

MINUTES OF THE 220th STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

1 December 1977

F. Otto Haas, Chairman

Present: F. Otto Haas, Chairman of the Commission
Janet S. Klein, Vice Chairman of the Commission
The Hon. John B. Kelly, Jr., Councilman-at-Large
Edward Pinkowski
Commissioner Robert Silver, Department of Public Property
Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Architectural Advisor to the Commission
Barbara Liggett, Archaeological Consultant to the Commission
David Rosenblum, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor, Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historian
Patricia Sieniontkowski, Executive Assistant to the Chairman

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

THE MINUTES of the Stated Meeting, 3 November 1977, F. Otto Haas, Chairman.
The Minutes were approved and directed to be filed.

REPORTS

The Report of the Architectural Committee for 16 November 1977 was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

Recommendations by the Staff for the Certification of Buildings, Richard Tyler, Historian.

There were no recommendations to be presented this month.

Report on Historical Commission Staff Activities for the month of November, Richard Tyler, Historian.

The Historian related to the Commission members the increasing interest of out-of-town investors in Philadelphia's historic properties. These investors, searching for buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places or buildings located within National Register Historic Districts, are interested in receiving the benefits derived from the Tax Reform Act of 1976 through the development of these buildings. Mr. Tyler and Craig Schelter, Deputy Executive Director of the City Planning Commission, most recently met with a financier involved in the creation of tax shelters. He proposes to suggest to his clients a number of National Register properties in Philadelphia. These development packages will probably range from one quarter of a million to ten million dollars in investment money.

REPORTS (Cont'd)

Mr. Tyler's report was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

228 South Ninth Street, Richard Tyler, Historian. Mr. Tyler reviewed with the Commission members the recent history of the Mills' house. Originally, Thomas Jefferson University had proposed to acquire the building and restore it as the President's house. This did not prove to be economically feasible and the property was subsequently incorporated into the parcel of land to be developed by Wills' Eye Hospital. Wills' Eye Hospital considered the building's retention on its present site but found it not to be practicable. Rather than demolish the structure, Wills' Eye Hospital agreed to relocate it since delays, caused by federal review procedures, would further escalate their development costs. The hospital agreed to move the house to a parcel of vacant land, owned by the Redevelopment Authority, at 236 South Eighth Street.

At the request of the Redevelopment Authority, Mr. Tyler asked the Commission's approval for moving the house and also its endorsement of the site chosen for the building's relocation. After some discussion, a motion was made to endorse both the moving of the house and its relocation at the Eighth and Locust Street site. This motion was seconded and carried.

Mr. Pinkowski asked whether the Historical Commission might review Wills' Eye Hospital's plans for the new building to be constructed on Ninth Street. It was pointed out that the Commission has no control over new construction and that the plans will be presented to the Art Commission and the Redevelopment Authority's Advisory Board of Design for review. Furthermore, a memorandum of agreement exists between the Redevelopment Authority, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Wills' Eye Hospital, and the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation stipulating that the project must meet the approval of the State Historic Preservation Officer.

NEW BUSINESS

The Chairman reported on a recent meeting with Commissioner Silver concerning division of responsibility between Public Property and the Historical Commission. The Commission's primary function is to establish policy; the Department of Public Property's, through Commissioner Silver, to handle administrative matters.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Sieniontkowski
Executive Assistant to the Chairman

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