

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

17 September 1980

Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Chairman

- Present: Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Chairman, Architectural Advisor to the Commission
Penelope H. Batcheler, Architect for the Independence National Historical Park
Russell Milnor, A.I.A., Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
Patricia Siemiontkowski, Architectural Historian
- Aino: William Reynolds, President of the Octavia Hill Association and an associate to present plans for renovations to 105 Fitzwater Street.
Newcomb T. Montgomery, Architect, to present his proposal for the rebuilding of the front facades of 748 and 750 South Front Street. (Mr. Reynolds of the Octavia Hill Association assisted Mr. Montgomery in his presentation.)
Greg Chance of the Ragan Design Group to present his proposal for the restoration of 1901 Green Street.
Margaret Dengate, Architect, and Jack Kelly to present plans for an addition to the Vesper Boat Club, Boat House Row.
Alfred DiMartini to present plans prepared by Mellencamp Design, Construction, Development for new construction at 1100 Rodman Street and alterations to 524 South 11th Street.
Paul Schaeffer, Architect, to present plans for new construction behind the Pine Building of Pennsylvania Hospital and to discuss with the Committee the Hospital's plans for the future development of the grounds behind the Pine Building.
D. Hughes Cauffman, Architect, to present a final submission for alterations to the University of Pennsylvania Boat House, Boat House Row.
Hugh Zimmers, Architect, and Herman Wolfman, Developer, to present plans for the rehabilitation of Musical Fund Hall, 808 Locust Street.
Harold Murray, Applicant, to present a proposal for the restoration of 1900 Mt. Vernon Street.

SUBMISSIONS FOR ALTERATIONS

105 Fitzwater Street, Santo Lipari, Architect. William Reynolds, President of the Octavia Hill Association, presented to the members of the Committee Mr. Lipari's plans for the rehabilitation of 105 Fitzwater Street. Probably erected between 1760 and 1780 this three-and-a-half story house, a twin to 103, suffered little mutilation over the years and remains virtually intact.

Following a detailed examination of the drawings, the Committee members made several recommendations. On the front facade, the members called for the elimination of the kitchen vent and its relocation; the retention of the original size window and door openings; the installation of a wooden box over the cast iron shoe of the downspout and the introduction

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of a transom light over the entrance door. In addition, the members asked that the design of the hood be restudied noting that a steeper slope would be more appropriate to the building. The Committee further asked that the architect prepare a detail of the entrance door, door frame, transom and hood.

In all other respects, the architect's proposal was found to be acceptable. The Committee recommends the approval of this project subject to the receipt of a corrected elevation drawing and the required detail.

748-750 South Front Street, Newcomb T. Montgomery, Architect. William Reynolds, Octavia Hill Association, and Mr. Montgomery presented for the Committee's consideration a proposal calling for the demolition of the existing facades of 748 and 750 South Front Street and their reconstruction. Erected c. 1770-75, both buildings have suffered significant mutilation, particularly 748. Probably originally three or three-and-a-half stories high, 748 was raised a fourth story and altered extensively on the ground floor. Only fragments of the original building survive.

Because of the structurally poor condition of the two buildings, Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Montgomery requested permission to demolish the front facades and rebuild them. While the Committee members agreed with the necessity for demolition of 748, they requested that 750 be examined closely by a qualified engineer to determine the feasibility of retaining the second and third floor masonry and rebuilding only the ground floor. If this portion of the building cannot be salvaged, the Committee strongly recommended that the entire facade be reconstructed to match the original design with two windows to each floor and double belt courses at the second and third floor levels. The treatment of the ground floor should be based on existing evidence found on the building facade and in the basement. The alley, which appears on the 1860 Hexamer and Locher atlas, need not be restored but treated as a blind opening with a simple brick recess. The placement of the door and the arrangement of the windows at this level will depend on the results of the architect's investigation.

Concerning 748 South Front Street, the Committee asked that the reconstruction reflect as closely as possible the original character of the building. This will require the restoration of the original roofline, the retention of a two-bay fenestration on the second and third floors and the treatment of the ground floor in accordance with evidence uncovered. The Committee noted that the ground floor may have contained either two standard size windows and a door or one large window and a door. Finally, it was agreed that the heads of the third floor windows could be raised to the height of those at 750 thereby allowing the extension of the cornice across both facades at the same level.

1901 Green Street, Ragan Design Group. Greg Chance of the Ragan Design Group presented to the Architectural Committee his plans for the restoration of 1901 Green Street. Built c. 1859, this elegant three-story brownstone building has remained virtually unaltered on the exterior suffering only from neighborhood vandalism and some brownstone deterioration.

Following some discussion of the project, the Committee agreed to recommend Mr. Chance's plans for the restoration of the exterior of 1901 Green Street and the building's re-use as a multi-family dwelling.

Vesper Boat Club, Margaret Dengate, Architect. Ms. Dengate and John B. Kelly, Jr., former City Councilman and member of the Vesper Boat Club, appeared before the Committee to present a proposal for the construction of an addition to the existing structure. Erected c. 1865, altered and enlarged in 1898, the Vesper Boat Club contributes substantially to the Victorian character of the Boat House Row.

