

THE MINUTES OF THE 323rd STATED MEETING
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

13 July 1988

Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman

Present: Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman
David Brownlee
Caroline Golab
David Hollenberg
Jason Nathan
Benjamin Ellis, Commissioner, Department of Public Property
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, Philadelphia City Planning
Commission
Scott Wilds, Office of Housing and Community Development
David Wisner, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Licenses and
Inspections

Maria Petrillo, Esq., Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Sally Elk, Historic Research Technician
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Maureen Heaney, Clerk Steno I

Also: Murray S. Korn, President of Dimensions, 1435 Walnut Street
Neil Schlosser, Architect, and Carl Roberts, Esq., 3428-30
Sansom Street
Mary Lou McFarland, Executive Director, Preservation Coalition
of Greater Philadelphia
Nancy Miller, Foundation for Architecture
Residents of the proposed Rittenhouse/Fitler Residential
Historic District
And others.

THE MINUTES of the 322nd Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 8 June 1988, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman. The minutes were reviewed and approved by the Commission.

THE MINUTES of the Special Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 28 June 1988, Edward A. Montgomery, Jr., Chairman. The minutes were reviewed by the Commission. Ms. Golab requested that the minutes of the Special Meeting be rewritten. She asked that the revision include specific comments made by the residents of the proposed Rittenhouse/Fitler Residential Historic District and that those who spoke be identified by name.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 30 June 1988, David Hollenberg, Chairman. Mr. Hollenberg divided the report into three sections.

The first section covers the projects for which an approval as submitted is recommended. These include the Franklin Institute, the Forrest Theater at 1114 Walnut Street, 2000-2004 Walnut Street, in concept only; and, 713 Walnut Street.

The Commission voted to approve the recommendations of the Architectural Committee for these five projects.

The second section contains two submissions for which additional information was requested. These submissions are 424 Pine Street and 109 Elfreth's Alley. This information has been received and reviewed and an approval is now recommended.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the recommendation of the Architectural Committee for these two projects.

The final section regards an application for the introduction of a Money Access Center on the facade of 1608 Walnut Street. The additional information requested has not yet been received. There is no recommendation by the Committee at this time.

The Commission voted to take no action on the 1608 Walnut Street submission at this time.

Barbara Kaplan expressed concern over the numerous installations of Money Access Centers in the already congested downtown area. Barbara Kaplan stated that the Philadelphia City Planning Commission will arrange a meeting with other concerned city agencies to discuss the proliferation of these Money Access Centers.

THE REPORT of the Committee on Historic Designation of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 20 May 1988, David Brownlee, Chairman.

Mr. Brownlee requested that the business of the Designation Committee be deferred until the next Commission meeting owing to today's lengthy agenda.

THE REPORT on the Activities of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff for June 1988, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer.

Richard Tyler informed the Commission of the discovery of privies at 4th and Chestnut Streets. Mr. Tyler commended the Commission's archeologist, Carmen Weber, on the long hard hours she worked in an attempt to complete several projects of immediate concern.

The Commission approved the Report for filing.

OLD BUSINESS

3428-3430 Sansom Street

At the meeting of 8 June 1988, Mr. Schlosser, architect, and Carl Roberts, Esq., both representing the Sansom Street Committee appeared before the Commission to explain the importance and necessity of creating an areaway at 3428-30 Sansom Street. There was a lengthy discussion between the representatives of the Sansom Street Committee and the Commission members, regarding an alleged approval of Design Criteria for the Sansom Street row. It was the opinion of Messrs. Roberts and Schlosser that an approval had been given by the Commission in 1978. The Commission voted to defer discussion on this matter until such time as a full and accurate record is available for review.

Maria Petrillo, counsel for the Commission, stated that she recieved a letter from Carl Roberts dated 12 July and suggested that discussion on this matter be deferred until the Commission members have had ample time to review the letter.

Mr. Roberts addressed the Commission and stressed the significance of the letter.

Mr. Schlosser addressed the Commission. He presented for review various illustrations of the Sansom Street Row. Mr. Schlosser stated that in lieu of the proposed areaway, an interior stair was considered. However, this would reduce the space available on the interior of the building which is greatly needed.

