NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

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1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE (must comply with a Board of Revision of Taxes address)

Street address: 101 W Gravers Lane

Postal code: *19118* Councilmanic District: 8

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2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name:

Common Name: 101 W Gravers Lane

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3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Site ☐ Object

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4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☐ excellent ☒ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: *Residential dwelling, single family*

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5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE ATTACHED

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6. DESCRIPTION

SEE ATTACHED

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7. SIGNIFICANCE

SEE ATTACHED

Period of Significance (from year to year): 1867 - 1924

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: *1867-68; 1907; 1924*

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: *Based on J.C. Sidney's designs*

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Lewis Headman

Original owner: Lewis Headman

Other significant persons:

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

☐ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,

☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,

☒ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,

☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,

☐ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,

☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,

☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,

☒ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,

☒ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or

☒ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

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8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE ATTACHED

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9. NOMINATOR

Name with Title: *Jennifer Robinson* Email: preservationistjenn@gmail.com

Edited by Emily Cooperman, Chestnut Hill Historical Society, 267-702-0778

Organization: Date: August 10, 2015

Street Address: 4339 Pine Street, Apt 3 Telephone: 559-776-1073

City, State, and Postal Code: *Philadelphia, PA 19143*

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt:_____

☐ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date:_____

Date of Notice Issuance:_____

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

City:_____ State:____ Postal Code:_____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation:_____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission:_____

Date of Final Action:_____

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

5. Boundary Description

The property (see figure 1) is situated at Chestnut Hill in the 9th Ward of the City of Philadelphia and located at the Westerly corner of West Gravers lane (formerly Union Avenue) and Shawnee (formerly Twenty-seventh) Street.

Containing in front on the Northwesterly side of West Gravers Lane one hundred forty feet and extending of that width in length or depth Northwestwardly between parallel lines at right angles to the said West Gravers Lane and along the Southwesterly side of said Shawnee Street one hundred twelve feet, six inches to the Southeasterly side of a twenty feet wide street or alley which extends in the read of said premises and leads into and from said Shawnee Street.

6. Description

101 West Gravers Lane is a large parcel at the northwest corner of West Gravers Lane and Shawnee Street (Photo 1) in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia, containing 2 separate buildings — a single-family dwelling at the southeast corner of the parcel built in 1867-8, built and occupied by Chestnut Hill stone mason Lewis Headman, is a well-preserved, important vernacular interpretation of the nearby houses designed by Philadelphia architect James C. Sidney and a representative example of an important house type in this part of the city from the period immediately following the introduction of the railroad to this section of the city in the mid-nineteenth century. A garage originally constructed in 1889 as a carriage house is located at the northwest corner of the parcel.

The property includes a historic, wrought-iron fence along the West Gravers Lane and Shawnee Street fronts. The fence stands on top of a low schist wall which includes the main entrance steps on Gravers Lane.

House

The main, rectangular-plan, gable-roofed, 2 ½-story volume of this vernacular Gothic Revival, stucco-over-rubble construction house faces West Gravers Lane, and is 3 bays wide and 2 bays deep (Photo 2). The main block is backed on the northeast by a 2-story, gable-roofed, partial-width rear wing that dates to the period of original construction (Photo 3). To the southeast of the main block and extending to the rear is a rectangular-plan, hipped-roof, 2-story volume added in 1907 (Photo 4). Immediately behind the main volume to the southwest of the historic rear volume is a 1-bay, mansard-roofed, 3-story addition (Photo 5), portions of which probably date to the original construction of the house. The lower floor of this part of the building is clad in painted brick. A small, 1-story, shed-roofed rear entrance volume is located immediately to the southwest of the rear el, and is clad in wood German siding. An interior, brick chimney is located to the north of the gable of the main volume's southwest elevation, rising from the center of the rear (northeast) wall of the 1907 addition. An interior, ridge, brick chimney which retains a historic chimney pot is located near the rear (northwest) wall of the rear el.

The main roof and roof of the historic rear el are clad in asphalt shingles**.** The 1907 addition has a composite roof, and the 1924 mansard is clad in asbestos shingle. The building retains historic, wood windows throughout. These have 2/2, double-hung sash in the main volume (see Photo 2), multi-light, diamond-pane, triple casement sash in the 1907 addition (Photos 4, 5), and 6/6, double-hung sash in the 1924 rear addition (Photos 3, 5). The house retains its historic, double leaf, paneled front door with top lights dating to the period of its original construction (Photos 2, 6). Historic wood shutters also probably dating to the period of construction survive on the main volume, with paneled shutters on the first floor and louvered shutters on the second and third floors (Photos 2, 6, 7).

The main, or southwest elevation (Photo 2) is symmetrically composed in the main volume, and includes the centered main entrance accessed by a set of stone steps from Gravers Lane. The

main entrance includes a historic, 2-light transom over the original doors, flanked by its historic wood sash windows. A pair of gabled wall dormers are lit by round-arch- windows in the upper story.

The northeast, side elevation, facing Shawnee Street, is lit by windows in the southeasternmost bay like those on the front elevation of the main volume (Photo 7). A 4/4 window with paneled shutters also lights the southeasternmost bay of the first floor of the rear el, and a historic double casement window with 2, 6-light casement sashes in a centered wall gable lights the upper floor of the el.

