged the considerable problems of property crime on Chestnut Street. He conveyed his optimism, however, that this problem would abate with the opening of Two Liberty Place and the Ritz Carlton Hotel on the north side of this block in fall of 1990.

The Committee reviewed documentation presented by Mr. Spano, expressed its vexation with the security problem, and voted reluctantly to recommend approval of the security grates. The Committee recommended disapproval of the canopy.

Finally, it voted to recommend a revision in the design of the awning so that it would not appear as a large canvas box. With this revision to improve the silhouette of the awning, the Committee recommended its approval.

1329 Pine Street. Bud Ross, architect, presented plans to alter this early-nineteenth century building. The alterations include an addition of a floor to a later one-story structure at the rear of the site, renewal of the stucco finish, and the removal of a mutilated, early-twentieth century shop front.

The Committee noted that the transom over the front door was disproportional. Contingent upon the revision of this element, the Committee recommended approval of these plans.

TABLED

Drexel University, Drexel Institute Lonne Rice, resident architect of Drexel University, presented plans for the replacement of existing wood sash and the panning of the existing frames with aluminum at the Drexel Institute. The University considered replacement with new wood sash, but dismissed the concept because the bids were nearly twice those for aluminum. Terry Graboys and Larry Grabyll, of Graboys Commercial Window, explained that the detail presented was a close approximation of the existing mouldings. Mr. Rice added that he had undertaken extensive research to determine the original color of the sash, and presented a sample plate for approval.

The Committee expressed its appreciation for the research, but noted that it would like to receive a copy of this study, or at least a brief explanation of it. With regard to the proposed sash replacement, Mr. Hollenberg indicated that the Committee had permitted the replacement of wood sash with aluminum panning and cladding, but only when the replication was as nearly perfect as possible. After questioning the applicant about the proposal, the Committee indicated that the drawings submitted were insufficient for review of this important building. Having requested more complete drawings of the proposal, including details of existing conditions and proposed replacements, the Committee voted to table the application until the applicants provided further information.

Minutes Approved: 11 July 1990

Daniel W. Simcox
Executive Secretary