

**THE MINUTES OF THE 643RD STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 11 MARCH 2016
ROOM 18-029, 1515 ARCH STREET
SARA MERRIMAN, ACTING CHAIR**

PRESENT

Sara Merriman, Commerce Department, Acting Chair
Michael Fink, Department of Licenses & Inspections
Anuj Gupta, Esq.
Dominique Hawkins, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP
Rosalie Leonard, Esq., Office of City Council President
Melissa Long, Office of Housing & Community Development
John Mattioni, Esq.
Thomas McDade, Department of Public Property
R. David Schaaf, RA, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Robert Thomas, AIA
Betty Turner, M.A.

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II

ALSO PRESENT

Lorna Katz-Lawson, Society Hill Civic Association
Lori Salganicoff, Chestnut Hill Historical Society
Peter Porretta, Lighthouse Architecture
Vern Anastasio, Esq., Anastasio Law
William Harlam
Nancy O'Donnell, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation
Theresa Stuhlman, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation
Darin Steinberg, Esq.
Kathy Dowdell
Jared Brey, Plan Philly
Mark Thompson, Mark B. Thompson Associates LLC
Glenn Werner, JKRP Architects
David Viola

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Merriman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Commissioners Fink, Gupta, Hawkins, Leonard, Long, Mattioni, McDade, Schaaf, Thomas, and Turner joined her.

MINUTES OF THE 642ND STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ACTION: Mr. Mattioni moved to adopt the minutes of the 642nd Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 12 February 2016. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 23 FEBRUARY 2016

Dominique Hawkins, Chair

ADDRESS: 150 S INDEPENDENCE W ML

Proposal: Replace doorway

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Abdi Mahamedi

Applicant: Glenn Werner, JKRP Architects

History: 1923; Public Ledger Building; Horace Trumbauer, architect

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Society Hill Historic District, Significant, 3/10/1999

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, and 9.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to remove an original, ornamental bronze panel with marble base at the center of the main, historic, Chestnut Street entranceway to this building. It also proposes to remove the existing single-leaf doors, which are not original but are in original openings. The extant doors are ADA-compliant. The application proposes to replace the historic entryway with brass double-doors and large sidelights.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Historical Commission. Architect Glenn Werner and property manager David Viola represented the application.

Ms. Merriman asked the applicants to provide their reasons for wanting to replace the historic fabric with non-historic material. Mr. Werner responded that the Public Ledger building is on its way to being subdivided into multiple uses. He noted that the wing along Chestnut Street would be retained for office tenants. He stated that their plan is to update the identity of the Chestnut Street entrance so that it is distinct from the other uses to come. He opined that the Chestnut Street entrance has cumbersome doors and a dark vestibule. He noted that they do not intend to remove additional historic material in the upper portion of the arched entry.

Mr. Werner commented that they plan to replace both sets of vestibule doors, the interior and exterior doors. He noted that the owner would like glass doors that provide good visibility for people entering and exiting the building. He opined that a pair of doors would help with deliveries up to the offices and would be more convenient. He commented that if they preserve the exterior set of doors, the interior doors will be entirely different, perhaps all glass, to offer views of the domed interior ceiling. He opined that if they leave the exterior panel and doors, it will be incongruous with the updated interior. He opined that he would like to see the vestibule created as a whole unit that would contrast with the historic qualities of the rest of the lobby. He stated that it would be more convenient and opined that it would be more attractive.

Ms. Merriman asked if the glass in the two existing doors is clear or shaded in some way. Mr. Werner responded that the drawings make it appear darker, but that it is actually clear glass.

Ms. Merriman questioned the removal of the exterior floor surface. Mr. Werner responded that it has cracks and needs to be modernized. Ms. Merriman asked about its material, and Mr. Werner responded that it is primarily concrete. He noted that the proposed alteration is concrete with granite inlays.