The southwest, side elevation is lit in the 1907 addition by a large, multi-light casement window as on the main elevation on the second floor, and similarly detailed, multi-light French doors on the first floor. The third floor of the main volume and mansard addition are lit by single windows not fully visible from the public right-of way. A shed-roofed dormer in the side elevation of the rear el, clad in German siding, is not fully visible from the public right-of-way.

The rear, northwest elevation is asymmetrically fenestrated. Multi-light, triple casement windows matching those on the southeast elevation light the 1907 addition. The central portion of the building is light by a combination of 6/6, 4/4, and a 6-light casement window. The rear entrance volume includes a single, 1/1 window with replaced sash adjacent to a door that does not appear to be historic.

Carriage House/Garage

The 1898, 1 ½-story, gable-roofed, stucco-clad carriage house, located in the northwest corner of the property, includes a replaced roll-up door on the northeast elevation (Photo 8). A weathered, gable-roofed metal shed sits adjacent to the garage.

Integrity

101 W. Gravers Lane retains the historic integrity required to convey its significance as an important example of the smaller houses of Chestnut Hill, an important counterpart to the larger mansions built in the period after the railroad first came to this part of the city. It retains integrity of location, having not been moved. It also retains the integrity of its historic, 1867-8 design, which is clearly legible on its main front and side elevations facing the street fronts of West Gravers Lane and Shawnee Street. The historic addition of 1907 also retains integrity of design, and remains legible. The property retains integrity of setting, which reflects construction that dates from the period of the house's own construction into the early nineteenth century, and is of a similar scale and of similar or complementary masonry materials. 101 W. Gravers retains integrity of materials and workmanship through not only its surviving form but such key details as its historic windows and shutters throughout.

7. Statement of Significance

Overview History of the Property

Historic documents indicate that the 101 W. Gravers Lane Property was first developed as the site of the Union Chapel, an important, non-denominational chapel established in 1822 for "the use of all evangelical denominations" in Chestnut Hill when it was still relatively sparsely populated.[1] At the time of its construction it was the only house of worship in this portion of the city, and was used by turns by Presbyterians, Baptists, and others. The building was described at the end of the nineteenth century as "a very Bethel to many, where God had met them, and where they had learned the blessedness of the forgiveness of sings, and adoption as children of God."[2] At the time of its construction, Shawnee Street had not been cut through, and Gravers Lane was generally known as Union Street in honor of the chapel.

There is apparently little record of the chapel, other than the fact that it was constructed with funds provided by "Philadelphia Presbyterians," that it was "capable of seating one hundred and fifty people,"[3] that it stood at what was to become the intersection of West Gravers and Shawnee Street (known as 27th Street in the late nineteenth century), and that it was removed when 27th Street was cut through prior to the construction of the present house. Historic maps (Map 1) show both the chapel and the associated burying ground, which stood further to the west.

Lewis Headman, a stonemason who is likely to have been employed in the area constructing some of the many similar houses and larger ones for wealthier Philadelphians who were beginning to come to Chestnut Hill as a summer resort and fashionable railroad suburb, constructed the main portion of the house in 1867-8.[4] In 1889, a building permit was issued for the construction of a 16' x 25' carriage house on the lot. No contractor or construction cost is identified.[5] The next major change to the property occurred in 1907, when a building permit was issued for the construction of a 2-story addition to the main volume of the home, at a cost of $1,800. This addition is located on the southwest side of the building and was built by M.S. Oberholtzer.[6] In 1911, a building permit for a second-story veranda was issued. The veranda was described as 8' x 8' and cost $200, built by M. S. Oberholtzer. The location of this veranda is unknown. In 1924, M.S. Olberholtzer added a third-story mansard to the rear of the house at a cost of $1,000.[7] There have been no further alterations to the exterior of the building since

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[1] Robert Melville Hunsicker, *The Chestnut Hill Baptist Church: Glimpses of Sixty-three Years* (Philadelphia: Commercial Publishing and Printing Company, 1898), p. 15.
[2] Hunsicker, pp. 32; 34.
[3] Samuel F. Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern Germantown* (Philadelphia: P. W. Ziegler & Co., 1889), p. 434.
[4] Inventory, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Chestnut Hill National Historic District.
[5] Permit number 1889 #3172.
[6] Permit number 1907 #5583.
[7] Permit number 1924 #11575.

1924. The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing property in the Chestnut Hill Historic District in 1985.

101 W. Gravers Lane meets Criteria for Designation c, h, i, and j as identified in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code. The property:

(c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
(h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
(i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; and
(j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

The dwelling located at 101 West Gravers Lane in the Chestnut Hill area of Philadelphia is a significant architectural and historical contribution to its neighborhood. It meets the eligibility for the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as follows:

Criterion (c): Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; and

Criterion (j): Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

When this house was constructed in 1867-68 by owner and mason Lewis Headman, it and was one of the first dwellings on the West 100 block of Gravers Lane (Maps 2 and 3). In the period in which it was constructed, Chestnut Hill was developing as a fashionable "suburb in the city" after the completion of the Chestnut Hill Railroad in 1854.[8] Development in this period was spurred by Philadelphia lawyer Samuel Austin, who purchased land near the railroad terminus at what is now the Chestnut Hill East station. Key to these developments for large suburban residences was the architect James C. Sidney, who designed a number of houses along Chestnut Hill Avenue, Summit Street, and Norwood Avenue in this period (Figure 2) with his partner Frederick C. Merry. Sidney, along with his previous business partner James P. W. Neff, constructed the Chestnut Hill railroad.[9]

Prior to the arrival of the railroad, and as the history of the Union Chapel suggests, Chestnut Hill had been an area characterized by a relatively small crossroads village centered around the intersection of Bethlehem Pike and Germantown Avenue, since both of these roads connected more densely developed areas to the south of Chestnut Hill and settlements in what is now Montgomery County. Development in Chestnut Hill also consisted of relatively sparsely built, single buildings along the spine of Germantown Avenue, the main road of the German

[8] David Contosta, *Suburb in the City* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992), p. 51.
[9] Contosta, p. 51.

