

MINUTES OF THE 228th STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

7 September 1978

F. Otto Haas, Chairman

Present: F. Otto Haas, Chairman of the Commission
The Hon. John B. Kelly, Jr., Councilman-at-Large
John Taxin
Val C. Mogensen, Executive Assistant Director of Finance
Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Architectural Advisor to the Commission
David Rosenblum, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor
Richard Tyler, Historian
Patricia Sieniontkowski, Executive Assistant to the Chairman

Also : Tom Hine, reporter for THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
Representatives of Kensington Action Now
Joel Peters concerning certification of the Royal Theater,
1524-34 South Street

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

THE MINUTES of the Stated Meeting, 3 August 1978, were approved and directed to be filed.

REPORTS

The Report of the Architectural Committee for 16 August 1978 was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes. It was noted that this report included a recommendation in favor of the certification of the following buildings:

Insurance Company of North America Building, Sixteenth and Arch Streets
Strawberry Mansion Bridge, Fairmount Park
Racquet Club, 215 South Sixteenth Street
Royal Theater, 1524-34 South Street

The question concerning Historical Commission policy as it relates to the substantial reconstruction of a historically certified building was tabled on the 16th owing to the lengthy agenda. This matter will be taken under consideration at the next meeting of the Architectural Committee to be held on 20 September 1978.

At the request of the Chairman, Mr. Levy presented the Report of the Architectural Committee for 21 August 1978. After some discussion by the Commission members and comment by the representatives of Kensington Action Now, the Commission voted to accept the Report of the Committee and to withhold certification from the Midway Theater, 1821 East Allegheny Avenue.

RECOMMENDATIONS by the Staff for the Certification of Buildings,
Richard Tyler, Historian

There were no recommendations for certification.

REPORT on Historical Commission Staff Activities, Richard Tyler, Historian

The Historian reported the Provident Bank's acceptance in concept of the proposal of the Council of Spanish Speaking Organizations to acquire the Furness Bank at Sixth and Spring Garden Streets for a museum, craft and cultural center. The Council must now demonstrate its economic capability to undertake the project by 15 October 1978. Mr. Tyler acknowledged the cooperation of the Managing Director's Office, the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and the Philadelphia Historical Commission as an important factor in this preservation achievement.

The Building Permit Project is proceeding smoothly. With donations received from the American Philosophical Society and the American Institute of Architects, the project now has a budget of \$475.00.

The Report on Commission Activities for the month of August was approved and directed to be filed with the official copy of the Minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

Erlanger Theater. As directed by the Commission at its meeting of 3 August 1978, the Historian contacted the Department of Licenses and Inspections to determine the status of the permit issued for the demolition of the theater. Mr. Tyler found that a demolition permit, issued in April, was still valid and that work on the dismantling of the theater had begun. Also, as directed by the Commission, Mr. Tyler spoke with one of the owners of the theater concerning tax incentives and other preservation tools. It was the opinion of the owner, however, that it was not feasible to consider any alternative to demolition at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Committee on Certification. At the request of the Historian and the Chairman, the Commission members were asked to take into consideration the establishment of a Committee on Certification similar to the Historic Values

Committee of the Commission which functioned from February 1960 to June 1970. It was suggested that the Committee could consist of a member of the Commission, the Chairman of the Architectural Committee, an outside architect, an outside historian and a representative of the City Planning Commission.

The Commission members were presented with a typewritten proposal and asked to take the matter into consideration. It was agreed that the question will be discussed at the next meeting.

National Trust for Historic Preservation Annual Meeting. The Historical Commission members voted unanimously to allow the Chairman's Executive Assistant to attend the Annual Meeting of the National Trust in Chicago, October 11-15. An expenditure from the Harry A. Batten Memorial Fund, not to exceed \$350.00, to cover expenses was approved.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Executive Assistant to the Chairman