

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

11 July 1985

David Hollenberg, Chairman

Present: David Hollenberg, Chairman
Theodore T. Bartley, Jr., F.A.I.A., Preservation Committee, American
Institute of Architects, Philadelphia Chapter
Penelope H. Batcheler, Historical Architect for Independence National
Historical Park
John Dickey, F.A.I.A.
Herbert Levy, A.I.A.
Kenneth Cooper, Esq., Deputy City Solicitor, Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historian
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Architectural Historian
Randal Baron, Executive Secretary
Terry Koob, Clerk Steno II

Also: Robert Thomas, Architect, and Steve and Larry Dichter to present
renovation plans for 241 Bainbridge Street.
Jerry Roller, Architect, to present plans for rehabilitation of
104-106 Fitzwater Street and 123 Kenilworth Street
Michael P. McCann, Architect, to present his proposal to rehabilitate
28 S. Front Street
Bob McMullen of Ueland & Junker Architects, to present plans for
renovations to the Packard Building, 15th and Chestnut Streets
Sandy Ward and Larry Paoletta, owners of 540 Spruce Street
Nancy L. Silber, representing Society Hill Civic Association,
regarding 540 Spruce Street
Charles Duncan, Architect, and Peter Pinnola, owner, to present
rehabilitation plans for changes to an enclosed, turn-of-the-
century porch at 7125-7127 Germantown Avenue
David Beck, Architect, to present renovation plans for Mastercraftsman
at Bread and Quarry Streets and 234-238 N. 3rd Street - both proposed
garden apartment rehabilitation projects
Edward Bell, Owner and Architect, to present plans for renovations at
229 Monroe Street
Frank Weise, Architect, to present revised plans for portico entrance
on 225 S. 8th Street
Leonard J. Cook, Attorney, and Joseph J. Flynn of Phillyship, to request
permission to demolish 19 Christian Street
and others

ALTERATIONS

241 Bainbridge Street, Bob Thomas, Architect. Steve and Larry Dichter and
Bob Thomas appeared before the Architectural Committee to present plans
for the renovation of this c. 1825 house which was altered around the
turn-of-the-century with the addition of a shopfront and metal cornice.
The building was altered again in the 1960s or 1970s with the removal of
the storefront and the installation of new brick infill covered by a clumsy
pent eve added between the first and second floor levels. Mr. Thomas

proposes to remove this pent eave and replace it with a brick band course. Mr. Thomas also proposes to remove the existing later cornice at the roofline and restore the original brick cornice which survives beneath it. The plans also call for the retention of the existing window openings. All recent inappropriate brick around the windows will be removed and replaced to match the original brickwork which surrounds the door. A new basement skylight is proposed. The existing dormer will be repaired and have an arched window installed to match the original design.

The Committee members voted to recommend to the Commission that an approval be given for this renovation plan.

104-106 Fitzwater Street, Jerry Roller, Architect. Mr. Roller presented plans for the complete rehabilitation of these two small, eighteenth century houses which includes primarily cleaning and repairing. The Committee reviewed the plans submitted. Mr. Roller explained that he intended to install insulated glass in the sash but was advised by the Committee to investigate the possibility of installing interior storm windows instead of the insulated glass. The Committee expressed concern that insulated glass would require very thick muntins resulting in inappropriate window sash.

Subject to the submission and approval of a revised window design with a smaller muntin, a final approval of this project is recommended by the Architectural Committee.

123 Kenilworth Street, Jerry Roller, Architect. Mr. Roller presented plans for the Committee's review for renovations to this 1840s house which was altered around 1865 with the addition of a wooden bracketed cornice. Mr. Roller expressed his intention to install a six-panel door to replace the existing door which was added to the house around 1890. The Committee agreed that the existing door was a fine example of the late Victorian period and should be retained. The original shutters remain and will be repaired and restored. The Committee recommended further that two-over-two windows be installed on the front facade and six-over-six windows on the rear.

Subject to the recommendations made regarding the windows and door, the Architectural Committee agreed to recommend an approval of Mr. Roller's renovation plans for 123 Kenilworth Street.

28 S. Front Street, Michael McCann, Architect. Mr. McCann presented plans for the substantial rehabilitation of this burned-out, four-story, 1830s loft building. Insurance surveys are available for the Front Street facade and the elevation drawings were based on these surveys. Unfortunately, there is no documentation on the Letitia Street elevation. Therefore, the Committee recommended that a field investigation be performed to ascertain if the plans presented by Mr. McCann are an accurate depiction of the original design.

It was the decision of the Committee that the plans, as presented, would be recommended for approval subject to the results of the field investigation. However, should any deviations be uncovered, revised elevation drawings for Letitia Street must be submitted to the Historical Commission staff for review.

