

MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

4 February 1974

Present: Mr. Henry J. Magaziner, A.I.A., Architectural Advisor to the Commission
Mr. Erling H. Pedersen, A.I.A., Old Philadelphia Development Corporation
Mr. Lewis Kremer, A.I.A., Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian
Patricia Sieniontkowski, Executive Assistant to the Chairman

Guests: Mr. Philip Mastrin, Architect and his associate, Mr. Satinsky, and the owner of the St. James Hotel, Mr. Leonard Stokler, attended the meeting of the Architectural Committee to discuss proposed alterations to the building's mansard roof.

SUBMISSIONS

St. James Hotel, Philip Mastrin, Architect. Mr. Mastrin explained to the Committee the problem created by the deteriorated condition of the mansard (slate and metal) making it impossible to repair the existing fabric. His plan to strip the building, at this level, of all fabric except for the structural elements and cover it with a urethane spray sealer, was rejected by the Committee. The dome portion of the building, since it cannot be replaced with slate, will be sprayed with urethane and painted a silver gray to resemble slate. The original components of the dormer and cornice must be replaced, either in fiberglass or sheet metal, to match the original. A resubmission is requested.

PROBLEMS

210 Spruce Street. A letter from Mr. and Mrs. Fayer, residents of Philip Street, opposing the installation of a parking slot, on Philip Street, at the rear of 210 Spruce Street. Since the work, begun two weeks ago, was illegal (no building permits were acquired), a stop work order was placed on the job. The owner has been asked to submit to the Committee a plan of what he proposes to do on this site for review. It was agreed that no action would be taken until such a plan has been presented.

PLAQUES

St. Mary Magdalene Church, 718 Montrose Street. Approved.

SPECIAL REVIEW

Irvin Building. Mr. Magaziner reported to the Committee the National Park Service's desire to raze this building at the corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets to allow for additional open space in the Independence Mall Area. The building, now vacant and open, is scheduled for demolition in the near future. The American Institute of Architects has taken a stand against allowing the building's demolition and Mr. Magaziner asked if

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SPECIAL REVIEW (Cont'd)

the Committee might not recommend that the Philadelphia Historical Commission take the same position. After much discussion, the matter was referred to the Commission without recommendation.

Eastern State Penitentiary. After much discussion regarding proposed uses for the Eastern State Penitentiary, the Committee agreed that it would be feasible to save the main Fairmount Avenue entrance of the complex only and create within the one block area a community park.

Other uses, as suggested by members of the American Institute of Architects' Preservation Committee (reuse as a prison, center for a Penology Institute, commercial development, public housing, etc.) were considered but thought to be unpracticable.

Musical Fund Hall. A report was made to the Committee on the American Institute of Architects' refusal to endorse the proposed use of Musical Fund Hall as a three-theatre complex. It was the opinion of the Committee that rather than lose an interested developer, it is much better to support this latest and possibly most viable proposal with the requirement, of course, that the exterior of the building be fully and accurately restored. A prior proposal to have the State acquire the building as its official Philadelphia concert hall was discarded since the State has already committed itself to a Penn's Landing site.

Mr. Magaziner called the next meeting of the Committee for February 19, 1974.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Executive Assistant to the Chairman