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June 6, 2016

Via Hand Delivery and E-Mail

Jonathan E. Farnham Ph. D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
Room 576 City Hall
Philadelphia PA 19107

Re: 81-95 Fairmount Avenue (the "Property")

Dear Jon:

We represent VMDT Partnership, the owner of the Property. As you know, for approximately an entire calendar year, the Property has been the subject of multiple nominations to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, and the nominators recently submitted a third version of the nomination that attempts to address the shortcomings of the first two.

The Committee on Historic Designation acknowledged that the first two nominations were insufficient to support designation. The nominators have now tried to pivot away from the critical flaws of the first two nominations – the building's severe loss of historic integrity and the lack of cultural significance connected with the brief tenure of the Friends mission – by focusing on what they claim is a "sensitive Colonial Revival renovation" of the building by a warehouse proprietor in the 1920s.

In reality, as described in the enclosed supplemental report from CivicVisions, the 1920s alterations destroyed the original character of the building – a series of Federal style rowhomes – and superimposed a pastiche of architectural styles that simply cannot be considered an authentic Colonial Revival treatment or, in any way, a restoration to the Federal style. The nominators are trying to fit a square peg in a round hole – no matter how many nominations they submit, the building's history cannot be repackaged such that the drastically altered building fabric is worthy of designation.

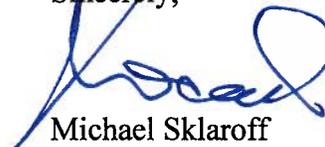
We respectfully request that the Committee on Historic Designation not recommend designation of the Property, for the reasons outlined below and further explained in the enclosed CivicVisions reports and our previous letter to the Historical Commission.

Jonathan E. Farnham Ph. D.
June 6, 2016
Page 2

1. The character-defining features of historic fabric have been lost over the years. The remaining massing does not support designation.
2. The historical context of the surrounding area has almost entirely disappeared so that there is no district to which the Property can conceivably "contribute."
3. The Friends Mission, while part of the larger story of the contribution of Quakers to our city, does not in itself support designation. No extant historic fabric represents the twenty-year period when a portion of the Property was used for the mission, and there are better examples of buildings where the mission was active in the City's inventory, such as Robert Venturi's iconic "Guild House."
4. The warehouse company is of course part of the city's history, but is not significant. The Property was a minor component of a relatively unremarkable, no-longer-extant warehouse complex. The repurposing of the building for office use eliminated the building's original Federal rowhome character by superimposing a doorway treatment of disparate architectural styles, which cannot fairly be classified as a "sensitive Colonial Revival renovation." Finally, the life of warehouseman Thomas Sullivan is no more significant than the lives of hundreds of other building owners in Philadelphia.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that the Committee on Historic Designation not recommend designation of the Property at its June 15, 2016 meeting.

Sincerely,



Michael Sklaroff

MS/djh
Enclosure

**Insufficiency of Proposed Historic Designation of 81-95 Fairmount Avenue
Supplemental Report, June 6, 2016**

Prepared for:
Piazza Management Company
401 South Schuylkill Avenue
Norristown, PA 19403

by:
George E. Thomas, Ph.D.
CivicVisions LP

Insufficiency of Proposed Historic Designation of 81-95 Fairmount Avenue

Supplemental Report, June 6, 2016

Prepared by George E. Thomas, Ph.D., CivicVisions LP

Introduction

This report supplements previous reports of March 4, 2016 and March 31, 2016 regarding the nominations for historic designation of 81-95 Fairmount Avenue (the “Property”), focusing on the most recent version of the nomination, dated April 21, 2016. We briefly review our analysis of the previous two versions of the nomination before elaborating on the shortcomings of the most recent nomination. We conclude that none of the nominations justifies the designation of the Property, due to the building’s lack of physical integrity and the absence of social significance associated with any of the proposed periods of significance.

First Nomination (April 7, 2015)

The first nomination argued that the building at the Property represented a rare surviving example of a particular building type, the rowhouse block, from the period 1825-1860. In our report of March 4, 2016, we explained that this nomination failed to demonstrate the significance of the building because the nomination overlooked the removal of the vast majority of the building’s historic fabric from this period, due mainly to the reconfiguration of the row of homes with eight doors into a combined office space with two doors. Upon further examination, we have confirmed that even more of the building has been altered and replaced, leaving at most a third of the original Fairmount Street façade elements extant, as illustrated in the below diagrams.

