

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

12 December 1985

David Hollenberg, Chairman

Present: Penelope T. Batcheler, Historical Architect for Independence
National Historical Park
David DeLong, University of Pennsylvania, Preservation
Program
Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A.
Kathleen McKenna, Executive Director, Art Commission
Kenneth Cooper, Esq., Deputy City Solicitor, Law Department
Mark McQueen, Esq., Assistant City Solicitor, Law Department
Richard Tyler, Historian
Randal Baron, Executive Secretary
Terry Koob, Clerk Steno II

Also: George Lovera and Michael Oei of Agoos/Lovera Architects and
David Villela of the City of Philadelphia, Department of
Public Property, to present renovation proposal for the
Third, Fourth and Fifth Floors of City Hall.
David Campbell of Alexander-Neal Developers and Dianne
Zimmerman of Dianne Zimmerman Designers to present
rehabilitation plans for 313 Queen Street.
Jerry Roller, Architect, to present proposals for 713 Walnut
Street, 925 Spruce Street and 104-106 Fitzwater Street.
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Caine, owners of Society Hill Florist and
713 Walnut Street.
Robert Cassway, Cassway/Albert Architects, and Alan Sobel,
Applicant, representing 918-920 Spruce Street.
Peter Saylor and Patrice Lynch, Architects, and John Wilson to
present a renovation proposal for Old St. Paul's Church,
225 S. 3rd Street.
Carles Vallhonrat, C.E. Vallhonrat Architects, to present
renovation plans for the Philadelphia Maritime Museum at
321 Chestnut Street.
Mike Carmagnola, Architect, to present rehabilitation plans
for 1016 Pine Street.
Alexander Hoskins, Fairmount Park Commission, to request approval
of demolition permit for Wakefield Mansion.
Mary Lou McFarland, Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
And others

ALTERATIONS

423 Vine Street, Martin Jay Rosenblum, Architect. Mr. Tyler presented an
elevation drawing for the proposed rehabilitation of 423 Vine Street,
a three-and-a-half story 1790's townhouse in Old City. At its meeting
of 20 February 1985, the Architectural Committee recommended an approval
of Mr. Rosenblum's plans subject to two revisions: the entrance door on
the front elevation to be an eight panel door and shutters, if hung, to

be solid panel on all three floors. The Committee at that time also agreed to allow the construction of a new cellar bulkhead. On the side elevation, the Committee asked that the architect redesign the new window openings. The Committee suggested installing five separate windows consistent in size and aligned evenly. Since this project is a tax act project, the members commented that any changes required by the state would necessitate a resubmission to the Historical Commission.

A copy of the National Park Service approval dated 9 September 1985 and a copy of the state's approval dated 30 July 1985 were presented for the Committee's review at today's meeting.

The Committee examined the elevation drawing presented and recommended that the project be tabled until Mr. Rosenblum can appear before the Architectural Committee and give documentation for the alterations that he proposes for 423 Vine Street.

812-816 Hancock Street, Charles Evers, Applicant. Mr. Tyler presented Mr. Evers' proposal which calls for the rehabilitation and reuse of these two trinity houses joined by a two-story infill above a former cartway c. 1830. This proposal was originally reviewed by the Architectural Committee on 12 September 1985 with recommendations that the elevations be revised and submitted. The major renovation proposed for these structures involves the creation of a new entrance by filling-in the former open cartway area. The Committee stated that the transoms over the two entrance doors at 812 and 816 be divided into three lites each. The members also suggested that the architect use the entrance doors as shown on the previous set of plans submitted on 12 September 1985. With regard to the center bay, the Committee asked for an explanation of the operation of the doors.

The Committee agreed to recommend that the proposal for 812-816 Hancock Street be revised and resubmitted for staff review.

City Hall, Renovations to the Third, Fourth and Fifth Floors, George Lovera and Michael Oei of Agoos/Lovera Architects and David Villela of the City of Philadelphia, Department of Public Property. Messrs. Lovera, Oei and Villela presented plans for the rehabilitation of City Council offices on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Floors of City Hall. Ms. McKenna, Executive Director of the Art Commission, was present for this submission. The architects explained that the Council President and all Councilmanic suites would be renovated. The typical council suite would include a private office and an outer office. The scope of the work will be determined by the conditions discovered when exploratory work begins. If upon removing panels of the present suspended ceiling, the original brick vaulted ceilings are found to be intact or easily repairable, the architect will call for the removal of the suspended ceilings and the reopening of the offices to their original height exposing the vaulted ceilings. However, if the vaulted ceilings have been badly damaged, a new suspended

ceiling will be installed rather than undertaking the expense of restoration. The original design called for ceramic tile wainscoting in various patterns. Over the years some of this tile has been damaged and much of it has been recovered with inexpensive paneling. The architects plan to remove this later paneling and examine the tiles underneath. If the tiles are found to be in good condition, they will be retained and exposed. If, however, the tiles are too badly damaged, they will be covered with cherrywood panels. Window air conditioners will be used for these offices.