Ms. Hawkins noted that, based on the Architectural Committee meeting, it seemed that the primary driving force behind the proposed alterations is an improved interior experience. She noted that the doors are currently ADA compliant, so there is no building code issue, and that there are multiple options for increasing visibility and light at the interior, including through the use of a fully-glazed interior vestibule. In terms of accessibility and convenience, she continued, they can be enhanced with the replacement of hardware on the doors to facilitate the door opening, or the addition of mechanized door openers. She explained that the Architectural Committee concluded that the geometry of the door opening as a whole, up to the arch, with the two vertical mullions that run through the large arched transom down through the door placement is a geometry that is original to the building, and to remove original fabric solely for convenience seemed inappropriate.

Mr. Mattioni opined that, from his personal experience, the doors are somewhat awkward, but noted that that may not be sufficient justification for the alterations.

Mr. Thomas seconded Ms. Hawkins' comments, noting that these are heavy, substantial, historic doors, but that there are many options for making them more manageable, including through the use of a mechanized operator. He opined that that is often a good solution. He noted that sometimes the Commission receives requests to alter or add door openings and remove historic fabric because people have trouble finding the entrance; however, he noted, that is not an issue with this building. Mr. Thomas continued, observing that the first and second-floor entrance is recessed behind columns, in the way that 30th Street Station is; one may not see the doors immediately, but the entrance is readily apparent. He sympathized with the applicant's position, but noted that the quality of the historic fabric and the Standards that guide the Commission well override the applicant's argument.

Mr. Thomas explained that many buildings such as this one have revolving doors which they ask visitors to use in certain months owing to the transference of heat, and to have a pair of doors, such as those proposed, would only exacerbate issues of convection. Since this property does not have a revolving door, he continued, at least having only one door open prevents much of the difficulty in that regard. He noted that the Commission does not regulate the interior, but opined that whatever alterations they undertake in the interior should take into consideration the grand historic entrance. He stated that the Standards as they apply to this proposed alteration are very clear. Furthermore, he continued, to remove this historic fabric, with its heavy, detailed bronzework and marble at the base of this grand, weighty entrance and to replace it with a flimsy aluminum system would not be in keeping with the character of the building. He opined that that treatment might be appropriate for a modern building, but not for a great, Classical building, of which the doors are a key, character-defining feature.

Ms. Merriman asked Ms. Hawkins if the bronze panel was discussed at the Architectural Committee. Ms. Hawkins responded that it was determined that the bronze panel was original, historic fabric and that it was important to the original design intent, and therefore the Committee recommended that it be retained.

Ms. Merriman opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and deny the application, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, and 9. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADDRESS: 221 PINE ST

Proposal: Legalize demolition and construction of rear ell

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: William Harlam

Applicant: Vern Anastasio, Anastasio Law

History: 1820

Individual Designation: 12/7/1964

District Designation: Society Hill Historic District, Contributing, 3/10/1999

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 6, and 9 and the Historical Commission's actions of February and August 2010.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to legalize demolition and new construction at a rear ell of this rowhouse on Pine Street. The side of the main block and rear ell of the building are visible from Pine Street because it stands at the end of the row, adjacent to a large parking lot. The work that was completed exceeds the Historical Commission's approvals for the property in 2010. In February 2010, the Commission reviewed an application to demolish visible sections of the rear ell and construct a wider addition with deck. The Commission denied that application. The applicant returned in August 2010 with a revised application, which proposed retaining more of the rear ell. The Commission approved the plan to retain the oldest portion of the rear ell with its half gable roof and allow a wider addition to the north with a more transparent deck railing. A building permit was obtained for the approved work. The approved work was not initiated, but the windows of the rear ell were removed and the building was left exposed to the elements for years. The Department of Licenses & Inspections issued a violation for demolition by neglect in 2011. In 2015, the Commission received reports of floor joists being removed from the portion of the rear ell that was supposed to be retained. The Commission requested that Department of Licenses & Inspections issue additional violations. As a result of this unpermitted work, the rear ell was unstable and a majority of the remainder was demolished. A wider rear addition was then constructed on the location of the historic rear ell. The applicant now seeks to legalize this work.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Attorney Vern Anastasio, owner William Harlam, and architect Peter Porretta represented the application.