Mr. Montgomery stated that if the Commission requires additional information, the staff will contact Mr. Roberts. David Wismer, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Licenses and Inspections, requested a copy of the plan for the proposed areaway. Mr. Wismer will review the plan and inform the Commission members of the plan examiner's determination regarding any proposed areaway in this location.

The Drexel Building
15th & Walnut Streets

On 24 June 1987, the Philadelphia Historical Commission reviewed and approved the installation of metal plaques and first floor window canopies on the 15th and Walnut Street elevations of the Drexel Building. Permission to install these plaques and canopies was requested by Dimensions to provide identification of their retail

store located on the original banking floor of the Drexel Building. While the plaques and window awnings provided some identification for the retail operation, it has not, according to the applicant, been sufficient to identify successfully the presence of the store and to draw pedestrians off the street into the building. For this reason, the applicant resubmitted his initial request for an entrance canopy on 15th Street. This resubmission was reviewed by the Architectural Committee at its meeting of 31 March 1988. The Committee, at that time, unanimously voted to recommend to the Commission an approval of the resubmission as presented. The Historical Commission, however, at its meeting of 13 April 1988 voted to defer a decision on 1435-41 Walnut Street pending a meeting with the applicant and the various agencies involved in the review of the proposed entrance canopy. Mr. Korn was notified by letter of 1 June 1988 of the Commission's decision to table action on his application.

On 8 July 1988 staff representatives of the City Planning Commission, the Art Commission, the Historical Commission and the Law Department met with the applicant, Murray Korn, to review the present status of this application. The files were reviewed and it was found that approval of the proposed entrance canopy was obtained in 1987 from the Streets Department, the Art Commission and the City Planning Commission. These approvals remain valid.

At this time, Mr. Korn addressed the Commission members. He noted that the addition of the entrance canopy is a reversible change to the building which reflects its new use and which does not destroy original building fabric.

The Commission unanimously voted to recommend an approval of this entrance canopy, on the condition that the staff review, on an annual basis, the necessity for the canopy and also the specifics of the canopy, i.e., color, fabric, logo, etc.

The Rittenhouse/Fitler Residential District

David Brownlee discussed the effect of historic designation on a district and how it protects buildings and other cultural resources.

Mr. Brownlee discussed at length and illustrated with slides the boundaries of the proposed Rittenhouse/Fitler Residential Historic District. Mr. Brownlee explained the procedures and reasons that governed the determination of the boundaries of this district. In his explanation of the boundaries, Mr. Brownlee incorporated a more extensive explanation of the three categories of properties. These categories include significant, contributing, and non-contributing resources.

Following Mr. Brownlee's lecture, Richard Tyler informed the Commission of how long it would take to designate each landmark individually. Mr. Tyler stated that based on the assumption that the Commission could designate five buildings a month it would take 40 years to designate the 2,400 buildings in the district.

Caroline Golab stated her concern over the number of people who have misunderstandings about the duties of the Historical Commission. Ms.

Golab suggested, that if necessary, another neighborhood meeting be held to clear up the misunderstandings surrounding district designation.

Benjamin Ellis suggested that a meeting be held with the members of City Council to inform them of the procedures and powers of the Historical Commission when designating districts. This would enable Council people to better answer their constituents' questions.

It was also suggested that a fact sheet be prepared by the staff which would address the most frequently asked questions and misunderstandings.

It was decided that this fact sheet be sent out with the letters notifying owners that their properties are being considered for historic designation.

Scott Wilds also suggested that in future district designations the letter of notification should contain the category of designation, i.e., significant, contributing or non-contributing.

NEW BUSINESS

Harry A. Batten Memorial Fund

The Historical Commission approved Richard Tyler's request for \$70.00 from the Harry A. Batten Memorial Fund for Lotus 1-2-3 Training for Shoureen Jabar.

Richard Tyler stated that there exists much concern over the fact that the Historical Commission has no published rules and regulations relating to its operation. It has also been requested by Councilman Street that designation of the Rittenhouse/Fitler Residential Historic District be postponed until such time as rules and regulations are adopted. Mr. Tyler stated that a grant of \$5,000 has been received from the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania to retain a consultant to assist the Commission in the development of rules and regulations.

The Commission approved Richard Tyler's request for the retention of John Gallery as the consultant to assist in the preparation of the rules and regulations for districts.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Heaney
Clerk Stenographer I

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