

THE MINUTES OF THE 305th STATED MEETING

OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

24 September 1986

Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman

Present: Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman
Joan Ferreira
Grace Gary
Caroline Golab
David Hollenberg
Jason Nathan
William Thompson
Paul Deegan, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Property
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning Commission
John Street, Esq., Councilman, Fifth District
David Wismer, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Licenses and
Inspections
Mark MacQueen, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor, Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation
Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Sally Elk, Historic Research Technician
Carmen Weber, Archeologist
Terri Koob, Executive Secretary

Also: Shirley Kitchen, Councilman Street's Office
Robert Scanlon, James Hilty and Stephen Bosch, Esq., Temple
University
John Higgins, Director of Physical Planning for Temple
University
Roxanne Galeota, Ad Hoc Committee To Save The Baptist Temple
and College Hall
Nicholas A. Cipriani, President, General Alumni Association
of Temple University
Muriel Kirkpatrick, Lab of Anthropology, Temple University
Jahan Sheikoleslami, Architect, former employee of Temple
University
Thomas Noon, River's Edge Civic Association
Robert Parsky and Carles Vallhonrat of Ewing Cole Cherry
Parsky

Albert Eisen, Executive Vice President of Strouse, Greenberg
& Co
Albert Taxin, Old Original Bookbinders
A. Robert Jaeger, Philadelphia Historic Preservation
Corporation
Mary Lou McFarland, Executive Director, Preservation
Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Ellen Miller, Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Roger Cohn, Reporter, The Philadelphia Inquirer
Patrick Starr, Foundation for Architecture
And others.

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

THE MINUTES of the 304th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 27 August 1986, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman, were reviewed and approved.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 11 September 1986, David Hollenberg, Chairman. Mr. Hollenberg reported that information requested for the following projects has not been received and that these projects are still pending: 1218 Panama Street, 233-235 Market Street, Society Hill Cafe at 3rd and Chestnut Streets and 329 South Street. Mr. Hollenberg informed the Commission that the Committee reviewed without comment the sign replacement proposal for 226-230 N. 2nd Street.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the Report of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 11 September 1986 with the exception of the four projects listed above.

THE REPORT of the Committee on Historic Designation Meeting held on 14 March 1986, Grace Gary, Chairman.

Boyd Theater, 1908-1910 Chestnut Street.

Ms. Gary described the historical and architectural significance of the Boyd Theater, 1908-1910 Chestnut Street and Mr. Baron presented a slide for the Commission's review. Mr. Tyler reported that the staff received a letter requesting a continuance of the historic designation consideration owing to a death in the family of the attorney for the owner of the Boyd Theater.

The Commission unanimously voted to grant a continuance on the consideration for historic designation of the Boyd Theater, 1908-1910 Chestnut Street, until the next stated meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

THE REPORT on the Committee on Historic Designation Meeting held on 8 July 1986, Grace Gary, Chairman.

College Hall, Temple University, 1801-1855 N. Broad Street.

Ms. Gary recounted the historical and architectural significance of College Hall and Mr. Baron presented slides for the Commission's review.

Representatives from Temple University who attended today's meeting included Robert Scanlon, Vice-President of Planning and Operations; James Hilty, Professor of History and Assistant to the President on the University Wide Planning Commission; John Higgins, Director of Physical Planning for Temple University; and, Stephen Bosch, Counsel for the University. Mr. Scanlon delivered Temple University's response to the Historical Commission's proposed designation of College Hall. Mr. Scanlon challenged College Hall's historical and architectural merit and its value to the University as a symbol of Russell Conwell's dream and of Temple's special place among educational institutions. Following Mr. Scanlon's presentation, Mr. Hilty in his slide presentation to the Commission focused on the deteriorated condition of College Hall and the Baptist Temple, the architectural diversity of the campus and the reuse of other buildings on the Temple campus. He noted that reuse studies for College Hall and the Baptist Temple indicated that the university's needs could be better met elsewhere on the campus.

As part of the record, the Historical Commission accepted the written response of Temple University to the Historical Commission's proposed designation of College Hall as well as data relating to the adaptive reuse of other older buildings on the Temple campus. A copy of Russell Conwell's Acres of Diamonds oration also became a part of the minutes.

In response to the University's presentation, members of the Commission asked questions relating to the cost of rehabilitation, the space needs of the University and related matters. In particular, Councilman Street requested information on the University's capital expenditures for new construction over the last twelve years. Mr. Hilty stated that during that period of time the University expended between \$60,000,000 and \$70,000,000 for new construction. Mr. Street pointed out that during that same period no money was allocated for the maintenance of College Hall or the Baptist Temple and that this contributed to the present deteriorated condition of both buildings.

Mr. Nicholas Cipriani, President of the Temple University General Alumni Association, presented a letter in support of the proposed designation of College Hall. He further reported his Association's petitioning of the University's Board of Trustees to reconsider its

decision to demolish College Hall and the Baptist Temple. Mr. Cipriani indicated that the President of Temple University has demonstrated a willingness to discuss this situation with the Alumni Association.

Included among those in attendance who spoke in support of the designation of College Hall were Mary Lou McFarland, Executive Director of the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, Roxanne Galeota of the Ad Hoc Committee to Save the Baptist Temple and College Hall and Jahan Sheikoleslami, an architect and former employee of Temple University.

Mr. Montgomery noted that all material submitted by Temple University dealing with the structural conditions, adaptive reuse studies and economic feasibility will be accepted as a part of the record by the Commission. He also observed that the purpose of today's meeting is consideration of the historical and architectural significance of College Hall.

The Commission unanimously voted to place College Hall on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

River Bank Steps and Passageway, Wood Street, Front to Water Streets.

Ms. Gary requested that the Commission consider the historic designation of the River Bank Steps and Passageway as presented at the 304th Stated Meeting.