Ms. Merriman asked the applicants to explain how the work proceeded without the proper permit and approval. Mr. Anastasio explained that the work proceeded after they had sought and received a zoning approval for the conversion to a two-family home. During this time, the owner's father died and he decided to move his mother into the house. She had an accident and broke her femur and needed a bathroom with barrier-free access. The owner decided to modify the plans to accommodate this need. He claimed that the portion of the building that they demolished was from the 1970s and stuccoed and that it was modified by only 27 square feet.

Ms. Merriman asked when the beams were removed from the rear ell. Mr. Baron said that the staff received reports of the removal in 2015. The owner claimed that no support beams were removed. Mr. Baron explained that the Department of Licenses & Inspections conducted an inspection and issued a violation in 2015 because of the work that had rendered part of the

building dangerous. He displayed a photograph of the building with the back and windows removed. Mr. Harlam said that they had not received a violation.

Ms. Hawkins explained the Committee's recommendation. She explained that the change to the building was undertaken without a permit. The work modified not only the first floor, where the bathroom is located, but also the upper floor and roof. Given the lack of a permit and the Commission's previous denial of essentially the same proposal in 2010, the Committee recommended denial. She noted that she had particular concern about the precedent of approving work after the fact that the Commission had denied in the first place. She did not understand why the developer did not return to the Commission for an amendment to his approval when the new circumstance of his mother's disability arose.

The architect, Mr. Poretta, explained that, given the 12 foot width of the property, it was physically impossible to install a barrier-free bathroom if the former rear ell was retained. Mr. Thomas asked about the installation of windows on the new wall on the property line. The architect said that he was not asked to address that issue, but only to design the bathroom. He thought that perhaps an alley easement existed. Lorna Katz-Lawson of the Society Hill Civic Association said that the neighboring property belongs to the bank. Mr. Thomas expressed a concern about the public visibility of the illegal work and said that he thought that there are other ways to create an accessible bathroom.

Ms. Merriman asked Mr. Fink, the Department of Licenses & Inspections' representative on the Historical Commission, to explain the process when someone exceeds a permit at a non-historic property. Mr. Fink said that a violation is issued. The owner seeks approvals for the work and a special permit fee is assessed that doubles the cost of the normal fee. Ms. Merriman said that she is also concerned about the precedent, but she also thinks that it does not make sense to keep the building in violation. She asked for public comment.

Ms. Katz-Lawson explained that the Civic Association has had a long history with the project. She said that the owner originally asked to remove the whole rear ell of the building. She said that this owner sold the building to someone else, who was going to use the building as a single-family building. Then he repurchased the property and sought to create two units, originally for his son. Now, he has removed the rear ell, after leaving it open to the elements until it was demolished by neglect. She expressed frustration with the Department of Licenses & Inspections as well for not forcing the owner to protect the building better. Now, the owner has "whacked off" the back and has built it wider for his mother. She asked the Commission to help protect the community.

Mr. Harlam said that many claims offered by Ms. Katz were simply untrue. He said he never sold the property. He said the property was condemned and he is fixing it up. He said it was at first to be for his son but now, because of her unfortunate accident, it is for his mother. He said that she took care of him when he was young and now it is his turn to take care of her.

Ms. Merriman asked Mr. Farnham to speak about the precedent and the Commission's options. Mr. Farnham said that, in his opinion, every decision is different and should not be viewed as a precedent for other cases. He explained that the Commission could approve or deny the application. If it was not approved, the violation would be enforced in court and the owner could be compelled to remove the addition and build according to the approved plans. He said that the ADA law does not require this bathroom in a private house, as the owner implied; the owner has elected to construct such a bathroom, but is not required to. Mr. Mattioni asked about the significance of the deviation. The applicant said again that it is only 27 square feet.

Mr. Thomas and Ms. Hawkins both said that it would be possible to create an accessible bathroom in other ways. Ms. Hawkins said that the deviation is more than the 27 feet because it also involves the upper floor and roof as well. Ms. Hawkins asked if the building was to be accessible in other ways, for example at the front stoop. The architect replied that they had not addressed that issue at this time. Mr. Thomas explained the many ways in which he has created accessible facilities at other projects.