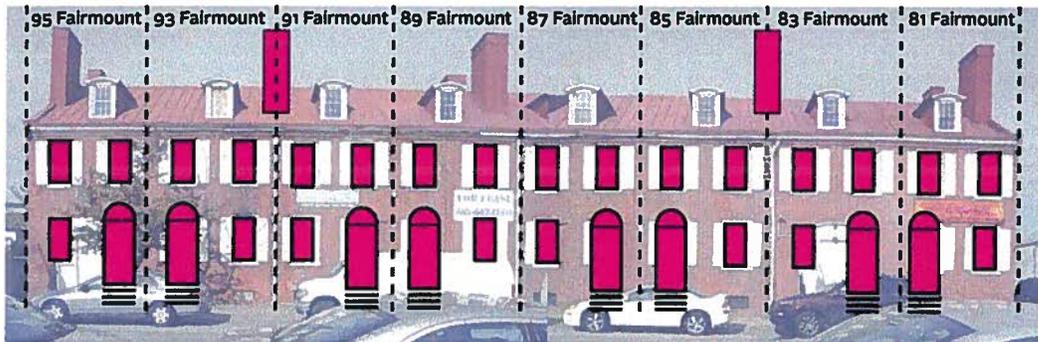
The present nomination asserts that despite the extensive alterations and removals, the building’s massing is sufficient to support a nomination.

The National Park Service’s National Register Bulletin #15 clearly states that a “property is not eligible . . . if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style.” The Bulletin further states under Criterion C that a property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique *must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique*. The building fails on both counts because of the extent of removal of the critical features of the façade.

With so much historic fabric gone – particularly those special features that define the original townhomes – the Property does not merit individual designation as a representative example of an architectural type.



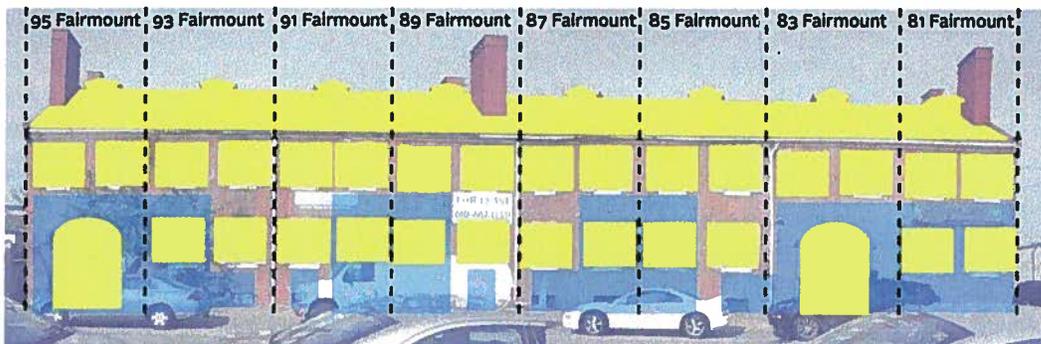
Existing Fairmount Elevation



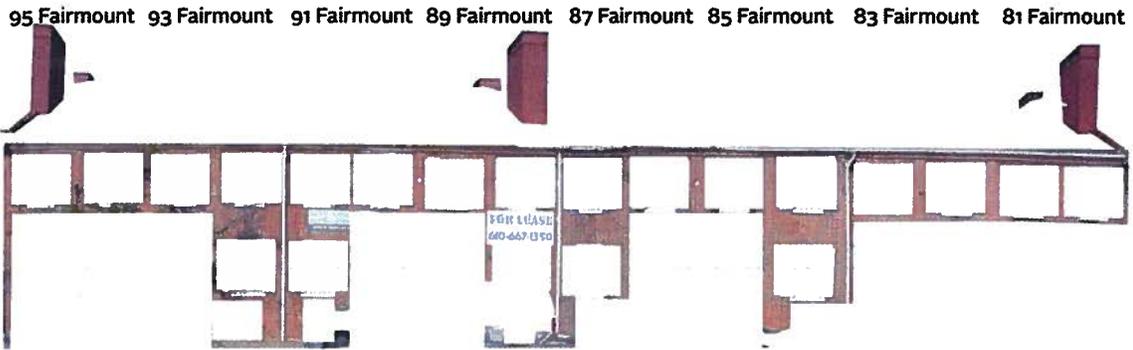
Original Fairmount Elevation: 8 rowhouses each with entrance door; party walls, three shared chimneys and 2 end chimneys



