

ZBA Hearing on Unisys Sign

Contributed by SCRUB Press Release
Thursday, 14 August 2008

Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB)

Hearing Date: Thursday August 14, 2008

Place: ZBA Hearing Room, 1515 Arch Street, 18th Floor

Time: 9AM

Unisys Corporation will re-appear before Philadelphia's Zoning Board of Adjustments tomorrow to finish its presentation seeking a variance from sign control laws protecting the aesthetic character of our city's skyline.

SCRUB will present testimony in opposition to the proposed accessory signs. Center City Residents Association, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Queen Village Neighborhood Association and Society Hill Civic Association have also submitted letters in opposition to the signs. Attorneys representing residents of Two Liberty Place and its developer will also present testimony.

Contrary to photographs appearing in the Inquirer, the proposed "accessory" signs are not in the same category as the PSFS, PNB or Aramark building signs. These buildings display the name of the corporation that owned or built the building and the signs were part of the design of the building.

This is a critical difference! Unisys does not own the building and is not even the major tenant. Unisys is leasing a scant 7% of the floor space in Two Liberty Place. The sign is not part of the building design and the sign would be placed in the middle, near the 37th floor, of this iconic building.

Imagine what our city would look like if any company who rented a center city office was permitted to hang a huge illuminated sign in the middle of the building. The rich historic and architectural fabric of our city would quickly disappear, replaced by a glaring commercial clutter of signs.

Public spaces are critical components of our city's economic vitality and quality of life and should not be squandered to appease private interests in branding. Laws regulating signage apply to all. Special treatment breeds contempt for the law and disappointment in a government that allows it.