Township, with farms to the southwest and northeast of Germantown Avenue accessed by a small number of perpendicular roads that would later become integrated into the city's street system, such as Gravers Lane.

With the arrival of the railroad, the community of Chestnut Hill grew not just in larger, elite residences, but in the residences, institutions, and commercials buildings of those that earned their living in various ways from those who inhabited these larger dwellings. This less wealthy part of the growing Chestnut Hill community was essential to the cultural, economic, and social makeup of this portion of the city.

Stonemason Lewis Headman represents this "other" component of the Chestnut Hill community in the period between the establishment of the railroad and the time when the second railroad line was completed in 1883 to what is now the Chestnut Hill West station. The "Wissahickon Heights" development on the western side of Germantown Avenue engendered by this second railroad line under the direction of Henry Howard Houston and his successors, marked another period of considerable expansion.[10]

When stonemason Lewis Headman purchased the land on which he built his house from Philadelphia attorney and developer Samuel H. Austin in 1867, Headman was part of a community of artisans, shopkeepers, and skilled craftsmen that was growing, with houses nearby on Gravers Lane, East Evergreen Avenue, Millman Street, and Highland Avenue within the first 2 blocks of Germantown Avenue.[11] Like Headman's house, the residences of these members of the community are generally free-standing, masonry, and stuccoed, and are built on a center-hall or center-stair plan, have three stories, and are usually gable-roofed. They continue to represent an important component of the built environment of this section of the city and the period of its development. Their close relationship to the Sidney and Merry houses is clear from a comparison to the buildings designed by the architects (see Figure 3). Because of the lack of documentation from this period, it is unlikely that a direct connection between Headman and these Samuel Austin houses could be established, but the notion that he would have worked on one or more of these buildings is entirely plausible, as well as on other houses for those of his economic class.

These houses, in a simplified Gothic Revival style, represent an era of design for middle-class suburban houses. The Headman house is a well-preserved example of a vernacular interpretation of an architect-designed dwelling as well as the record of the material success and aspirations for a suburban house on the part of artisans in the portion of the city in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Its historic additions, which have not adversely affected the legibility of the original construction, harmonize with it and its original scale, enhancing the cottage feeling in materials and scale, without detracting from the 1867-8 fabric.

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[10] On the Wissahickon Heights development, see Contosta, Chapter 3.
[11] Contosta notes that in 1855, this community includes roughly 100 citizens. Contosta, p. 27.

Criterion (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;

101 W. Gravers occupies a key location in the Chestnut Hill landscape. As a large corner lot property it represents the suburban ideal as it was reified for the artisan class of Chestnut Hill. The house's prominent position at this corner allows it to form an anchor in its surroundings, a stalwart of its block that is allied with the other early houses around it. It vividly communicates the architectural diversity, architectural quality, and relationship both to green space and public, shared streetscape that characterize Chestnut Hill.

The house serves as a visual landmark for the neighborhood. It stands out from its surroundings with its larger lot, unique architecture, and dense foliage. As one of the oldest houses on the block it serves as liminal point in the neighborhood, a pivot between larger houses and lots to its west and the double- and triple-residences in immediately surrounding blocks. It offers visitors and neighbors alike a crucial sense of place and a sense of community character.

Criterion (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history;

As noted above, the Headman House property was the location of the former Union Chapel, the earliest house of worship in this section of the city. As also noted, its precise location is unknown other than the fact that it stood in roughly the same location, and little is also known about its configuration. The lack of specific record about this important early chapel and undetermined nature of its precise location means that this property is likely to yield information about this important part of the development and culture of this portion of the city.

8. Major Bibliographical References

Bromley, George W., and Walter S. Bromley. *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia: Vol. 7, 22nd Ward* Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley & Co., 1889.

_____. *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia Complete in One Volume.* Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1895.

_____. *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia Complete in One Volume.* Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1901.

_____. *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia Complete in One Volume*. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1910.

Contosta, David. *Suburb in the City.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992.

Hopkins, G. M. *City Atlas of Philadelphia, Vol. 1, 22nd Ward*. Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins, 1876.

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Keels, Thomas H. *Philadelphia Graveyards and Cemeteries*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2003.

Moak, Jefferson. National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Chestnut Hill National Historic District. 1985.

Sanborn Map Company. *Insurance Maps of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, including Chestnut Hill and Mount Airy.* Vol. 21. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1925.

Sidney, James C. *American Cottage & Villa Architecture: A Series of Views and Plans of Residences Actually Built ... with Hints on Landscape Gardening ...* New York: Appleton, 1850.

Smedley, *Samuel. Atlas of the City of Philadelphia.* Section 20. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott &, 1862.