Existing Fairmount Elevation



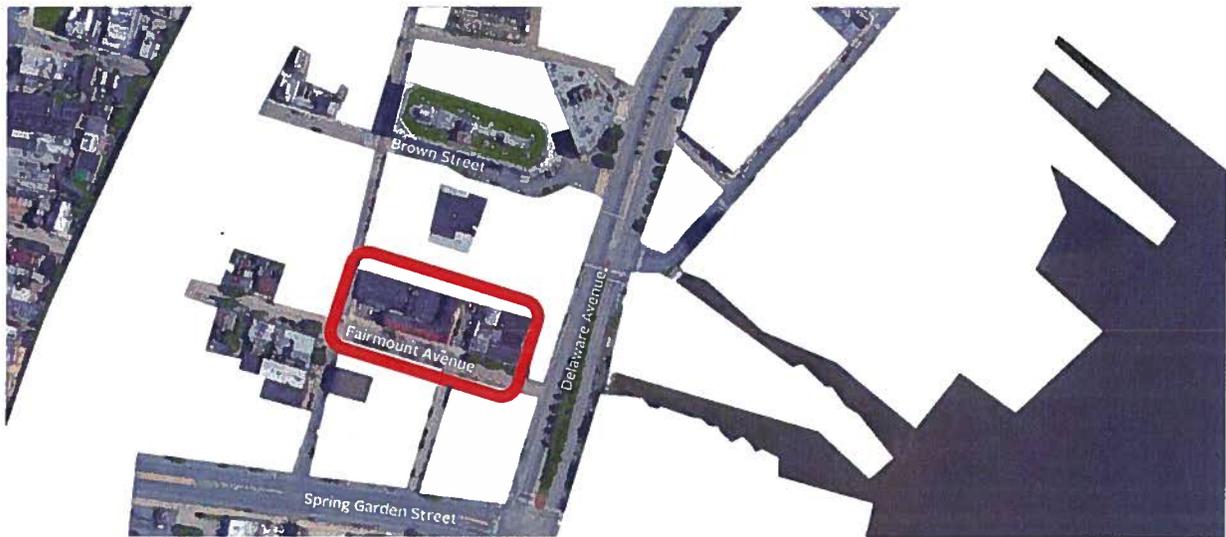
Original Fairmount Elevation non-historic materials: window units, shutters, roof, dormers (shown in yellow); new brick (shown in blue).



Original Fairmount Elevation remaining historic materials

The present state of the building shows original materials on less than a third of the Fairmount Avenue façade; the end elevations are similarly altered with concrete parging on one façade and windows relocated and replaced.

In addition, as discussed in our previous reports, nearly all of the historic building context surrounding the building has been removed.



2016: The nearly total demolition of the neighborhood around 81-95 Fairmount Avenue: the site outlined in red.

Second Nomination (February 11, 2016)

The second nomination argued that although the building had lost portions of its historic fabric, the building warrants designation for its social significance as the former home of a Quaker neighborhood guild, for the period from 1879-1899. In our report of March 31, 2016, we explained that (a) the guild use only occupied a small portion of the building for a 20 year period, (b) virtually no historic fabric from this period remains intact, and (c) other buildings in Philadelphia better represent the guild program and its goals of social betterment.

There were, in fact, hundreds of similar charitable organizations by 1880.¹ The Quakers had numerous earlier guilds, and Methodists, with their focus on workingmen's issues, had opened the Bedford Street Mission on what is now Kater Street in the 1850s. Other sites better represent the Friends' work in the community. The Friend's Mission was renamed in 1899 when the group moved to another house at 151 Fairmount Avenue. Though altered, that building survives, as does the organization's present home at 701 N. 8th Street, where the Friends Neighborhood Guild has been located since the 1950s. This building is the group's longest serving site and better represents the Friends' activities in the community. The same group is also represented on the City Register by Guild House at 711-39 Spring Garden Street, designed by Venturi & Rauch and designated in 2004 at the 500th meeting of the Commission. The Bedford Street Mission on Kater Street and the Bethany Mission for Colored People on Brandywine Street would also be better candidates for City designation. The original Bethany Mission survives today as the Bethany Mission Gallery at 1521 Brandywine Street.

