

THE MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Hollenberg, Chairman

25 October 1990

Present: David Hollenberg, Architect, Chairman
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect for
Independence National Historical Park
William Cornell, J.S. Cornell & Sons, Inc.
Herbert W. Levy, American Institute of Architects

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

Also: Jeff Statnik, The Gap
James Kruhly, James Oleg Kruhly & Associates
Marshal Compton, James Oleg Kruhly & Associates
Bob Church, representing John J. Branigan
Peter Benton, John Milner Associates
Peter Richardson, John Milner Associates
John McGaw, Administrator,
City Hall Restoration Program,
Department of Public Property

Appointments to the Committee: Mr. Hollenberg announced that J. William Cornell and Tony Atkin had been appointed to serve on the Architectural Committee. Mr. Hollenberg announced that a quorum was present and proceeded to the agenda.

APPROVAL IN CONCEPT

City Hall, Emergency Egress Alterations: Peter Richardson and Peter Benton, John Milner Associates; and John McGaw, Administrator, City Hall Restoration Program, Department of Public Property. The Department of Public Property has retained John Milner Associates (JMA) to investigate possible solutions to three cited Code violations in City Hall. The plan developed by JMA has been presented to the Fire Department's Board of Safety, (Board). The Board concurred with the concepts proposed by JMA, but has required another meeting for final approval.

Mr. Hollenberg, a principal with John Milner Associates, abstained from the ensuing discussion and vote. Upon his request, Mr. Levy assumed the chair for this presentation.

Mr. Benton introduced a proposal to remedy existing violations of the Fire Safety Code in City Hall. Aware of the endeavors to develop a comprehensive Restoration Plan for City Hall, the architects proposed alterations which could be removed later without harm to the historic fabric. Through the implementation of the Restoration Plan, the architects anticipate that the Board will insist that City Hall comply with the provisions for high-rise buildings, requiring sprinkler installation throughout the building.

Mr. Benton presented his plan in the following order:

- fourth floor, being typical of floors two through five
- floors six through seven, which are connected by a single-story stair;
- floors eight and nine, which are linked to the others by an open stair; and
- the Tower.

Fourth Floor, (typical of two through five)

Corner Stair Towers: The existing doors between the elevators and the stairs are not rated for fire protection and fail to comply with the Code. Further, there is considerable opportunity for smoke to rise through the elevator shafts. To remedy this problem, JMA proposed to install a new two-hour-rated door assembly at each corner stair tower on floors two through five. These doors will be located between the corridor and the existing elevators. This installation will enclose the existing elevators and stairs within protected areas such that smoke on any floor would not be able to travel to another via the elevator shafts. Further fire protection will result from the pressurization of the elevator shafts and the provision of elevator recall to the first floor in event of a fire.

Intercommunicating Stairs: These floors also possess interior, intercommunicating stairs which terminate at the second floor. At present, these stairs are unprotected. JMA proposes to install two-hour rated door assemblies across the existing corridors near these stairs.

Corridors: At present there are no measures to prevent the diffusion of smoke along the long corridors of City Hall. JMA proposes to install smoke barriers in the middle of each hallway in order to divide each floor into quadrants. These barriers will be either fully or partially glazed with double doors. These are not rated assemblies.

- deletion of the proposed patching of the marble facade with a glass-fiber concrete treatment, and
- deletion of the proposal to grind the marble in order to smooth or clean its surface. As an alternative, the Committee recommended a gentle cleaning with water. The Committee reminded the applicant to obtain staff approval of a test patch for all proposed cleaning and patching.

Drexel University, Drexel Institute: The Committee reviewed a proposal to replace existing wood sash on the Drexel Institute with aluminum. The Committee deferred its review of this proposal at its meeting of 28 June 1990, because the drawings were inadequate. The Commission ratified this decision on 11 July 1990. Next, members of the Committee met on-site with Lonne Rice, resident architect of the University, on 16 August 1990. At that time, the Committee confirmed the deterioration of the existing sash. However, drawings submitted subsequent to that site visit still failed to address several significant concerns.

At the September meeting, the applicant reasserted that the condition of the existing wooden sash and frames presented operational and energy problems. Although the University considered wood reproductions, their cost exceeded the allotted budget for this project. Mr. Rice indicated that there was a cost differential between wood reproduction and aluminum replacement of \$260,000 dollars. The installation of operable, insulated glass requires wider window jambs. Although the dimensions desired by the Committee could be attained, this task would require removal of the existing wood before panning. This labor-intensive task would increase the cost of the project considerably. To mitigate the impact of this alteration, the university proposes to restore the auditorium windows on the northern facade.

The Committee stressed that the most recent drawings contained internal inconsistencies and still depicted a considerable difference between the dimensions of the existing and replacement windows. The Committee repeated its reservations regarding the differential in the dimensions of the jamb head, meeting rail and transom. Mr. Hollenberg indicated that no previous proposal for panning entailed such a dramatic change in these dimensions. However, the Committee acknowledged a justifiable interest in replacing the existing windows. Given the expressed financial hardship of this non-profit corporation, the Committee forwarded the following recommendation:

Approval of the proposed replacement, contingent upon:

- the restoration of the sash and frames of both the auditorium windows on the northern facade and those

within the arch of the main entrance on Chestnut Street, and

- the submittal of internally consistent drawings of record which accurately depict the existing conditions and proposed replacements. These modifications may be approved by the staff.

