

THE MINUTES OF THE 294th STATED MEETING
OF THE

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

25 September 1985

F. Otto Haas, Chairman

Present: F. Otto Haas, Chairman
Grace Gary
Caroline Golab
Jason Nathan
William Thompson
Christine Washington
David Baldinger, Deputy Director, City Planning Commission
Julia Robinson, Director, Office of Housing
Dudley Sykes, Commissioner, Department of Public Property
David Wismer, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Licenses and
Inspections
Kenneth Cooper, Esq., Deputy City Solicitor, Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historian
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Architectural Historian
Randal Baron, Executive Secretary
Terry Koob, Clerk Steno II

Also: Gail Harris, Deputy Mayor's Office

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

THE MINUTES of the 293rd Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission held on 28 August 1985, F. Otto Haas, Chairman, were reviewed and unanimously approved.

THE REPORT of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 12 September 1985, David Hollenberg, Chairman. In the absence of Mr. Hollenberg, Ms. Siemiontkowski requested that the following submission be added to the Architectural Committee Report for 12 September 1985:

771 South 2nd Street, Tony James of Stephen Goldner Associates, Architects. This proposal calls for the conversion and reuse of a former 1837 Baptist Church which later became the Neziner Synagogue located at 771 South 2nd Street. Preliminary plans were approved, in concept, by the Architectural Committee at its meeting of 8 August 1985. Subsequently, a final design including details for the exterior front stairway and railing, the doors and the windows was submitted and reviewed by members of the Architectural Committee. A final approval is now recommended.

Ms. Siemiontkowski explained that several items in the report of 12 September were left unresolved and since resubmissions have not been received, these remain pending.

The Commission voted unanimously to accept the Report of the Architectural Committee Meeting held on 12 September 1985 with the addition of the submission of 771 South 2nd Street. This report will be filed with the minutes of today's meeting.

THE HISTORIAN'S Report on Staff Activities for 15 August - 15 September 1985 was reviewed and approved for filing. Mr. Tyler informed the Commission that arrangements were underway for hiring graduate students from the University of Pennsylvania to help prepare nomination forms and to do survey work. The salaries of these students will be covered with the excess money in the budget caused by the delay in filling the three new positions on the Commission staff. The Civil Service Commission will consider the approval of these three positions at their meeting today.

OLD BUSINESS

19 Christian Street

Mr. Tyler reported to the Commission that subsequent to the August Stated Meeting he wrote to the attorney representing the owner of 19 Christian Street requesting a feasibility analysis of the rehabilitation of the property at 19 Christian Street. The attorney informed Mr. Tyler that his client believes there exists no sound economic reuse for this property. In view of this position, the owner refused to underwrite the cost of such a study at this time. Mr. Tyler agreed to conduct an on-site inspection of the building accompanied by an independent real estate consultant, the owner of the property and a representative of the neighborhood association to ascertain the condition of the building and its potential for reuse. If reuse possibilities appear to exist, the owner will be required to submit the requested information that is needed by the consultant to complete the evaluation.

Letters of Notification

The draft Letters of Notification to owners that were distributed to the Commission members at the last stated meeting were reviewed and approved. These letters may now be sent to owners notifying them of the date and time of the meeting at which their properties will be considered for designation.

Preservation Community Presentations

The Historian announced that the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia and other preservation groups working in the Philadelphia area will have representatives attend the next stated meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission to deliver brief presentations on the work of their individual organizations. This addition to the agenda was approved at the Stated Meeting of 31 July 1985.

NEW BUSINESS

Certified Local Government Program

Mr. Tyler reported that the Bureau for Historic Preservation in Harrisburg received an approval of its guidelines for the Certified Local Government Program from the National Park Service. In order to qualify as a Certified Local Government, Philadelphia must comply with the requirements set forth in the Program Guidelines which in part include:

- 1) The enforcement of legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties,
- 2) the establishment of an historic preservation commission composed of professional and lay members,
- 3) the maintenance of a system for survey and inventory of historic properties, and
- 4) the provision for adequate public participation.

Subsequent to certification, the local government will be required to do the following:

- 1) Continue to meet the standards for certification described above,
- 2) participate in the National Register nomination process for properties within the City's boundaries,
- 3) provide for attendance by historic preservation commission and staff members at at least one informational or educational meeting per year,
- 4) submit an annual report to the Bureau for Historic Preservation,
- 5) conduct any new survey activities in accordance with the "Guidelines for Historic Resource Surveys in Pennsylvania," and
- 6) if awarded a grant, adhere to federal standards for grant administration.

Mr. Tyler informed the Commission that completion of the documentation for the Certified Local Government Program requires that members of the Historical Commission and staff submit resumés that should include "credentials of expertise in fields related to historic preservation..." Mr. Tyler stated that he would write a memorandum to each member of the Commission and staff requesting the submission of resumés. According to Mr. Tyler, an arrangement may be possible for having the State set up an annual one-day seminar in Philadelphia in order to satisfy the educational requirements. Mr. Tyler also noted that, as part of the National Register nomination process, the Commission would be required to comment on at least 75% of local nominations.

204 Monroe Street - Decertification Request

Ms. Siemiontkowski suggested to the Historical Commission members that local historic designation be removed from this three story, brick building located at 204 Monroe Street. Originally constructed in the 1840s, the property

suffered serious structural damage in 1971 which resulted in the issuance of a dangerous building violation by the Department of Licenses and Inspections and the subsequent removal and reconstruction of the front facade. The Historical Commission staff at that time approved a new, non-historic front facade. Recently the Historical Commission received a request for permission to construct a second story addition on the side of this structure. An inspection of this property verified the building's loss of all historical and architectural significance. As a result, the staff recommends that 204 Monroe Street be removed from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

The Commission unanimously approved the removal of 204 Monroe Street from the list of designated buildings.

Historical Commission Designations

Mr. Tyler informed the Commission that local designations will be considered at the October Stated Meeting. These designations will consist of properties reviewed at the 2 August 1985 Meeting of the Committee on Designation. The nomination for the Diamond Street District will be considered at a meeting of the Committee on Designation scheduled to meet in November 1985. Several members of the Committee will conduct on-site tours of each proposed district. A notice of these tours will be forwarded to the members of the Commission as invitations to participate in these inspections.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Koob
Clerk Steno II