Given the almost total lack of historic fabric from the Friends' mission period and the numerous better examples of the guild movement throughout Philadelphia, the Property does not merit historic designation due to its brief association with the Friends. At its last meeting, the Committee on Historic Designation agreed that the second nomination was insufficient.

Third Nomination (April 21, 2016)

The third nomination reiterates the nominators' earlier arguments regarding historic fabric and the Friends' mission, but focuses on a different period of significance, from 1921-1967, connected with alterations made to the building by a warehouseman. This nomination claims that the building "still exhibits its original early Federal style characteristics despite a significant, but sensitive Colonial Revival renovation . . . [that] restored, reinforced and sometimes augmented the original Federal style qualities on the block of former houses." In addition, the nomination asserts that the Colonial Revival movement "was not necessarily attempting to 'get it right' in terms of perfect restoration, but rather to reflect a sense of authenticity and fondness for the past . . . The houses . . . were not perfectly restored . . . but were instead, carefully reworked by a sensitive designer to fit a new purpose but remain stylistically harmonious with the original design."

This argument fails for three reasons: (1) the alterations represent a perfunctory, vernacular pastiche of various architectural styles, and cannot accurately be characterized as a sensitive Colonial Revival adaptive use or restoration; (2) the alterations do not constitute a restoration or rehabilitation as those terms were understood in the 1920s and are grossly different than those recognized by the National Park Service; and (3) the social history of the building connected with the warehouseman is insignificant.

¹ Benjamin L. Hartley, Ph.D. D.D., "Philadelphia's 'Five Points,' Evangelism and Social Welfare at the Bedford Street Mission, (2009) <http://www.historicstgeorges.org/sites/default/files/1%20Phila's%205%20Pts%20Evangelism.pdf> For the Bethany Mission for Colored People see Martha Paxson Grundy, "The Bethany Mission for Colored People: Philadelphia Friends and a Sunday School Mission." *Quaker History* 90.1 (2001): 50-82. The history of the organization is briefly treated in Alyssa Ribeiro, "Friends Neighborhood Guild," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia* <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/friends-neighborhood-guild/> (accessed February 2016). See also the Temple Urban Archives Finding Aid for Friends Neighborhood Guild, <https://library.temple.edu/src/friends-neighborhood-guild> (accessed February 2016). See also John F. Powel, *A List of some of the Benevolent Institutions of the City of Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia: Henry B. Ashmead, 1859).

Vernacular, Not Colonial Revival, Re-Use

The 1920s alterations included removal of all of the original front doors, stoops, and much of the original brickwork; the replacement of the original roof structure; the rebuilding and redesign of the original dormers (from curved to triangular in shape); the removal of interior masonry party walls, fireplaces, and related chimneys; and the installation of two oversized doorways (replacing the eight original). The nomination makes the incongruous suggestion that the building could be restored to its *Federal* era appearance by a *Colonial Revival* style restoration. Colonial – meaning generally Georgian in scale and weightiness – is different than the delicacy of Federal style, influenced as it was by the slender proportions of Robert Adam and John Soane. While it is possible that the 1920s building owner may have proposed to renovate the building in a vaguely Colonial manner to celebrate the 1926 Sesquicentennial, there is no documentary or other evidence of this intention and the rehabilitation itself directly contradicts this goal. In fact, the 1920s alterations represent only a warehouse company's simple, practical desire to repurpose a row of townhomes for office use, not a unique, architecturally sensitive "restoration" to the building's original Federal style or a significant reimagining of the building's elements in the Colonial Revival style. Those altering the building in the 1920s had access to a wide variety of expertise and documentation concerning Colonial Revival techniques, but the alterations do not represent a serious attempt at the style.

The only elements of the alterations that might be considered "Colonial Revival" are the two new doorways, only one of which survives in its 1920s form. This doorway is an irregular, vernacular hodgepodge of architectural elements, not a serious Colonial Revival restoration or historically appropriate embellishment of the building's original Federal style. The doorway includes an oversized Colonial or Georgian eight-panel door, an oversized Colonial fanlight with basket handle arch, Victorian or Gothic Revival side lights with flat mullions, oversized Colonial mansion style marble steps, and wrought iron handrails (likely salvaged from another site) in a Federal or possibly Georgian style. These elements were common in the late Victorian era when Colonial revival elements were up-sized for 1890s mansions. Their appearance here suggests that the builder / engineer simply selected elements from a local supply yard.