The Committee reviewed the general plan for this rehabilitation and recommended an approval in concept. However, the Committee suggested that all work be monitored step by step by a member of the Architectural Committee so that all original fabric can be inspected as it is uncovered. Ms. McKenna of the Art Commission stated that she would also like to monitor this project as it progresses. Mr. Tyler recommended that the Historical Commission approach Commissioner Sykes to implement a mechanism for this process.

- 313 Queen Street, David Campbell of Alexander-Neal Developers and Dianne Zimmerman of Dianne Zimmerman Designers, Applicants. Ms. Zimmerman and Mr. Campbell presented rehabilitation plans for this two-and-a-half story brick rowhouse built c. 1820. Later renovations include a replacement door, door frame, watertable and cornice.

Ms. Zimmerman explained that the plans call for the restoration of the facade, cornice and door. They also plan to clean and repoint the brick where necessary and install an asphalt mineral shingle roof.

The Committee reviewed the plans and recommended the installation of returns on the arch molding on the dormer to replicate those on the adjacent property. Mr. Baron suggested that the dormer window contain six-over-six lites and the windows on the first and second floors should be two-over-two sash. The Committee agreed. The Committee also recommended that the grillwork be retained and restored. The Committee further recommended that the handrail be free-standing to prevent damage to the fabric on the front facade.

The Committee voted to recommend an approval of this project for 313 Queen Street subject to submission of revised drawings.

- 713 Walnut Street, Jerry Roller, Architect, and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Caine, owners of Society Hill Florist and 713 Walnut Street. Mr. Tyler stated that 713 Walnut Street is part of Sansom Row which was designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe and built in 1799 as one of first speculative rowhouse developments in Philadelphia. Mr. Roller explained that Society Hill Florist has been located at 8th and Walnut Streets for over forty years and the owners have recently been informed that the rental lease would not be renewed. The owners of Society Hill Florist, Mr. and Mrs. Caine, purchased the property at 713 Walnut Street for the purpose of moving their business to that location. Mr. Roller explained that a location in close proximity

to the old business is essential to keeping former clientele. Mr. Roller stated that 713 Walnut Street was a great building but was useless as a flower shop. The proposal presented by Mr. Roller calls for the installation of a greenhouse type structure at the first floor to just below the marble band course on the front facade of the building. This addition will be used as a display area to attract customers which, according to the owners of the flower shop, is absolutely necessary in their type of business.

After considerable discussion on alternative ideas for a display area, the Committee suggested that the design be restudied and resubmitted with consideration given to a free standing display area that comes up to the sills of the windows but does not cover them.

925 Spruce Street, Jerry Roller, Architect. Mr. Roller presented a proposal for the substantial rehabilitation of this three-and-a-half story house built c. 1813. The front facade was removed and replaced c. 1853. The Committee reviewed this proposal and suggested that the arched head dormer window contain a three-over-six light window with 8" x 10" glass.

The Committee agreed to recommend that this proposal for 925 Spruce Street be approved pending resubmission of revised drawings.

104-106 Fitzwater Street, Jerry Roller, Architect. At the 11 July 1985 meeting of the Architectural Committee, Mr. Roller presented plans for the complete rehabilitation of these two small, eighteenth century houses. At that time the Committee expressed concern that insulated glass proposed for the windows would require very thick muntins which would result in inappropriate window sash. At today's meeting, Mr. Roller presented for Committee inspection, a sample of this insulated window sash. The Committee rejected the use of this window stating that the muntins were, indeed, too thick and inappropriate. The Committee suggested that regular glass sash be used with the installation of interior storm windows.

918-920 Spruce Street, Portico Row, Alan Sobel, Applicant, and Robert Cassway of Cassway/Albert Architects. Messrs. Sobel and Cassway presented this proposal which calls for the substantial rehabilitation of these two Portico Row houses built c. 1831-1833 from plans by architect Thomas U. Walter.