"Vacating Old Cemetery." (Philadelphia), 1917. Campbell Collection, V. 36, p. 182. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Photo 1: 101 W. Gravers Lane, looking northwest at the northeast, end elevation of the building, from the intersection of West Gravers Lane and Shawnee Street

Photo 2: 101 W. Gravers, southeast elevation of main block, looking northwest from Gravers Lane.

Photo 3: 101 W. Gravers Lane, rear (northwest) elevation, showing historic rear el at left and 1924 rear addition at right.

Photo 4: 101 W. Gravers, looking north from Gravers Lane at southeast elevation, with original block at right and 1907 addition at left.

Photo 5: 101 W. Gravers, looking southwest from Shawnee Street at the northwest elevation, showing, from left to right: rear el, 1924 addition, 1907 side addition.

Photo 6: Chestnut Hill Firehouse, detail, southeast elevation, looking north, showing entry door details.

Photo 7: 101 2. Gravers Lane, northeast elevation, detail, looking west.

Photo 8: Carriage House/Garage, 101 W. Gravers Lane, looking southwest from Shawnee Street.

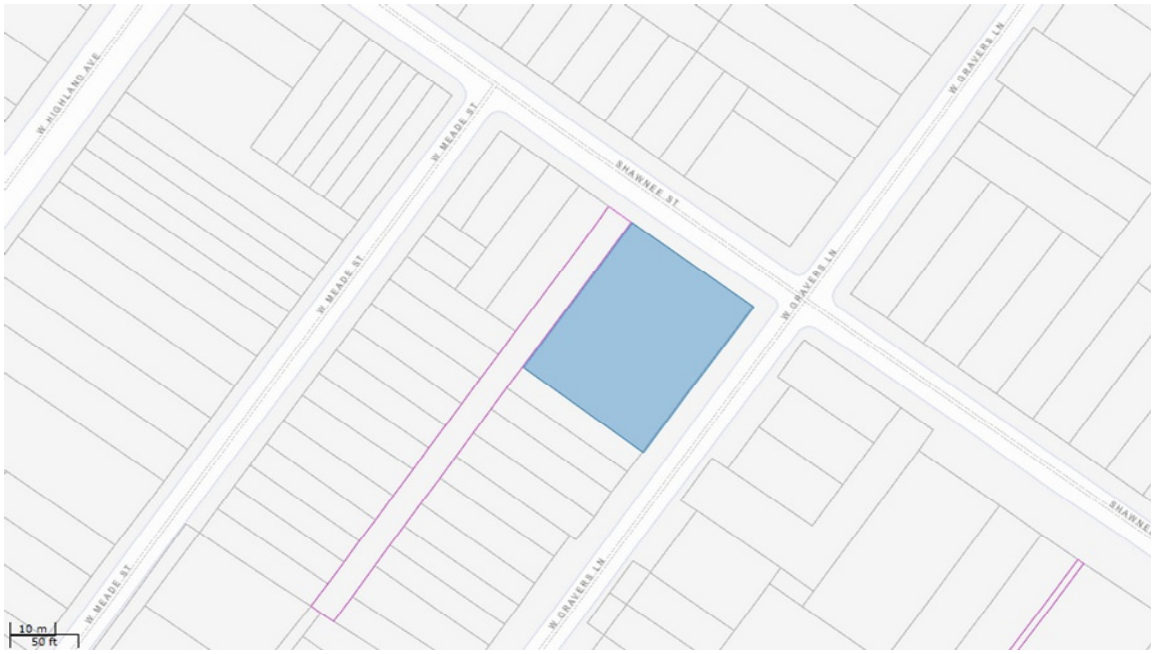

Figure 1: 101 W. Gravers Lane, plot boundaries

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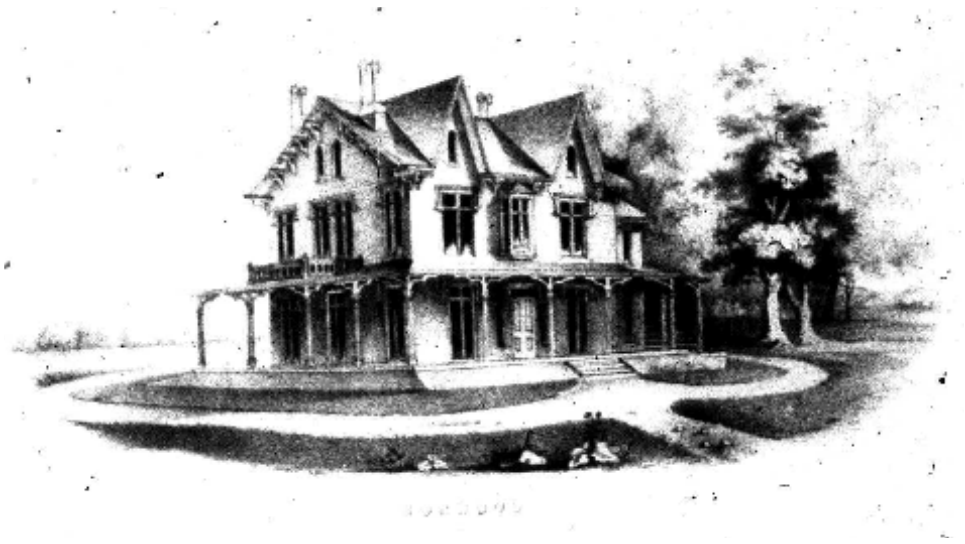
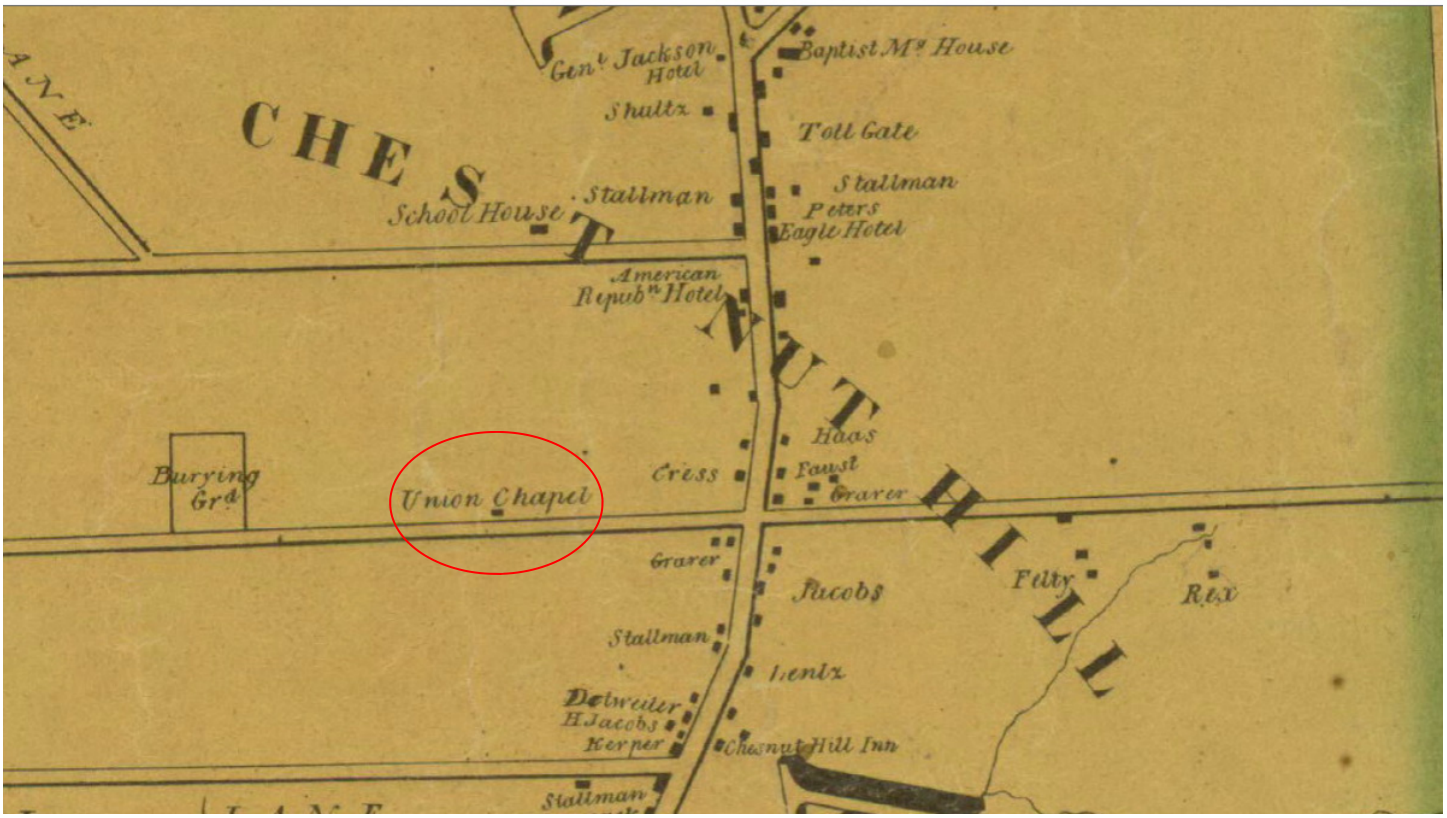


Figure 2: A plate from J. C. Sidney's *American Cottage & Villa Architecture, Residences Actually Built*, ca. 1850.