Left: Detail, doorway 83 Fairmount showing similarity to late Victorian Colonialesque doors of Germantown house; right: early 19th century federal doorways at 117-119 Fairmount Avenue of the sort removed in 1922 from the row at 81-95 Fairmount Avenue (Google Earth)

Given that most of the original doorways were still in place when the 1920s renovation occurred, it is obvious that the work accomplished was not a restoration.² The critical element that makes clear the intended direction of the project is the surviving added door, described above in detail, in the façade of 83 Fairmount Avenue. The doorway is the type of assemblage of disparate elements that characterized the late 19th century style that might best be termed “Colonialesque.”³ From the evidence of the door it is clear that what was intended was neither Colonial Revival nor a restoration to the building’s original Federal period.

Character-Removing Alterations, Not Restoration or Rehabilitation

The 1920s alterations should not be considered a historic restoration or rehabilitation of the building. The National Park Service provides that:

- a restoration “depicts a property *at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.*” In this case, the alterations did not focus on a specific time period in the building’s past, instead creating a mishmash of unrelated

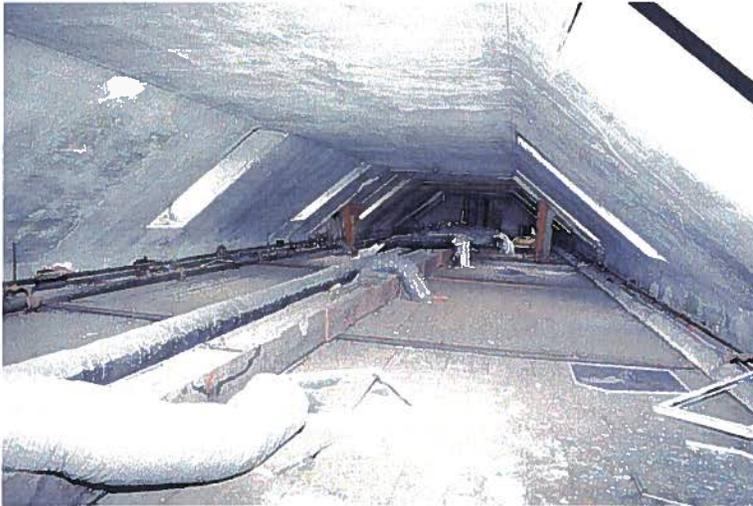
² By the end of the 19th century extensive restoration projects were being undertaken on the landmarks of the American Revolution and architects with claims to specific restoration skills had emerged. The topic was of sufficient interest for the local T-Square Club to maintain a “standing committee on Preservation of Historic Monuments” whose members were listed in the *Journal of the T-Square Club*. This period also included intense antiquarian interest in the survival of Revolution-era buildings with numerous books on regional history such as John T. Faris’s *Old Roads out of Philadelphia* (1917, which passed through multiple printings), and Joseph Patterson Sims and Charles Willing published *Old Philadelphia Colonial Details* (New York, Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1914) providing a wealth of details that were available to serious designers. Frank Cousins and Phil M. Riley assembled a host of colonial details for their exacting recreation in *Colonial Architecture of Philadelphia* (1920). These publications form the basis for ever more scholarly and increasingly careful restoration practices that had begun in the 1870s with the Centennial Exposition.

³An example of the of the shelf faux colonial revival is the house in Germantown that was featured in an article in the *New York Times* Virginia McGuire, “She Used her Gut Instincts,” *New York Times* (August 14, 2013). http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2013/08/15/greathomesanddestinations/20130815-LOCATION.html?_r=1 (Accessed May 2016)

features and new elements that differed wildly in scale and detail from the original character.

- a rehabilitation “acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses *while retaining the property’s historic character.*” The work described cannot be considered a rehabilitation because they did not retain the Property’s historically Federal character, instead inserting new architectural styles that were not functionally related to the building’s new use.

According to the nomination (p. 21), the work proposed was “...take out partitions, reinforce joists with I-beams and brick up openings, fix plaster and general repairs.” The following page reported again on the “extensive” work, the “removal of most of the interior partitions” (which included the party walls that separated the original residential uses which necessitated reconstruction of all of the interior structure and the roof), and continued by recounting the removal of original fabric and the substitution of Colonial details for Federal style elements. The summary of the building permit issued for the renovation makes it clear that restoration was not intended.



