

DESIGN
ADVOCACY
GROUP

of Philadelphia

March 25, 2003

Mr. Robert N. C. Nix, III, Esq.
Chairman, Fairmount Park Commission
Memorial Hall, West Park
4231 North Concourse Drive
P.O. Box 21601
Philadelphia, PA 19131-0901

RE: PROPOSED ADDITION TO THE ENGINE HOUSE

Dear Chairman Nix:

The Design Advocacy Group of Philadelphia is very concerned about the proposed addition to the Engine House at the historic Philadelphia Waterworks. As we know you appreciate, this complex of buildings is one of Philadelphia's most important treasures. While we understand and share the Commission's interest in attracting more visitors to the area, we believe that because of the unique character of the site and its extremely high visibility, a most compelling case must be made before new construction of any kind is even considered.

Should the Commission decide to permit new construction, we believe that the Commission must apply the most rigorous standards of design quality. The Commission should demand that the developer engage a distinguished architect of international stature, and the proposal should be offered to the public for careful review prior to proceeding. The juxtaposition of the 19th century Waterworks and the 20th century Art Museum establishes a magnificent standard of design quality at one of Philadelphia's most prominent visual gateways. The restoration of the Waterworks complex is a remarkable achievement, illustrating our city's commitment to protecting these valuable assets. The Commission must not allow short-term commercial expediency to compromise what has been accomplished.

Sincerely,

The Design Advocacy Group of Philadelphia

William P. Becker
Chair

Cc: The Honorable John Street, Mayor, City of Philadelphia
Dean Gary Hack, Chair, Philadelphia Planning Commission
Michael Sklaroff, Esq., Chair, Philadelphia Historical Commission

*William P. Becker, Principal
Becker & Frondorf
1500 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
wbecker@beckerfrondorf.com*