Packard Building, 15th and Chestnut Streets, Ueland and Junker Architects.

Bob McMullen of Ueland and Junker, presented plans for minor renovations to the 15th Street entrance to the Packard Building. The Architectural Committee reviewed details for ornamental grill work proposed for the transom and decided that this was too ornate and should be eliminated. It was recommended that the architects consult the original construction drawings for the Packard Building which are on file at the Athenaeum to determine if such ornamentation was part of the original design.

The Committee agreed to recommend approval of this renovation plan subject to the elimination of the ornamental grill work as noted above. Should the original drawings prove to have such ornamentation, a revised drawing should be submitted for review and approval.

540 Spruce Street, Sandy Ward and Larry Paoletta, owners, and Nancy Silber, Society Hill Civic Association. Ms. Siemiontkowski explained to the Committee that the owners of 540 Spruce Street had received approval for renovation plans from the Historical Commission several months ago. The finished work, however, deviated from the approved plans and photographs were presented to illustrate the problems. One major unapproved alteration was the installation of a steep roof on the top of the garage door on the garden wall. The original plans which were approved by the Architectural Committee were for a flat garden wall. Ms. Ward explained that a protective enclosure was recommended by the manufacturer of the electronic device which operates the doors. Mr. Paoletta stated that the roof was installed without approval of the Historical Commission to avoid a work delay which would have resulted if approval were sought. Mr. Bartley agreed to conduct an on-site inspection of this wall to determine if it is feasible for a flat enclosure to provide sufficient protection for the electronic mechanism.

Another deviation from the approved plans concerned the application of stain to the garage doors which were specifically designated to have been painted a color to be compatible with the brick garden wall. The Committee agreed that these doors should be painted. This presents a problem since paint should not be applied over stain. It was recommended that the owners seek advice from a reputable paint store as to the best type of paint to adhere to a stained surface. Ms. Batcheler suggested that an opaque stain could perhaps offer a solution.

Ms. Silber appeared at the meeting to voice the objections of the Society Hill Civic Association toward the work done at 540 Spruce Street. The Association is not pleased with the alterations finding them awkward and unacceptable. Ms. Silber commented that the recommendations made by the Committee to correct the unapproved work should satisfy the objections of the Association.

7125-7127 Germantown Avenue, Charles Duncan, Architect. Mr. Duncan submitted a proposal which involves alterations to a turn-of-the-century porch along the side and rear of this two-story stone building with Mansard. Mr. Duncan explained that the original renovation plans called for restoration of the porch with its column construction and for the installation of glazing in the porch windows. However, substantial structural damage was uncovered.

The steep financial aspects of this approach made it unfeasible to restore. The decision was made, therefore, to construct stud bearing walls and to apply siding to the exterior. The Committee reviewed the plans for this renovation and recommended one minor revision. The members found the windows to be out of character with the Victorian scale of the building and asked that they be lengthened.

The Committee asked Mr. Duncan to revise the window details and resubmit to the staff for a final review. Due to financial considerations, Mr. Duncan requested and received permission to proceed with interior work only pending final approval of the overall project.

Mastercraftsman, Bread and Quarry Streets, David Beck, Architect.

Ms. Siemiontkowski explained that several months ago, a demolition permit was approved for this nineteenth/twentieth century industrial complex following the Commission's six-month statutory delay period. Fortunately, however, an alternative was found and David Beck appeared before the Committee to present plans for the rehabilitation and conversion of this complex into apartments. The plans presented include the removal of a roof on a one-story garage with the retention of the steel trusses to create a courtyard and the demolition of two insignificant buildings.

The Architectural Committee reviewed the drawings and a scale model for this proposed project and agreed to recommend approval.

Since this will be a Tax Act project which requires the review of the Bureau for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service, any changes to the exterior demanded by the state and federal preservation offices must be referred back to this office for further review and final approval.

234-238 N. 3rd Street, David Beck, Architect. David Beck presented a detailed drawing and a scale model of the proposed conversion of this four-story loft building into garden-type apartments adjacent to the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and the construction of a modern addition.

The Architectural Committee reviewed these plans and agreed to recommend their approval.

Since this is a Tax Act project, any changes required by state or federal agencies must be resubmitted to the Historical Commission for review and a final approval.

229 Monroe Street, Edward Bell, Owner and Architect. Mr. Bell presented renovation plans for 229 Monroe Street, a two-and-a-half story nineteenth century rowhouse. Mr. Bell proposed to reconstruct the front facade and restore and hang shutters which remain intact.

After reviewing the plans, the Committee agreed to recommend the approval of this project and suggested that photographs be used to count the courses of brick in order to determine the placement of the window and door openings.