The Attic, looking east – total removal of party walls necessitated rebuilding of entire roof framing and dormers

Had the owner or the builder and the engineer taken seriously the character of the building, the form of the individual houses front doors could have been retained and adapted as windows; shutters could have better matched the original paneled shutters instead of the off-the-shelf louvered shutters selected; and dormers could have matched the original in shape and detail. Every aspect of the project makes it clear that characterizing this as a “restoration” minimizes the extent of the removal of historic fabric and distorts the character of what was in fact achieved. Clearly, the work was an economical means to create a separate office relatively near the center of the business’s activities.

Warehouseman History Insignificant

The final grounds upon which the building is now offered for significance is as the office for the Terminal Warehouse Company, on whose behalf the building was renovated. Maps of the city show that the Terminal Warehouse Company operating along the waterfront with most of their buildings along Front Street. It is certainly fair to say that the warehouseman Thomas D. Sullivan achieved a modicum of wealth, which is represented by his donation to Temple University for its Sullivan Hall, the campus library, designed by William Lee in 1934. Sullivan was the manager and perhaps founder of the Terminal Storage Company, a relative late comer to the storage and logistics business. The Terminal Commerce Building, on North Broad Street, claimed as part of the Sullivan empire, appears to have had no relation to Sullivan, being the project of the Reading Railroad Company. (See National Register Nomination, Frederick Richards, 1991, 1996.)

The Terminal Warehouse Company business was not a significant player in the development of the industry. It is not listed or discussed in the various trade magazines such as the *Proceedings of the 23rd-35th Annual Meetings of the American Warehousemen's Association*. Thomas Sullivan, described in the nomination as the agent of the Terminal Warehouse Company's growth, was merely listed as a "manager" for the business in the 1913 City Directory, with his main activity being the Valkone Dye and Finishing Works.⁴ There is a brief obituary for Sullivan in the *New York Times* on November 9, 1929, but very little else in any survey of the various biographical sources of the city. He does not appear in the various biographical dictionaries and his name is misspelled on many of the Temple references to the "Thomas B. Sullivan Library" (sic).

Additional claims are made in the present nomination that the Property reflects the industrial careers of various owners including Thomas Powers and J. Campbell Harris. Powers' contributions to the invention of modern sulfate of quinine that remained a proprietary drug of choice for the treatment of malaria is discussed at length. The nomination fails to note that none of this work took place at the Property, that the various Powers businesses related to this discovery were located elsewhere, and the business advertisements of the various Powers businesses depict the plants where the scientific and production activities occurred.⁵

Conclusion

None of the three nominations of the building establishes the building's significance as worthy of designation. In summary:

1. The building's physical fabric is so altered as to not have sufficient integrity to warrant designation. Massing in itself is not sufficient to support designation. In addition, the

⁴ *Boyd's Co-Partnership and Residence Directory* (1913), p. 1054.

⁵ "Four immense plants are operated by the present firm: That at Ninth and Parrish street: the original P. & W. laboratory; that at Falls c Schuylkill, where heavy chemicals are made; that a 17th and Fitzwater street, the Rosengarten establishment; and their quinine works at Thirty-fifth and Moore streets." Early 20th century business description: <http://www.bottlebooks.com/wholesale%20drugists/powers-weightman-rosengarten.html>.

historic context formerly surrounding the building has been largely removed making designation as a part of an historic district inappropriate.

2. The building is not particularly significant in the history of Philadelphia charitable organizations, including the Society of Friends. Other, better examples survive from before its adaptation; no fabric identifiable with the Friends use remains.
3. The 1920s alterations to the building cannot be characterized as a restoration or rehabilitation to the building's original Federal style, nor as an authentic Colonial Revival adaptation.
4. The building's owners' use of the building was not significant, and the owners were not important players in the history of Philadelphia. Thomas Sullivan is probably best remembered for his estate's donation to Temple University for its library; he was not a particular innovator in the warehouse business; and his career was not particularly exemplary.

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April 1, 2016

Via Hand Delivery

Jonathan E. Farnham Ph. D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
Room 576 City Hall
Philadelphia PA 19107

Re: 81-95 Fairmount Avenue

Dear Jon:

We represent VMDT Partnership (“Owner”), the owner of 81-95 Fairmount Avenue (the “Property”). As you know, the Property has been the subject of multiple nominations to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Oscar Beisert submitted a nomination approximately one year ago, on April 7, 2015; Philadelphia City Planning Commission staff subsequently elected to revise the nomination, which they re-submitted on February 11, 2016. At its March 17, 2016 meeting, the Committee on Historic Designation moved to recommend that the most recent nomination be tabled, revised, and returned to the Committee for reconsideration.