The Commission voted unanimously to place the River Bank Steps and Passageway, Wood Street, Front to Water Streets, on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

U.G.I. Building, 1401-1415 Arch Street.

Ms. Gary described the architectural and historical significance of the U.G.I. Building at 1401-1415 Arch Street and Mr. Baron presented a slide for the Commission's review.

Mr. Albert Eisen, Executive Vice President of Strouse, Greenberg & Co., Inc., addressed the Commission to request that its decision on historic designation be tabled pending the outcome of development plans proposed for the site at 1401 Arch Street. Mr. Eisen introduced two representatives from the firm of Ewing Cole Cherry Parsky, Robert Parsky, President and Chief Executive Operating Officer, and Carles Vallhonrat, Director of Architecture. An extensive visual and oral presentation followed on the proposed development of the U.G.I. site. The schematic plans, presented to the Commission, call for extensive demolition within the envelope of the existing building, the removal of the top two stories, the construction of an approximately twenty-story glass tower above the preserved Arch Street facade and

the substantially altered Broad Street elevation of the U.G.I. Building. This high rise development scheme will be achieved through the transfer of development rights from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts to the adjoining U.G.I. Building site. In return, the developers of the U.G.I. property will provide the Academy with exhibit space within the building at 112 N. Broad Street. Mr. Eisen stated that historic designation of the building at 1401 Arch Street would cause monumental problems for the developers in securing financial support for this project.

Sally Elk addressed the Commission as President of the Samuel Yellin Foundation and presented a letter citing the importance of the Yellin ironwork which is contained on the U.G.I. Building at 1401 Arch Street. Ms. Elk noted the significance of this ironwork and urged its preservation through the historic designation of the building.

The Commission acknowledged the impact of this potential development on the city of Philadelphia. Owing to the fact that the building is currently protected, the Commission agreed to table the designation consideration of the U.G.I. Building at 1401 Arch Street. The Commission further agreed that an ad hoc committee be established consisting of Historical Commission staff, City Planning Commission staff and others to evaluate this proposal. The results will be reported to the Historical Commission for consideration prior to making a decision on historic designation. Mr. Tyler stated that this ad hoc committee will meet before the next stated meeting of the Commission.

THE REPORT on the Committee on Historic Designation Meeting held on 3 September 1986, Grace Gary, Chairman. Ms. Gary presented the Report of the Committee Meeting on Historic Designation held on 3 September 1986 which resulted in recommendations for guidelines for the Committee on Historic Designation. These recommendations establish a system of prioritizing designation activities. Such a system is necessary owing to the increased number of designations planned.

Patrick Starr, Foundation for Architecture, addressed the Commission and voiced his concern over inadequate staffing at the Historical Commission. Councilman Street acknowledged that the new ordinance does necessitate the addition of extra staff to the Historical Commission. He suggested that Mr. Tyler submit a report identifying the Commission's needs so that he may present a proposal to the administration.

The Commission unanimously approved the Report on the Committee on Historic Designation held on 3 September 1986.

THE REPORT of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff Activities for 15 August - 15 September 1986, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer and Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer, was reviewed and approved for filing. Mr. Tyler introduced the Commission's newly appointed Archeologist, Carmen Weber.

NEW BUSINESS

Policy for Requests for Continuances

Mr. Tyler presented a resolution prepared by the City of Philadelphia's Law Department establishing policy giving the Historical Commission staff the power to grant continuances of hearings on proposed designations and submissions relating to permit issuance. A copy of this resolution is filed with the minutes of this meeting.

The Commission unanimously approved this resolution.

Annual Meeting of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 16 - 18 October 1986

Mr. Tyler reported the donation of \$500 to the Harry A. Batten Memorial Fund by the Commission's former Chairman, F. Otto Haas, to be used by Randal Baron to attend the Annual Meeting of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 16 - 18 October 1986

The Commission unanimously approved the expenditure of this amount, as specified by the donor, for Randal Baron to attend the National Trust for Historic Preservation Annual Meeting in Kansas City as the Historical Commission's representative.

OLD BUSINESS

149 S. Hancock Street - Proposed Demolition

Mr. Tyler reported that John Taxin's request for permission to demolish this structure first came to the Commission's attention on 5 September 1985. The applicant was twice scheduled for review before the Architectural Committee - 12 September 1985 and 14 November 1985. The applicant cancelled on each occasion. The applicant rescheduled an appearance on 16 June 1986 at which time the Architectural Committee recommended the submission of data as prescribed by Section 7(f) (.1-.7). This recommendation was approved by the Commission. On 17 June 1986 the staff received a one page report supporting justification for the demolition of 149 S. Hancock Street which was determined to be inadequate. Following two telephone conversations, a site meeting and a letter explaining the need for additional information, the applicant submitted with a letter of 28 July 1986 a one page financial analysis on the economic feasibility of rehabilitating 149 S. Hancock Street. This, too, was unacceptable.

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On 3 September 1986 Mr. Hollenberg, Mr. Tyler and Ms. Siemiontkowski inspected the building and concluded that the structure appeared sound. An inspector from the Department of Licenses and Inspections on 11 September 1986 concurred with this opinion. Mr. Tyler requested that the Commission act on this request at today's meeting.

Albert Taxin appeared at the meeting representing his father, John Taxin. Albert Taxin noted that he was not familiar with all the past circumstances of this case. However, he urged the Commission to approve the request for demolition. Mr. Taxin indicated that he would attempt to submit the data required by the Commission but he was not sure just what was needed. Mr. Tyler stated that he would advise Albert Taxin concerning the Commission's requirements.

The Commission unanimously agreed to deny the demolition request for 149 S. Hancock Street pending submission of a complete application.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Koob
Executive Secretary