The Committee recommended that the meeting rail on the third floor shutters be lowered. The architects plan to restore the chimney. The Committee advised Mr. Sobel that the rear and side elevation changes and the garden gate elevations meet with its approval but that the Park Service might object. The Committee also recommended approval for allowing excavation in front of 918 Spruce Street to create a depressed areaway to match the one at 920 Spruce Street.

The Committee agreed to recommend approval of this project but advised the architects that since it is a tax act project, should the state or federal agencies require any changes, it will be necessary for them to resubmit these changes for our review.

Old St. Paul's Church, 225 S. 3rd Street, Peter Saylor and Patrice Lynch of Dagit/Saylor Architects and John Wilson. Mr. Saylor presented a preliminary proposal to the Architectural Committee for major renovations to the Old St. Paul's Church at a meeting on 17 April 1985. The Committee at that time agreed to recommend an approval in concept for this project and requested that plans be submitted when they were more fully developed. At today's meeting, Messrs. Saylor and Wilson and Ms. Lynch presented a proposal which calls for almost total removal of existing interior fabric and the introduction of new offices which will greatly alter the character of the interior space. Mr. Tyler explained that this building has not been used as a church for over eighty years. The architects explained that they are planning to gut the church but will attempt to keep as much of the character as possible by retaining basic wood structures. The stairs will be retained and restored. The vestibule area will also be retained and the doors will be restored. The gallery will be expanded to create a larger squared off area, however, the panels which band the gallery will be reapplied around the new gallery. The pulpit will be saved and used in the large Conference Room. The wooden benches will not be saved. The architects plan to keep the vaulted area intact. A skylight will be installed to allow light into the center space.

The Committee reluctantly agreed to recommend approval of this project and requested that photographs be taken and given to the Historical Commission to document the church prior to any alterations. Mr. DeLong abstained from voting on this project.

Philadelphia Maritime Museum, 321 Chestnut Street, C.E. Vallhonrat, Architect. Mr. Vallhonrat presented a proposal which calls for interior and exterior renovations to the Philadelphia Maritime Museum at 321 Chestnut Street. Mr. Vallhonrat explained that the proposal calls for the re-opening of several windows on the Orianna Street elevation. The Committee reviewed the elevations and photographs and suggested that the stone marble surrounds be eliminated. The Committee requested that the first window on the Orianna Street elevation be revised to yield a form more compatible with the front corner window. This window on the east elevation should be the same size as the windows on the front of the building. The Committee also suggested that the remainder of the Orianna Street elevation windows should have the brick infill removed and be restored to their original opening size.

The Committee agreed to recommend approval of this project pending receipt of revised drawings containing the suggestions listed above.

DEMOLITIONS

Wakefield Mansion, Fairmount Park, Alexander L. Hoskins of Fairmount Park Commission. Mr. Hoskins of Fairmount Park appeared at the Architectural Committee Meeting to request approval of a demolition that has been completed. Mr. Tyler explained that this was not a case of a curbside bid such as those taken immediately after a fire but that the mansion stood

for approximately six months after the fire. According to Mr. Tyler, the Historical Commission should have been informed of demolition prior to its execution. The Committee agreed with Mr. Tyler and requested that Mr. Hoskins inform the Fairmount Park Commission that this should not occur in the future and that the permit process should be followed.

Mr. Hoskins informed the Committee that money was available in the Fairmount Park Commission budget for the Wakefield Mansion and since its demolition, a memorial could be erected at the site or perhaps a maintenance building would be built there. The Committee rejected the idea of a memorial but agreed that a maintenance building would help deter the vandalism problems that occur at these sites.

The Committee agreed to recommend that the demolition of Wakefield Mansion in Fairmount Park be accepted.

13 S. 2nd Street, Michael Singer, Owner, Dennis DiDonatis, Applicant.

This submission involves a request to demolish this four-story commercial loft building of an 1840's vintage. The applicants did not appear at the Architectural Committee Meeting and failed to cancel their appointment. Prior to demolition permit application, the Department of Licenses and Inspections issued a violation requesting that the owner of this property remove conditions by repair or demolition. This building is currently vacant.

The Committee agreed that since the property is in danger of deteriorating further, it would recommend to the Commission that Section (8)(c) of the preservation ordinance be invoked.

PLAQUES

502 Spruce Street. The Committee reviewed the plaque application and photograph of 502 Spruce Street. The Committee agreed that the outside light was inappropriate and recommended that the owner resubmits a plaque application and photograph after the light is removed and the masonry is repaired properly.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Koob
Clerk Steno II