FAILED MOTION: Ms. Hawkins moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and deny the application, pursuant to Standards 2, 6, and 9 and the Historical Commission's actions of February and August 2010. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion, which failed by a vote of 4 to 5. Mses. Leonard and Turner and Messrs. Fink, McDade, and Mattioni dissented.

ACTION: Mr. McDade moved to approve the application. Ms. Leonard seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 5 to 4. Ms. Hawkins and Messrs. Gupta, Schaaf, and Thomas dissented.

ADDRESS: 405-25 QUEEN ST

Proposal: Rehabilitate playground

Review Requested: Review and Comment

Owner: City of Philadelphia

Applicant: Nancy O'Donnell, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

History: 1810; Bethel Burying Ground; Weccacoe Playground

Individual Designation: 6/14/2013

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend that the application demonstrates that the playground project satisfies Standard 8: "Archaeological resources at the Bethel Burying Ground will be protected and preserved in place."

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to refurbish a section of the Weccacoe Playground at 405-25 Queen Street. The section of the playground where the work would take place is not designated as historic. Another section of the playground, the former Bethel Burying Ground, is designated as historic. The Historical Commission designated the Bethel Burying Ground in June 2013 and is charged with protecting archaeological resources at the former cemetery, which was associated with Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Owing to the boundary of its designation, the Historical Commission does not have plenary jurisdiction over the proposed project. Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (Parks & Rec) and its partners are presenting the project to the Historical Commission as a courtesy for review and comment only.

Prior to developing the playground project, Parks & Rec retained an archaeologist to verify the bounds of the historic cemetery to ensure that archaeological resources would not be disturbed while refurbishing the playground. The archaeologist conducted documentary research as well as excavations and identified the locations of the perimeter wall of the historic cemetery. All work on the playground will take place outside the historic perimeter wall of the cemetery. Two fences will be erected outside the historic cemetery to protect the cemetery from incursions during construction. During the construction at the playground, an archaeologist will advise, be on site for work near the cemetery, and be on call for unexpected occurrences.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Nancy O'Donnell and Theresa Stuhlman of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation represented the application.

Ms. O'Donnell stated that Parks & Recreation provided many opportunities for public comment on the project and has respected all communities involved in the project. The applicants stated that the plans for the improvements can be implemented without having adverse effects.

Mr. Thomas noted that the application thoroughly documents measures that will be taken to protect the site. He complimented the team on the project. Ms. Hawkins also commented that the team did an outstanding job of balancing all of the needs required by the project and stated that she appreciates the level of protection of the historic resources.

Ms. Merriman opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

ACTION: Ms. Hawkins moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee and find that the application demonstrates that the playground project satisfies Standard 8: "Archaeological resources at the Bethel Burying Ground will be protected and preserved in place." Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

ADDRESS: 8330 MILLMAN STREET

Nominator: Kathleen Abplanalp and Emily Cooperman, Chestnut Hill Historical Society

Owner: Estate of Thomas and Agatha Hughes

Proposal: Designate property

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Dilworth moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the property at 8330 Millman Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and F. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 8330 Millman Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and F. World-renowned architect Robert Venturi designed and built the house for his mother, Vanna Venturi, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It is widely considered one of the world's most important architectural landmarks of the twentieth century. The subject of numerous books, articles, and essays, the house marks a pivotal shift in architectural theory and design, signifying the end of Modernism and the start of Post-Modernism. The Historical Commission designated Venturi's Guild House on Spring Garden Street, which occupies a similarly prominent position in the canon of architectural history, in 2004.

On 29 September 2015, the Historical Commission informed the property owner that the property at 8330 Millman Street had been proposed for designation as historic. At its meeting on 11 December 2015, the Historical Commission considered the nomination and tabled the review for 90 days, to its March 2016 meeting.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented an additional continuance request to the Historical Commission. Lori Salganicoff, Executive Director of the Chestnut Hill Historical Society, represented the nomination and continuance request.

