

THE MINUTES OF THE 371ST STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

14 April 1993

City Council Caucus Room
Room 401 City Hall

Present

Wayne S. Spilove, Chairman
David Brownlee, Ph.D., Architectural Historian
James Cuorato, First Deputy Director Of Commerce
Department
Barbara Kaplan, Executive Director, City Planning Commission
Stephanie Wolf, Ph.D., Historian
Arlene Matzkin, AIA, Chairperson of the Architectural Committee
Susan Rabinovitch, Real Estate Developer

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Ira Kauderer, Executive Secretary
Andrew Haines, Historic Research Technician

Also

Danielle Rio, JMH Realty Concepts, Inc.
Dennis Feldsher, Fairmount Park Commission
Ted Beitchman, Mayor's Office

THE MINUTES of the 370TH Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical
Commission held on 28 February 1993, Wayne S. Spilove,
Chairman.

THE REPORT of the Meeting of the Architectural Committee held on
25 March 1993, Arlene Matzkin, Chairwoman.

Approval

Dropsie University, 2321-2335 North Broad Street: This proposal came to the Committee as the first part of a phased renovation of the three buildings in this former university campus. The buildings will be adapted for use as single room occupancy housing, a community center and administrative space. The former classroom and library building will be the first to be renovated and is the subject of this proposal. Initially this building will be used for SRO housing, but it will become non-residential space within five years as houses in the surrounding neighborhood are acquired and renovated.

Proposed Alterations

Windows and Doors: Originally all seven first floor openings held doors. The applicant proposes to install casement windows in the four peripheral bays. These windows will be milled to match an extant example of the originals. The three openings at the center of the building will continue to operate as doors, again, milled to match the originals. The Department of Licenses and Inspections requires that the bottom 18 inches of these doors and windows be solid and so the architects propose placing wooden panels at the bottom of each of these first floor openings. The remaining windows on all facades will be restored or remilled to match the originals. The muntins are wide enough to hold insulated glass which will replace the existing single panes of glass.

Handicapped Ramp: This ramp will be added to the north end of the front of the building. The architect proposed that it be faced with split face block to match the existing sandstone. An illuminated pipe handrail will be attach to the ramp.

Front Steps: Several steel handrails, painted black, will be added at the front of the building.

Masonry: This project includes cleaning the exterior surfaces.

The Committee Recommended approval contingent on review of shop drawings for the windows and specifications for cleaning the masonry. It also asked that the handicapped ramp be faced with smooth-faced block instead of split-faced block.

At the Commission meeting, Mr. Tyler reported that this project will be partially funded by CDBG money. Mr. Baron added that this project is also part of a federally funded program to house and employ homeless veterans. Ms. Kaplan told the Commission that this is one of several developments about to begin in this area of North Broad Street.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the Committee's recommendation as presented.

Spring Garden College, 7500 Germantown Avenue: This property is in the process of being sold to the New Covenant Church. They plan to convert a 1960s classroom building into a new large church which will be more in scale with other buildings on the campus. The applicants came to the Committee seeking conceptual approval at this time before the sale. Other buildings on the campus will be rented out for different uses.

A second issue is that of roofing for several of the buildings. Some of the buildings have a deteriorated slate roofs and others have asphalt shingles.

The Committee recommended conceptual approval for the new church building. They also recommended that the roofs that are currently asphalt shingle be replaced in asphalt or fiberglass shingle to match the original slate. The Committee thought that the roofs that are currently slate should remain so or be replaced with a mineral fiber substitute such as Supradur, at least on their highly visible slopes.

Since the Committee meeting Mr. Baron conducted a site visit to identify the most visible roofs, which the new owners should restore. At the site visit Mr. Baron agreed to meet with the prospective owners in the future to discuss roof repairs on a building by building basis.

Mr. Baron added that in his view the overall plan is a good one in that the Church plans to keep the central grassy area open. He noted that this was a great concern of the community when the property went up for sale.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and grant conceptual approval to the New Covenant Church's plans.

700 Washington Square South: This proposal calls for the construction of a rear addition along the highly visible 7th Street side of this early 19th century townhouse which faces Washington Square. The addition would house a garage, accessible from 7th Street, with a small breakfast room above. Plans call for a planter on the roof above the addition. This planter would rise to the existing roofline.

The proposed garage would cover three existing 6/6 sash windows at the rear of the building. The window sash would be removed but the window openings would remain. An opening would be cut into the east wall of the ell to extend the garage length to 18 feet.

The Committee voted to approve plans for the garage and breakfast room addition. They voted to deny the proposed rooftop planter, which would hide the original configuration of the building.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the Committee's recommendation and approve the plans with this modification.

325 South Street: The architect for this project came to the Committee with plans to alter this shop-front for a new tenant. The building has a recessed turn-of-the-century storefront with a double leaf entrance door.

The applicant proposed replacing the existing exterior white tile floor with brown quarry tile to match the color of the

wooden floor in the show window. The Committee thought that because the existing smaller white tiles were an integral part of the Victorian shop-front design, and were more sympathetic to the delicate composition of the original storefront than quarry tile, they should be retained.