We submit this letter on behalf of the Owner to request that the Historical Commission vote against the nomination at its April 8, 2016 meeting, as opposed to giving the nominators a third try at justifying a nomination of the Property. For a year, the nominators have failed to demonstrate that the Property is worthy of designation. The shortcomings of the nomination were discussed in detail at the meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation meeting and thoroughly documented in the March 4, 2016 CivicVisions report (the “Report”) submitted on behalf of the Owner. As described in the Committee meeting minutes, Dr. Jeffery Cohen, acting chair, acknowledged that the Property has been “altered tremendously.” No amount of additional research or rewriting of the nomination will change that fact.

As described below, in the original Report, and in the attached supplemental CivicVisions report (the “Addendum”), alterations to the Property are extensive, including (a) removal of all eight of the original rowhouse doors and steps; (b) replacement of all 24 of

the original window sash of the front and 32 windows on the rear; (c) replacement of all of the sash of the eight dormers; (d) removal of four double chimneys; (e) insertion of two double-wide doors in a style decades removed from the original construction; (f) insertion of eight windows in place of original doors; and (g) replacement of nearly half of the main façade's original brickwork, resulting in the total loss of the building's historic identity as a row of eight individual houses. This overwhelming loss of historic fabric renders the Property completely inappropriate for designation as an individually significant historic resource. In particular:

- As noted at the Committee meeting, the Property does retain an overall massing similar to the original scale, along with a brick façade, such that given a passing glance, the building appears old and possibly historic. But a rectangular mass, uniform height, and replaced brick façade are not enough for individual designation. Applicable here and succinctly put in the National Park Service's National Register Bulletin #15, a "property is not eligible . . . if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style." With so much historic fabric gone – particularly those features that define the original townhomes – the Property does not merit individual designation.
- The Report reviews the building's loss of integrity in great detail, including an explanation of how the Property fails to meet the National Park Service's standards for the characteristics of integrity, and includes text, photographs and diagrams documenting the altered building fabric and the loss of historic fabric in the neighborhood.
- Although such an altered building that retains its original massing might be considered a *possible contributor* to a historic district, there is no historic district surrounding the Property. The surrounding area is characterized by a bus maintenance facility, parking lots, storage facilities, and other commercial uses. Furthermore, as discussed in the Addendum, most of the urban fabric around the building has been removed as part of the city's ongoing development. While the Commission has designated certain buildings as "contributing" to a district because of scale, here there is no district, and when it comes to the search for historic context, "there is no there there."
- As further discussed in the Addendum, the brief use of a portion of the Property as a Friends Mission does not bestow the Property with any special value that mitigates the building's significant loss of character-defining features. The guild house only occupied the east end of the row of eight original townhomes – hardly a rationale for designating the entire row. As explained in the Addendum, the portion of the Property used as a guild house has lost significant historic fabric – including the

Jonathan E. Farnham Ph. D.
April 1, 2016
Page 3

removal of the rowhome shop window and entry door and steps, the replacement of the majority of the historic brick, and the replacement of all windows – so that the building from the guild house period is no longer recognizable. While relics of historic fabric survive, none is characteristic of the twenty year period of guild house occupancy, and there are other, better (and one iconic!) examples of guild house history already designated in the city – not to mention other earlier mission buildings listed in the Addendum.

In conclusion, we ask the Commission to reject the nomination of the Property due to the significant alterations and the loss of the building's original townhouse character. To designate such a building as an individually significant historic resource would set a poor precedent and improperly dilute the standard for individually significant buildings in Philadelphia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Sklaroff

MS/djh
Enclosure

**Supplemental Information relating to the Philadelphia Historic Commission
Criteria for Designation Applied to 81 /95 Fairmount Avenue**

for:

*Piazza Management Company
401 South Schuylkill Avenue
Norristown, PA 19403*

by:

*George E. Thomas, Ph.D.
CivicVisions LP*

31 March 2016

Supplement: March 31, 2016

The building at 81 /95 Fairmount Avenue was nominated to the Philadelphia Register on the claim that it meets designation criteria a.), d.), h.), and j.). In the discussion by the designation committee on 17 March 2016 it was suggested that the building did not meet criterion h.) having to do with a unique location or an established and familiar visual feature on the grounds that its location is relatively ordinary. There was additional discussion that the building did not have sufficient integrity to meet criteria a.) as representing the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city; and further, because of significant losses and alterations to the architectural fabric, it was not a good representative of criterion d.) embodying distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style. Our previous report, issued on March 4, 2016, explained in detail why 81-95 Fairmount Avenue should not be designated as a historic resource, focusing on the building's extreme lack of physical integrity.

