

FINAL APPROVAL

May 26, 1959

D R A F T

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

and
THE THIRTY-FIRST STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Held on April 28, 1959, in the Commission's Office, 634 City Hall at 3:30 P. M.

Present were: Mrs. Richardson Dilworth
Mr. Harry A. Batten
Mr. Charles E. Peterson
Mr. R. Norris Williams, II

Mr. Grant M. Simon, Chairman

Also present: Mr. George I. Lovatt, City Architect
Mr. Philip Carroll, representing Mr. William T. Gennetti
Mr. Harry G. McDowell, representing Mr. McConnell
Dr. Margaret B. Tinkcom, Historian
Mrs. Charles J. Maurer, Executive Secretary

THE MINUTES for March 31, 1959 were approved with corrections made by Mr. Peterson, Secretary for the Commission.

As per motion moved and seconded at the March 31, 1959, Meeting, the following statement will henceforth be included in the Minutes:

"Unless otherwise stated, all actions reported herein were taken after motions properly presented, seconded and carried."

DR. TINKCOM'S REPORT:

1. Budget: It was the late Commissioner Regalbuto's opinion the Historical Commission would need between twenty and thirty thousand dollars annually for its operation. In view of the Commission's steadily expanding program, it is probable that a figure approaching Mr. Regalbuto's maximum estimate will be required for 1960.

(Copy of Budget attached)

The members present accepted the proposed budget for 1960

2. Apprenticeship program: Dr. Tinkcom reported that she had a conversation with Dr. Garvan of the American Civilization Department of the University of Pennsylvania, relative to a plan for giving academic credit to graduate students in American Civilization who investigate some phase of the City's history in which the Commission is interested. The projects to be undertaken will be carefully defined to meet the requirements of both the Commission and the University. The students, of course, will receive no financial remuneration for this work, and the studies they complete will supplement the work now being done by our assistant historians; not supplant it. Such a program will give the Commission an opportunity of appraising qualified graduate students, one or two of whom it may wish to hire at a later date.
3. HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY Photo-data books: About a year ago, arrangements were made between the Commission and the National Park Service to collaborate in preparation of thirty photo-data books for the HABS.

These books permit more extensive reports, architecturally, historically, and photographically than do the old HABI forms. The National Park Service will take the photographs, the Philadelphia Historical Commission will supply the history. Ten buildings have been studied. Twenty others, including the nine houses measured for the Commission by George Robbins, and the nine houses measured by the Redevelopment Authority, are here with proposal for study. They are:

704 South Front Street
Drinker's Court (238 Delancey)
307 South Third
309 South Third
NE cor. Third & Delancey
320 South Fourth
112, 114, 116 Cuthbert Street
223 Spruce Street
225-227 Spruce Street
317 Spruce
429 Spruce
318 Delancey
232 South Third
270 South Third
271 South Fourth
273 South Fourth

The Benjamin Rush "Homestead" and
The Rembrandt Peale House will complete the twenty.

4. Buildings for Certification: The Commission agreed that 511 South Front Street; 104, 106 Fitzwater Street; and 758, 760 and 762 South Front Street should be certified immediately. The Bonaparte house, 260 South 9th Street, is to be studied to determine whether this was actually the place where the Bonaparte lived while in Philadelphia. The Comegy house, 4205 Walnut Street, a typical mid-19th century country villa was recently called to Mr. Simon's attention. Exterior and interior photographs of the house, formerly owned by Benjamin Comegys, President of the Philadelphia National Bank, now the property of the University of Pennsylvania were shown. Comegys was a book collector as well as a banker and many of his books are in the U. of P. Library. It is possible that the Smithsonian Institute in Washington might become interested in purchasing the fabric of the Library to preserve as an example of "a cultivated Philadelphia gentleman's library." It was Dr. Tinkcom's opinion that the house itself is not certifiable, although very interesting. Mr. Williams moved that the matter be tabled. The motion was seconded by Mr. Batten.

It was moved and seconded by Mr. Williams and Mrs. Dilworth, respectively, that Dr. Tinkcom's report be accepted and filed.