In order to provide adequate facilities for women rowers whose numbers have increased steadily over the past several years, the Club proposes to construct a one-story addition to the existing building. Executed in brick to match an existing alteration, the new addition will not damage the building's original fabric and will not be a highly visible intrusion. The architect noted that shrubbery will be planted as camouflage and will serve to soften the juxtaposition of the old and new building materials.

Following some additional discussion of the project, the Commission agreed to recommend its approval.

524 South 11th Street, Melloncamp Design, Construction, Development. Mr. DiMartini, owner of 524 South 11th Street, presented for review a revised set of drawings for alterations to 524 South 11th Street and for new construction on the adjoining lot at 1100 Redman Street.

The revised plans, as presented, call for the construction of garage units along the Redman Street elevation and the proposed use of the garage roof as an open deck. To allow for access to the deck, Mr. DiMartini proposes to introduce a series of door openings on the original back building leading out onto the garage roof. While the Committee found this treatment to be acceptable, they requested that the heads of the doors align with the heads of the existing windows on this elevation.

In all other respects, the members found the revised drawing to be acceptable and agreed to recommend its approval.

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Pennsylvania Hospital (new construction), Bartley, Long & Mirianda, Architects. Paul Schaeffer, Architect, discussed with the Committee members Pennsylvania Hospital's plans for new construction behind the old Pine Building. While the Committee did not disapprove of the Hospital's plans for new development in this area, they expressed some concern over the possible loss of archaeologically significant sites. Mrs. Batcheler noted that the site of the original kitchen for Pennsylvania Hospital might be located within an area designated for new development. An archaeological investigation of the suspected site could provide valuable information concerning 18th century Philadelphia and the Hospital. The Committee members agreed to raise this matter with Mr. Bartley and to discuss the possibility of conducting such an investigation and recording the findings.

For the present, however, the Committee members agreed to recommend that construction on the site, currently underway, continue as planned.

University of Pennsylvania Boat House, Francis, Cauffman, Wilkinson & Pepper, Architects. Mr. Cauffman presented to the Committee his final submission for alterations to the University of Pennsylvania Boat House. Although Mr. Cauffman agreed with the Committee's previous recommendation that the area between the two gable ends on both the east and west elevations be treated as a mansard with a sloping roof similar in construction and fabric to the original building, he asked that the Committee reconsider its additional request that the four gable ends on these two elevations be executed in a manner similar to the East River Drive gable end with its decorative wood trim. Mr. Cauffman suggested that a simple treatment of these less prominent gable ends would be more appropriate since any significant amount of ornamentation would detract from the importance of the main gable facing the Drive.

The Committee, following some discussion, agreed with Mr. Cauffman's observation and voted to recommend the approval of the plans as submitted.

Musical Fund Hall, 808 Locust Street, Hugh Zimmers, Architect and Herman Wolfman, Developer. Both Mr. Zimmers and Mr. Wolfman presented to the Architectural Committee for its consideration detailed plans for the rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of Musical Fund Hall. Earlier preliminary submissions had received the approval of the Commission in concept with the request that final working drawings be presented for further consideration.

Members of the Committee examined carefully the proposed alterations and made several suggestions. On the front facade, the members requested the retention of the existing one over one light window sash arrangement and the elimination of the oculus within the tympanum of the arched entrance. The latter area should be treated to resemble the original stone design as shown in early photographs of the building.

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As suggested by Lee Nelson, Chief of the Technical Preservation Services Division of the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Council, the Committee asked for a restudy of the east elevation. Mr. Zimmers was asked to consider the retention of the original window openings on this wall and the restoration or replacement of all original sash. New fenestration on the upper floors could then be designed to compliment the existing window pattern. Finally, the Committee suggested the division of lights within the new window openings on the east and west elevations into two rather than three sections. This will give the building a stronger sense of verticality on these two walls. The Committee also asked for either the elimination of the iron window grilles in these openings or their placement on the interior of the building.

After considerable discussion, the Architectural Committee asked Mr. Zimmers to prepare a resubmission for the Committee's review. The members agreed to arrange for a special meeting to consider the revised plans before the next Stated Meeting of the Historical Commission.

1900 Mt. Vernon Street, Harold Murray, Applicant. Mr. Murray presented to the Committee his drawing for the restoration of the building at the southwest corner of 19th and Mt. Vernon Streets. Erected c. 1855, this four-story Victorian rowhouse has suffered considerable mutilation on its ground floor.

Since similar, intact houses exist along the street, the Committee urged Mr. Murray to use them as a model for his restoration project. The house at 1904 appeared to be virtually unaltered and could serve as a good example to follow. In addition, Mr. Murray was directed to examine the double doors located at 1932 Mt. Vernon Street and to install a pair similar in design at 1900. Finally, on the side elevation, the Committee asked that the stone watertable, proposed for installation, be eliminated.

The Committee recommended the approval of the applicant's proposal subject to the submission of a revised elevation for the staff's review.

Owing to the late hour, all the requests for plaques were tabled and will be taken up at the October meeting of the Committee. The meeting adjourned at 6:10 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Siemiontkowski
Architectural Historian