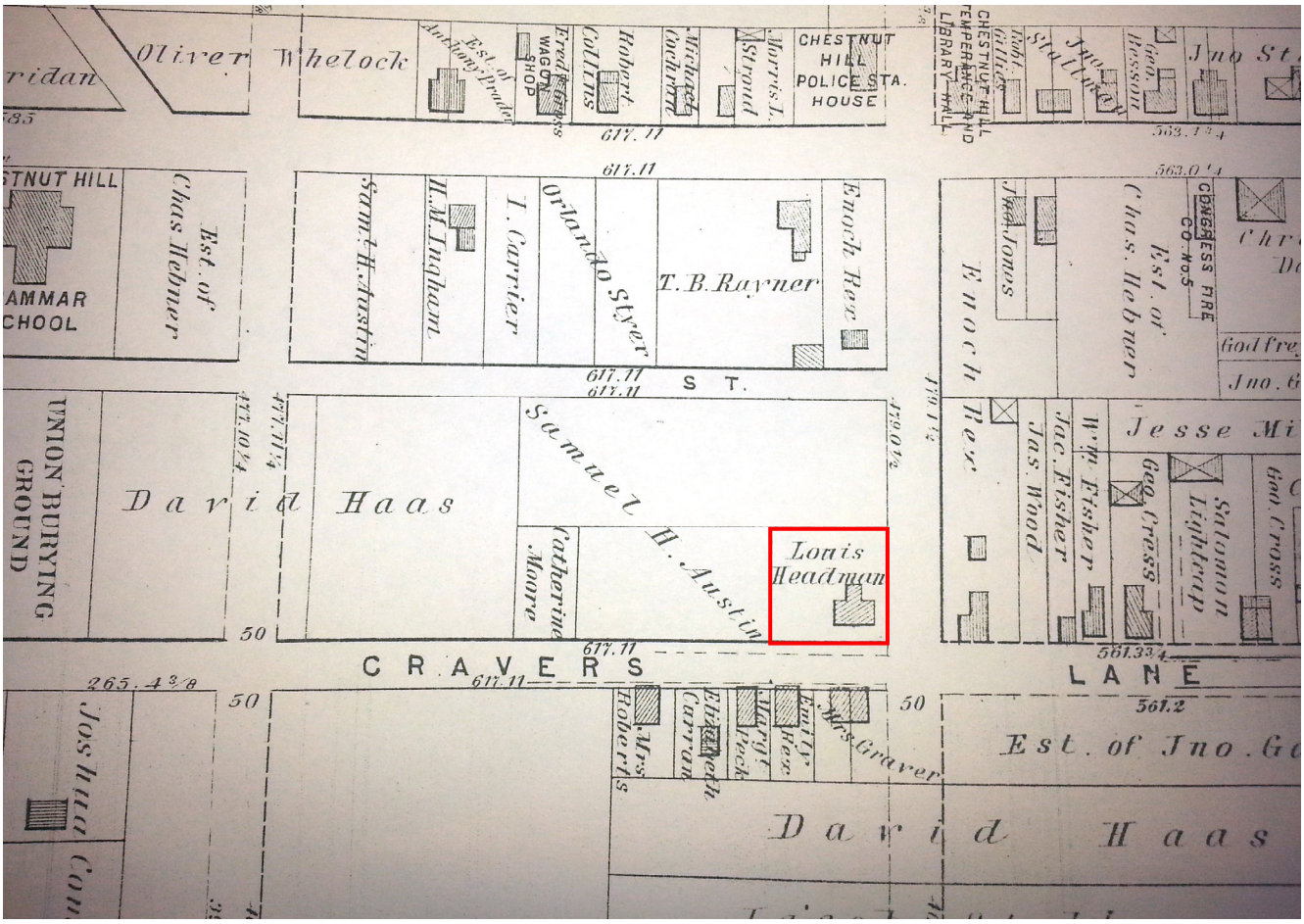
Figure 3: 18 E. Chestnut Hill Avenue, attributed to Sidney and Merry, built for Samuel H. Austin, 1863-4. Collection the Chestnut Hill Historical Society.

Figure 4: Undated photograph, 101 W. Gravers Lane, view from southeast, looking northwest. Collection the Chestnut Hill Historical Society.

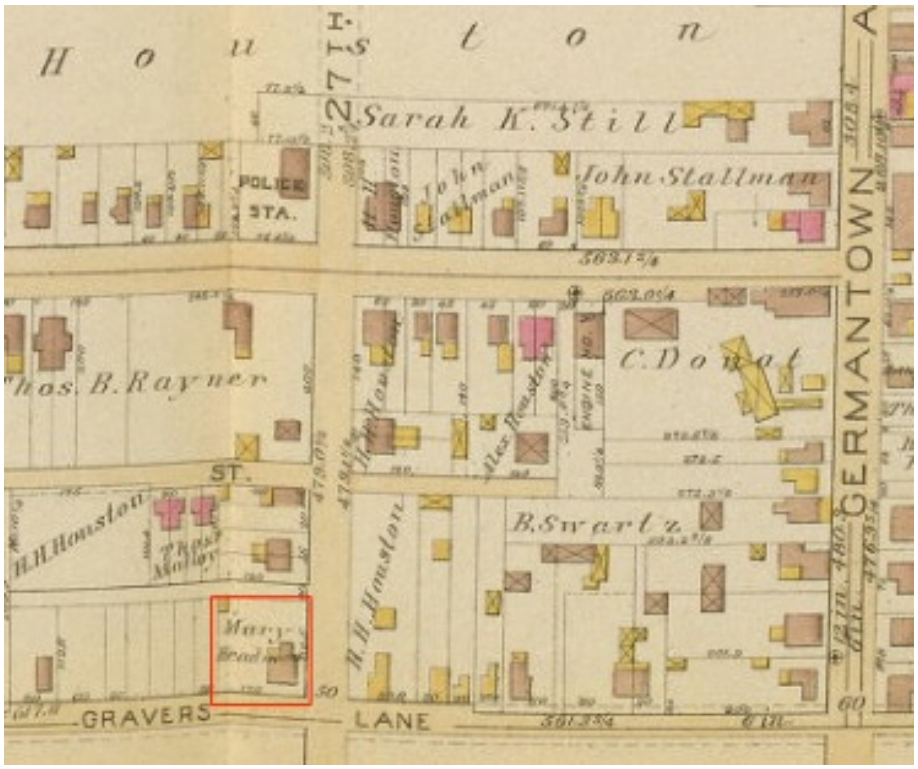


Map 1: Detail, *Map of the Township of Germantown*, 1848. Collection Germantown Historical Society. Source: philageohistory.org

Map 2: Detail, Samuel Smedley's 1862 *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*, Section 20, showing sparse development in Chestnut Hill in the area around 101 W. Gravers at this date. Source: philageohistory.org