312 DELANCEY STREET

The Chairman reviewed the background of this house and its relationship to the Greenway to St. Peter's Church and asked Mr. Williams to report on the meeting in Mr. Rafsky's office on April 9 to discuss the problem. The Chairman asked the members to review three diagrams, showing alternate plans for the Greenway, submitted by Mr. Andrade's office. It was moved by Mr. Williams and seconded by Mr. Batten that the second of the three plans, calling for the demolition of only two buildings, 316 Delancey and 319 Pine Street be accepted. The motion was carried.

SCHUYLKILL ARSENAL

The newspapers report that there is a possibility of making this a detention center. It was suggested that the Commission go on record with a statement that as much as possible of the original Arsenal buildings dating from about 1800 be restored and used as administration offices for the detention center. The entire plant has been allocated to the Department of Welfare which is interested only in relieving the congestion at Moyamensing Prison. It was resolved to advise Commissioner Gennetti of the Commission's recommendations for the restoration of the historic parts of Schuylkill Arsenal.

FORT MIFFLIN

It was reported that the area surrounding the old fort is scheduled to become an industrial area. It was agreed that no action could be taken at this time.

DOCUMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE UNEARTHED DURING DOCK STREET DEMOLITION

A letter from Mr. Lammar of the Redevelopment Authority, dated January 20, 1959, and addressed to Mr. Williams was read. In it Mr. Lammar stated that Mr. Marshall DeHaven, Director of Projects in the Redevelopment Authority would call to see Mr. Williams and discuss means of preserving any historical material that may be discovered when demolition of the area is in progress. This meeting has not yet occurred. Mr. Williams stated that any papers found could be sent to the Historical Society where they can be stored. No further action was taken.

THE FIRST CITY TROOP

The Chairman reported that he had recently had a conversation with Mr. Frederick Wheeler, vice president of the Fidelity-Philadelphia, and past treasurer of the Troop, regarding the matter of a Society Hill headquarters for the Troop. No action was taken on this matter.

MR. ROBBINS

The Chairman stated that, because it was necessary to demolish 716, 718 Spruce to allow for the expansion of the proposed nurses' home for the Pennsylvania Hospital, he had asked Mr. George A. Robbins to make measured drawings of the remarkable interior of 716 Spruce Street. Mr. Robbins has submitted a bill for \$200 for the drawings. Payment of this was approved by the members of the Commission.

AIR CONDITIONER

It was resolved that Admiral Mauerman be thanked for obtaining an air conditioner for the Commission's office.

STANDARDS

Mr. Williams noted that although he and the Chairman had been asked to review the preliminary draft of standards for the restoration of Society Hill buildings, it be made a Minute that the Historical Commission has not been consulted concerning the standards that are being made by the Redevelopment Authority. Nor has the Commission had any reply to the suggestion made by the Chairman that these standards be submitted for consideration. The Chairman said that in his opinion the standards for restoration as interpreted by the Redevelopment Authority are very rigid. The Chairman asked Mr. McDowell if the Commission could make a ruling that an applicant for a permit to restore his house be requested to bring with him an architectural drawing of the facade. Mr. McDowell replied that he believed that this could be done.

April 28, 1959

Mr. Peterson suggested that the Commission hire an architect to examine each house and make recommendations for its restoration whenever a submission is received. He illustrated his recommendation by pointing to the drawing submitted for the restoration of 511 Delancey Street, drawing attention to the many errors it contained and further he suggested that a head-on photograph be required as part of the submission, so that the members could compare the proposed changes with the building's present state, more easily than is possible to do at the present time. It was agreed that the Commission cannot hire an architect to advise the public regarding the restoration of their houses. Mr. Batten was asked to talk with Mr. Rafsky and Mr. Lammara about the possibility of the Redevelopment Authority's employing an architect experienced in the restoration of Philadelphia houses to whom this Commission could refer home owners who come in without suitable architectural plans for the restoration of their houses.

SUBMISSIONS: The Chew barn. Changes approved by action duly moved, seconded and carried.
126 Elfresth's Alley. Changes were approved by action duly moved, seconded by Mr. Batten and Mr. Peterson, that Mr. Oskar Stonorov's plans be approved. The motion was carried.
Mr. John A. Griswald's plan to restore the Hopkinson houses were duly approved.

The meeting was adjourned in the proper manner at 5:15 P. M.

Respectfully submitted