Mr. Farnham explained that the nomination was continued previously to allow the property owner and any potential new owners to seek a conservation easement. He noted that the Commission had continued the matter for 90 days and asked that the nominator to report back after 90 days. Since that time, there has been a subsequent request for a continuance to allow the discussions regarding a conservation easement to proceed. Mr. Farnham noted that, during the period of the continuance, the property would remain under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission and there would be no threat to the building.

Ms. Salganicoff addressed the Commissioners, asking them to table the nomination for as long as possible so that the current owner can continue to be successful in selling the property to a preservation-minded buyer who might be interested in pursuing a preservation easement. She noted that it is a special property, and there are a number of interested parties, some international, who have been looking at it. Despite this, she continued, it is not an easy property to sell, and there are still negotiations and discussions happening, and that she expects that will continue for many months.

Mr. Mattioni asked Ms. Salganicoff how much time she is requesting. Ms. Salganicoff responded that it would be helpful for the owners to have a six-month continuance to remove some of the pressure as they try to sell the property. Mr. Mattioni asked whether it was appropriate to take the pressure off to that great of an extent. Ms. Salganicoff responded that she believed it would be, since the property would remain under the Commission's jurisdiction. The continuance, she noted, would allow the protection to remain in place while a new owner who would be interested in pursuing a preservation easement, possibly on the interior and exterior, could be identified. She noted that there is an easement that was already crafted by the owner who purchased it from Robert Venturi and his mother that does protect both the interior and exterior. In order for something of that level to move forward, she opined, they would need to have an easement that has the maximum possible value.

Ms. Hawkins stated a 90-day continuance, potentially followed by another, would not be a burden. Ms. Salganicoff responded that the owner would prefer a six-month continuance. She noted that it would be appropriate for the Commission to offer a continuance that is more typical, but in recognition of the stewardship that the family has put into the building, and their particular situation, she did not see a reason not to grant their request.

Mr. Thomas opined that all properties are unique, and this building is certainly one of the more unique. He noted that he understood the issue from a financial standpoint, and if a buyer has not been identified yet, he would be surprised if an easement could be executed in 90 days. Since the Commission maintains jurisdiction during the tabling period, he continued, he did not see a problem with an extension to allow the easement process to unfold.

Ms. Merriman opened the floor to public comment. Architect Kathy Dowdell agreed with the earlier comments about the excellent stewardship of the current and previous owners of the house, and the fact that easements do take a long time occur. Her concern over a six-month continuance, she continued, was the lack of information available to the public during that period. She noted that this is a very important house that is, for better or worse, is an issue of public interest and concern. She asked whether there would be a way to inform the public of the progress during that six-month period, other than seeing it on the Historical Commission's agenda and attending the meetings. Ms. Merriman asked Ms. Salganicoff if there was any way for community members to receive updates on the property during the tabling period. Ms. Salganicoff responded that the Chestnut Hill Historical Society does not have something that specifically addresses updates on this particular building, and that the sale is a private matter,

but perhaps they could submit updates to the Historical Commission. Ms. Dowdell responded that any update would be helpful, and noted that her question is really more related to how people stay informed about matters like this. Ms. Salganicoff encouraged Ms. Dowdell to join the Chestnut Hill Historical Society. She noted that Ms. Dowdell's question is valid, and recognized that people are very interested in this house. Ms. Salganicoff explained that they will be talking about the property frequently with the AIA convention coming up, and the awards that Venturi and Scott Brown are receiving. She noted that they hope that it will generate additional interest and increase the value of the house so that the owners choose a preservation-minded buyer. She suggested that, owing to the interest in the house, perhaps the Historical Society could publish quarterly updates on the property.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to continue the review of the nomination for six months, to the Historical Commission's meeting of 9 September 2016. Mr. Gupta seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: At 10:21 a.m., Ms. Hawkins moved to adjourn. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES CITED IN THE MINUTES

Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinct materials or alterations of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Standard 5: Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Standard 8: Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.