Map 3: Detail, G.M. Hopkins' 1876 *City Atlas of Philadelphia*, 22nd Ward, Vol. 1, Plate 3. Source: philageohistory.org



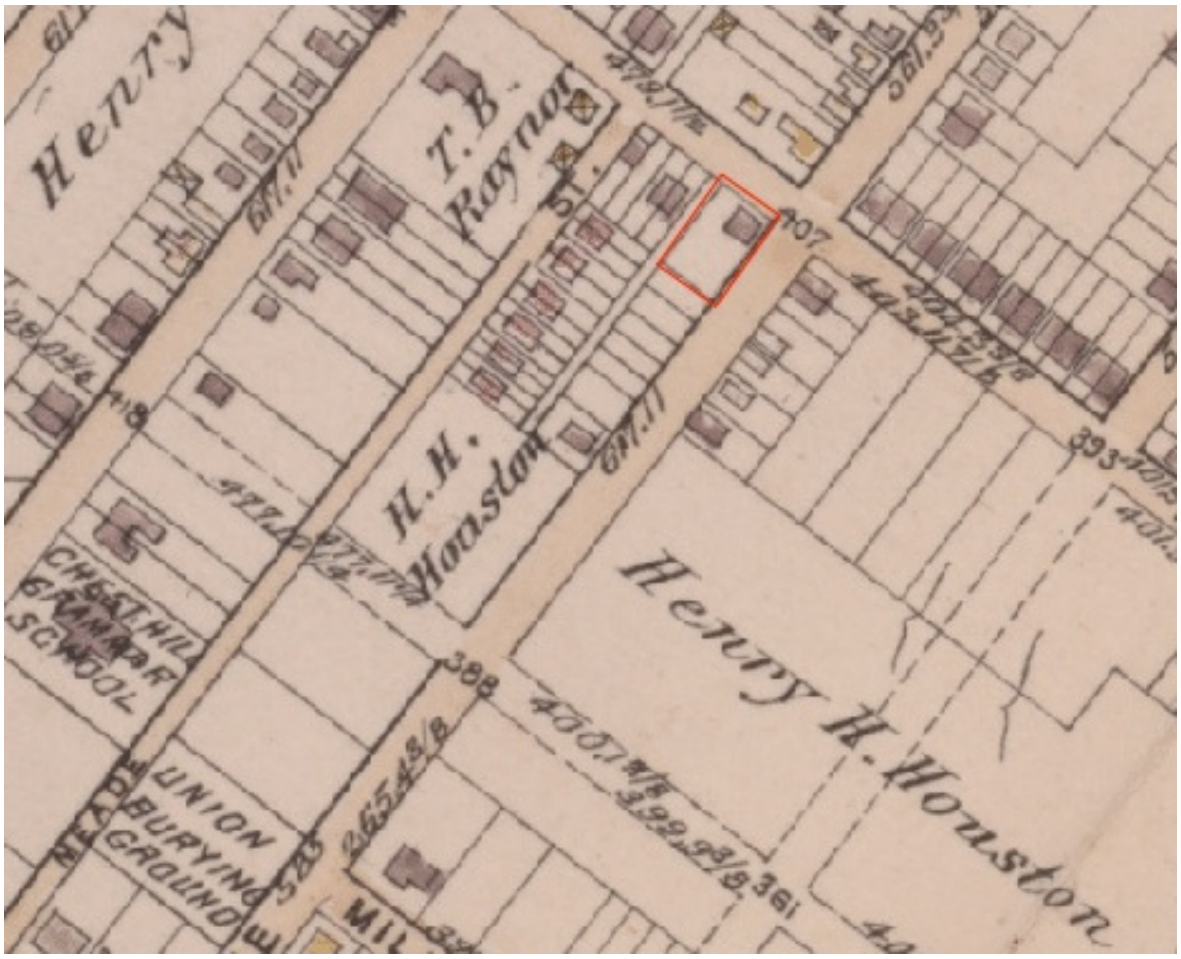
Map 4: Detail, George W. and Walter S. Bromley's 1889 *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, 22nd Ward*, Vol. 7, Plate 19.

This map shows the increased development that has taken place in the previous 13 years.

Lewis Headman passed away in 1887 and willed the property to his wife, Mary.

The detail of the parcel shows the placement of the one-and a half story brick stable that was added in 1889.