The architect also proposed replacing the double leaf door with a single central door flanked by sidelights. He explained to the Committee that his client thought that the existing narrow double leaf doors would make it difficult for customers to enter the store. Committee members unanimously agreed that they would like the applicant to again consider retaining the existing doors. They stated, however, that they would consider approval of a single central arched door with two fixed sidelights upon submission of shop drawings to the Committee.

Mr. Tyler reported that a site visit conducted since the Committee meeting revealed that work on this store-front had already begun without any permits. The Department of Licenses and Inspections was notified and the Department issued a violation and stop work order. Mr. Tyler added that in addition to proceeding without a building permit, the alterations that were taking place did not correspond to those approved at the Committee meeting.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the recommendations of the Architectural Committee. Commission members look forward to an update concerning the restoration of the historic store-front at the next meeting.

626 South Front Street: This proposal calls for alterations to this 18th century corner house. The house had already received a new facing of brick on the first floor by the time of designation. The applicant only seeks to make minor changes to the sign and ground floor window bays. On the later rear addition to the property, the owner seeks to fill in window openings with brick and glass block.

The Committee approved the sign, cellar bulkhead and window bay changes.

At the Committee meeting Mr. Baron explained that the window openings had already been covered with dry-wall on the interior. The existing windows dated from the 1950s and needed work. The Committee decided that an acceptable solution would be to infill the window openings with recessed brick panels. This would solve the problem of matching the existing brick exactly, and not result in a long unarticulated wall along Bainbridge Street.

Mr. Tyler explained to the Commission that these openings were not located in the original building. Therefore, the concern was not with retention of historic fabric, but rather with the impact these alterations would have on the streetscape.

Commission members expressed a preference for retaining the existing windows, even if they no longer were able to function because of the interior dry-wall. Mr. Cuorato suggested that Commission staff contact the applicants, and try to negotiate a solution based on this preference. Ms. Kaplan made a motion to put aside the Committee's recommendation and instead implement Mr. Cuorato's suggestion. Dr. Brownlee seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Old Business: Because Commissioner Levin could only be present for a short time, Mr. Tyler asked the Commission to consider Old Business at this point.

Plaisted Hall, #1 Boat House Row: Mr. Tyler drew attention to a memorandum from Mayor Rendell which appoints a Committee to work with the Park in the development of a plan to replace Plaisted Hall. Mr. Tyler said that he and Mr. Spilove agree that with this Committee in place the Commission's objectives in conditioning approval of the demolition of Plaisted Hall on the development of new plans are secure. Mr. Tyler recommended approval of the demolition of the present building at the Park's discretion. Recordation of the building would precede any demolition. Plans for construction of the new building must still come back to the Architectural Committee and the Commission for review.

Dr. Tyler also stated that the Park's original program for the new Plaisted Hall was only 5,000 square feet, which raised questions about such the small mass of such a building at that location. Owing to requests for additional functions from City Council and others, the program has been expanded to 9,500 square feet.

Mr. Spilove addressed Dennis Feldsher from the Park Commission and requested that the Historical Commission be apprised of any date for demolition of Plaisted Hall so that the old building will be properly photographed and recorded.

Dr. Brownlee moved to approve demolition of Plaisted Hall at the discretion of the Park Commission conditioned on its recordation. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

With the resolution of this Old Business, the Commission returned to the Report of the Architectural Committee.

Bartram's Garden, 54th Street & Lindbergh Boulevard: This proposal calls for alterations to the 18th century stone barn at Bartram's Garden. These alterations include interior renovations that would adapt the interior for use as a multi-purpose space. On the exterior, the architect proposes to add a covered wooden stair at one of the end walls of the building, that would reach an existing above grade door, that would be reopened to its

original 18th century length.

Mr. Tyler conducted a site visit to Bartram's Garden with Ms. Batcheler prior to the Committee meeting. He reported that there is no historic fabric being lost inside the barn. Committee members reviewed the design of the exterior stair, found it sympathetic with the historic structure, and unanimously recommended approval for the project.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the recommendation of the Committee and approve the plans for Bartram's Garden as presented.

THE REPORT of the activities of the Historical Commission Staff, February and March 1993, Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer.

Mr. Tyler discussed the ongoing City Hall Master Plan Project. He noted that while the HSR is not ready for in depth Commission review and discussion, the project is moving forward. He added that the HSR includes newly available information confirming that Thomas U. Walter had a greater role in the design of City Hall than had previously been documented.

Responding to a question about the Reading Terminal Headhouse, Mr. Tyler reported that he had not been made aware of any move toward public acquisition of the building. Periodic inspections of the building with the Department of Licenses and Inspections have taken place. Ms. Kaplan added that purchase of the building may be contingent on permission to raise the funds granted to the City from the PICA board.

Mr. Tyler reported that more of the perimeter wall of the former Naval Home has collapsed. A periodic inspection of the building will take place in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,

Ira Kauderer