225 S. 8th Street, Morris House, Frank Weise, Architect. At the meeting of the Architectural Committee of 15 May 1985, Mr. Weise presented plans for alterations to the Reynolds-Morris House at 225 S. 8th Street. These plans called for the addition of an elaborate portico on the side of the structure. The initial design was rejected by the Committee on the grounds that it was imitative in style, creating a false idea of the historical look of the house. Furthermore, its enormous scale dwarfed the detail on the main facade of the building. Mr. Weise appeared at today's meeting to submit a revised drawing for the portico entrance. This revision detailed a smaller, less elaborate treatment beneath a glass roof.

The Committee examined the revised drawings and agreed to recommend their approval.

DEMOLITION

19 Christian Street, Leonard Cook, Attorney and Joseph J. Flynn, Phillyship. Ms. Siemiontkowski stated that Mr. Flynn and Mr. Cook were in attendance to seek approval for the demolition of 19 Christian Street as a result of a violation notice that was issued citing the property to be a public nuisance.

Mr. Cook advised the Committee that he had prepared an affidavit made in connection with the demolition request for his client, Joseph Flynn, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer of Swanson Enterprises, Inc. Swanson Enterprises, Inc. exists as a real estate holding company for Phillyship. Mr. Flynn circulated a copy of this affidavit to the members of the Commission and summarized as follows:

- Swanson purchased the property at 19 Christian Street along with a vacant lot at 17 Christian Street on 28 August 1981 from Westaway Builders, Inc. for \$77,500.
- On 19 March 1985 Swanson received a violation notice from the Department of Licenses & Inspections declaring the building to be a public nuisance and ordering it to be rehabilitated or demolished within ten days.
- In compliance with this order, Mr. Cook sent a letter to the Department of Licenses & Inspections explaining that they intended to demolish the property and requested and subsequently received a sixty day extension.
- Swanson then received a violation from the Philadelphia Rat Control Project and sent a letter to them explaining that the building was scheduled for demolition.
- Swanson then solicited bids and entered into a contract with Atlantic Wrecking on 31 May 1985 requiring the wrecker to demolish the building at 19 Christian Street and to commence work on or before 5 June 1985 and to complete same within thirty days. Swanson paid Atlantic Wrecking \$2,000 downpayment and contracted for total of \$5,200. According to the terms of this contract, Atlantic was to secure all permits.

Mr. Cook stated that the most recent assessment of land value and improvements is \$9,562 with market value at \$33,400. Swanson has received no income from this property since its purchase. Mr. Cook testified that the building has never been occupied and that it cannot feasibly be used for residential purposes since industrial and commercial buildings surround it. At the time of acquisition, Swanson considered developing the property in conjunction with neighboring land; however, that plan has since been abandoned. It is the opinion of Swanson that the building is a nuisance and a danger. Vandals continually break into the house and have torn out various portions of the building. Mr. Cook emphasized the fact that neither the Department of Licenses & Inspections nor the Rat Control Project staff indicated the possibility that demolition might not be approved. If approval to demolish is not granted, Swanson will still be bound to honor the contract with Atlantic and suffer a substantial monetary loss. Mr. Cook further stated that the owners of 19 Christian Street were unaware that the building was certified as historical at the time of purchase. Mr. Tyler advised Mr. Cook that the structure was certified by the Philadelphia Historical Commission on 24 June 1958.

Alternatives such as commercial reuse or possible sale of the property were discussed but discarded by Mr. Cook as infeasible due to the current depressed market value compared with the purchase price.

The Chairman advised Mr. Cook that any recommendation made by the Architectural Committee could either be approved or rejected by the Philadelphia Historical Commission. If Phillyship wished to present its case before the Commission, representatives are welcome to attend the next meeting on 31 July 1985 in the 14th floor Conference Room of City Hall Annex at 10:30 a.m.

The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend that the Commission take the matter under advisement and seek an external assessment of the financial data submitted pursuant to Section 7 (f) of 14-2007 of the Philadelphia Code. The Chairman asked that the staff contact Licenses & Inspections to have the building sealed immediately to minimize public nuisance.

PLAQUES

117 Elfreth's Alley. After reviewing the photograph of this building at 117 Elfreth's Alley, the Committee agreed to recommend that the Commission approve an "altered" plaque.

WCAU Building, 1618-1622 Chestnut Street. The Committee reviewed photographs of the building at 1618-1622 Chestnut Street and agreed to recommend approval of an "altered" plaque.

The Church of Saint Andrew and Saint Monica, 36th and Baring Streets. The Executive Secretary explained that a plaque had previously been awarded to this structure but that it had been stolen. The Committee agreed that a replacement plaque should be awarded to this church and would recommend approval to the Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Koob
Clerk Steno II