Source: philageohistory.org

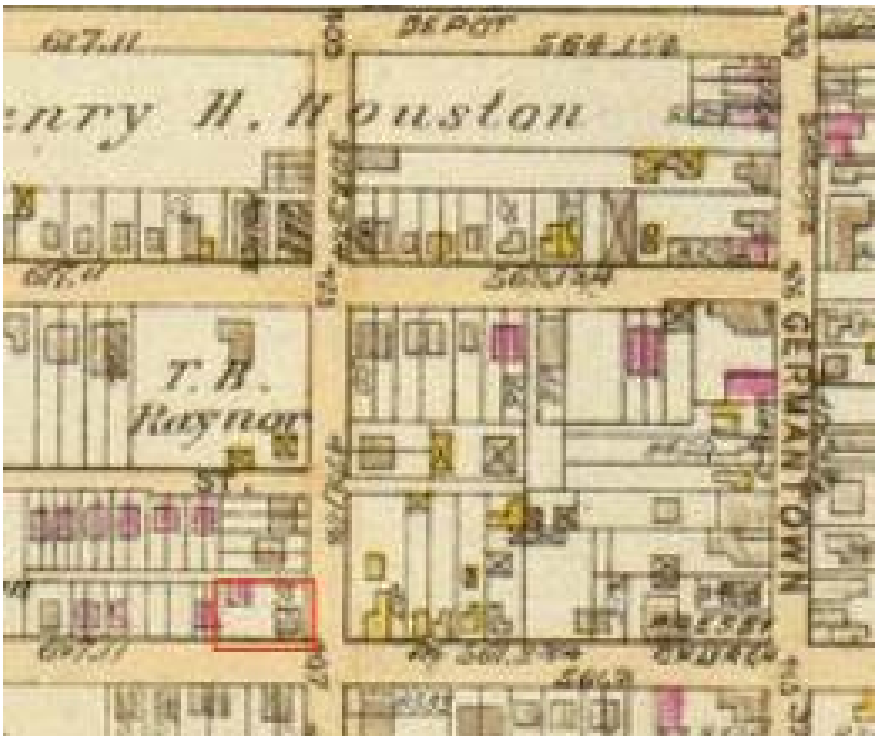


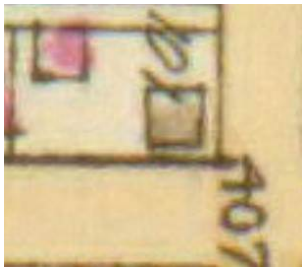
Map 5: Detail, George W. and Walter S. Bromley's 1895 *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*, Plate 35.

Only six years after the previous map, this shows growing development of nearby double houses after the introduction of a second train line by Henry Houston. The stable is not shown in this image, but that is likely an error.

Shown in this map is the Union Burying Ground, which was located on west of the property of interest in this nomination. The cemetery was opened in 1828 [Keels, Thomas H. *Philadelphia Graveyards and Cemeteries*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2003. Print. p. 72.]. The property had become neglected, and in 1917 Dr. George Woodward paid for the removal and relocation of the nearly 300 buried at a cost of about $6,000. The remains were moved to Arlington Cemetery in Upper Darby. After the removal of the bodies, Woodward gained clear title to the property ["Vacating Old Cemetery." [Philadelphia] 1917: n. pag. Print. Campbell Collection, V. 36, p. 182, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.]

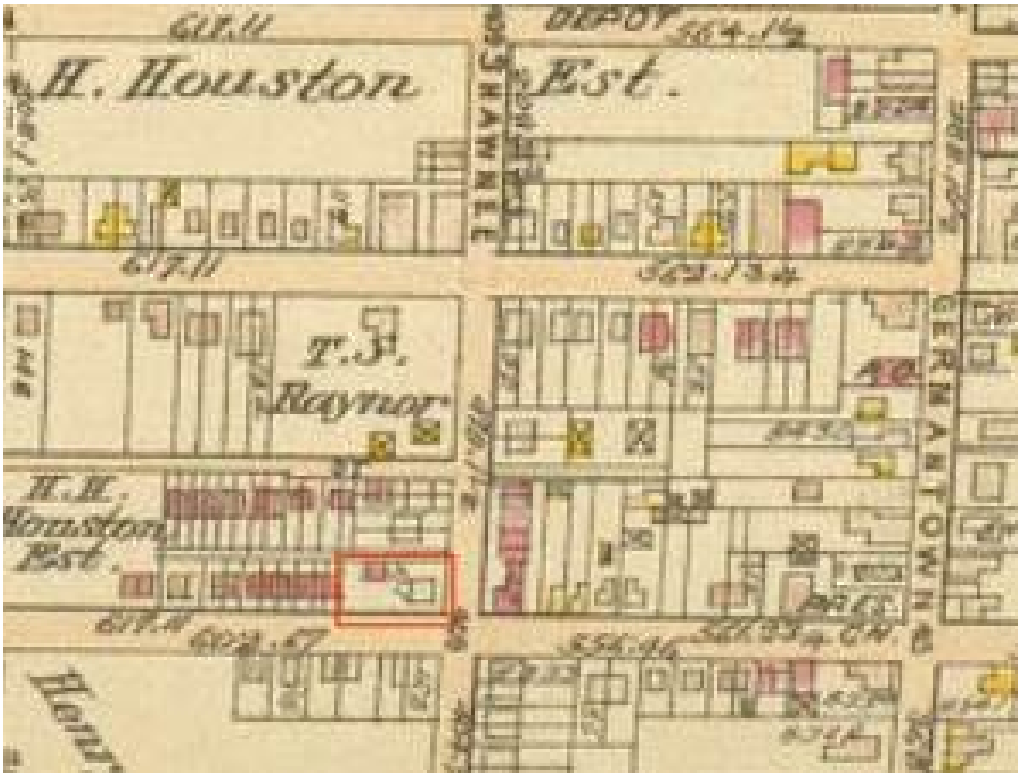
Source: philageohistory.org





Map 6: Detail, George W. and Walter S. Bromley's 1901 *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*, Plate 35.

Further development of twins is shown in this map. The stable is included again on the property of interest. Source: philageohistory.org



Map 7: Detail, George W. and Walter S. Bromley's 1910 *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*, Plate 35

Significant development in Chestnut Hill is now evident. The southwestwardly adjacent parcels are now filled with twins. Source: philageohistory.org