Mr. Wismer seconded this recommendation, which the Commission adopted unanimously.

Disapproval

City Hall, "T" Level Observation Platforms: The Department of Public Property presented a conceptual plan to install new observation platforms in the "T" Level of City Hall Tower. A platform encircling this level offers spectacular views of Philadelphia through large oculus windows. To allow visitors to span an existing two-foot gap between the platform and windows, the Department has proposed to cantilever decks from the iron platform.

The Committee expressed a commitment to preserving the existing space at "T" Level. The present views through the oculus windows offer visitors superb vistas of Center City. The Committee stressed the value of retaining the original design for this level, which offers dramatic views upward along the curves of the metal structure toward the sculpture of William Penn, downward to the levels below, and out upon the City of Philadelphia.

Mr. Thompson seconded the recommendation of the Committee. Deputy Commissioner Aborn suggested that "T" Level is not the only place where visitors could admire the drama of the architecture; it is however, the only level which offers a direct view through the oculus windows. The Commission adopted the recommendation of its Architectural Committee by a vote of 7-3. Opposed were Mrs. Kaplan, Mr. Wilds and Deputy Commissioner Aborn.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE

John Wanamaker Store

Mr. Tyler provided a summary of a proposal made by the owners of the John Wanamaker Store at 1320 Market Street. They proposed to use the second bay from Chestnut Street on Thirteenth Street as an entrance to the underground garage. Messrs. Hollenberg and Mr. Stevenson abstained from comment and vote on this proposal. The others recommended approval.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Nathan to approve this proposal. Councilman Street seconded the motion, which the Commission approved unanimously. Mr. Hollenberg abstained.

Given the existing alterations and the date of the building, the Committee recommended that the application was acceptable provided that the yellow brick was retained behind the new facade.

3432-3436 Sansom Street: James Kruhly and Marshal Compton, James Oleg Kruhly & Associates. Mr. Kruhly proposed to alter these late nineteenth century Second Empire townhouses. These buildings retained numerous alterations from their previous use as Restaurant La Terrasse. Mr. Kruhly proposed to construct a two-story glass and steel addition on the side and rear of these properties where a wood and glass enclosed porch previously existed. Another change from the design of the old restaurant is that the kitchen, formerly on the first floor of 3436, will be located in the basement. The space vacated by the kitchen will become a patisserie and will be altered in a manner to reflect its new use, including an entrance. A handicapped access ramp will be added along 35th Street. Finally, Mr. Kruhly proposed to replace the existing windows with insulated glass. As the appropriate muntin thickness can be achieved with two over two double-hung sash, the Committee noted its support for this element.

The Committee responded favorably to this proposal, though added several suggestions. Ms. Batcheler stated her preference to retain existing vertical mullions in the windows of 3436 to reinforce the vertical arrangement of this building. Mr. Kruhly reinforced his interest to project a corner store aesthetic for the new patisserie and shared an earlier photograph of the building which revealed a large horizontal glass storefront.

The Committee recommended approval, contingent upon the following conditions:

- revision of the drawings, with notes, to reflect the proposed treatment to the building fabric above the canopies;
- shop drawings of the new windows; and
- staff review of the proposed brick color for the handicapped access ramp.

Mr. Hollenberg clarified that the preceding recommendation would be forwarded to the Commission. Ms. Batcheler's comments regarding the vertical mullions of the corner storefront were noted, but were not voted as part of the

recommendation.

DISAPPROVAL

1122 Locust Street: Mr. Baron provided background information for this application. A contractor for the owner applied stucco to a brick facade without a permit. The owner assumed that the contractor had obtained all necessary approvals and a building permit.

Robert Church appeared for the owner. The Committee unanimously expressed disapproval of the covering of this building with a very rough coat of stucco. Ms. Batcheler suggested a compromise of removing the stucco from the front facade, while allowing it to remain on the side and rear facades. Mr. Cornell expressed concern that the bricks may have sustained considerable damage through the application of the stucco and nailing of the wire lath. The Committee suggested that even if the brick is damaged that the present stucco application was unacceptable. The members asked the staff to examine the brick wall once the stucco is removed and to meet with the owners to achieve an acceptable solution. The Committee recommended that the stucco may remain on the rear and side walls, but must be removed from the front facade.

Ms. Batcheler also directed the attention of the applicant to water damage along the western end of the facade, apparently caused by a faulty gutter.

The Warwick Hotel: The Committee reviewed a proposal for the installation of a new canopy and sign on the northeast corner, at 17th and Chancellor Streets, of the Warwick Hotel. The Committee deferred this matter and encouraged the applicant to alter the design in a manner which would provide uniformity along this facade. Specifically, the canopy contour should be similar to an existing canopy adjacent to the bay under consideration.

The Committee adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel W. Simcox
Executive Secretary