The designation committee suggested that the nomination be revised to make the case that it met criterion j.) as exemplifying the cultural political, economic, or social heritage of the community particularly for the use of a portion of the building as a Friends' Mission.

Social Heritage Context:

It is contended by the owner that the nominators' Criterion J argument fails for several reasons:

- It is claimed that the building is eligible for designation because of the occupancy at the eastern most units of the row by the Friend's Mission # 1, a community benevolent organization organized by the Religious Society of Friends in 1879 and occupying the building from 1880 until 1899.
- At the time when the Friends used the building, the east end previously had been altered as a shop, at one time serving as a saloon. The portion of the property used for the Mission has lost significant historic fabric -- including the removal of shop window, entry door and steps, the replacement of the majority of the historic brick, and the replacement of all windows so that the building from the Guild House period is no longer recognizable.
- Other sites better represent the Friends' work in the community. The Friend's Mission was renamed in 1899 when the group moved to another house at 151 Fairmount Avenue.¹ Though altered, that building survives, as does the organization's present home at 701 N. 8th Street where the Friends Neighborhood Guild has been located since the 1950s. There it has been a stabilizing force in the Urban Renewal Project of the East Poplar Neighborhood; it was also there that its organization was revised to equally incorporate African Americans into its community board after Black Panther sit-ins in the 1960s.

¹ The best summary history of the Friend's Neighborhood Guild is the introduction to the Finding Aid to the Friends Neighborhood Guild Records, Temple University Library, Special Collections. <http://library.temple.edu/src/friends-neighborhood-guild> (accessed April 2016). The change of name was mentioned in *The Friends Intelligencer & Journal* 56: 44 (November 4, 1899): 832. "The Committee in charge of Beach Street Mission Philadelphia are glad to be reliable to announce that the work unavoidably laid down during last year will be resumed on the 11th of this month and henceforth carried on under conditions and on a larger scale. A good sized house situated at 151 Fairmount avenue has been purchased for \$4,300, \$ 4,000 of which was furnished by an interested friend on a mortgage at 4 per cent. Some interior alterations were necessary as well as painting and papering throughout. The name Friends Neighborhood Guild has-been adopted to replace the familiar old one of Beach Street Mission since we are now no longer located on Beach Street and to many it has seemed desirable to substitute for the Mission one more word more clearly indicating the notion of helpfulness and mutual neighborly kindness."

- The presently designated Friends Neighborhood Guild at 701 N. 8th Street is the current and longest serving site and better represents the Friends' activities in the community.
- The same group is also represented on the City Register by Guild House at 711-39 Spring Garden Street, designed by Venturi & Rauch and designated in 2004.
- There were earlier and more significant Friend's missions.² Among the earliest was the Bethany Mission For Colored People, located on the 1500 block of Brandywine Street. Founded around 1854, by 1869 the organization had acquired a chapel fronting on Brandywine Street which remained the organization's home into the 1930s.³ The original Bethany Mission survives today as the Bethany Mission Gallery at 1521 Brandywine Street.
- Earlier, in 1853, the Methodist Church established the Bedford Street Mission on the 600 block of Kater (formerly Bedford) Street; rebuilt in the 19th century from its original clapboarded structure, the building survives at 619 Kater Street to the present.⁴
- While the Bethany Mission, with its great second floor room, spanned by a timber trussed ceiling survives, as the 1880 *City Mission Directory* makes clear, there were numerous other groups active across the city. These groups had their beginning with the Sunday School Movement that had reached Philadelphia in the 1790s.

Physical Context:

An alternative case may be made that Criterion J represents the urban context into which a building is set. 81-95 Fairmount Avenue fails in this regard as well. For more than half a century, the city and its planning agencies have been systematically supporting the redevelopment of this area. As a consequence of those acts by the city, there is so little of the urban fabric between Front Street and the Delaware River that a contextual argument is on its face a failure.

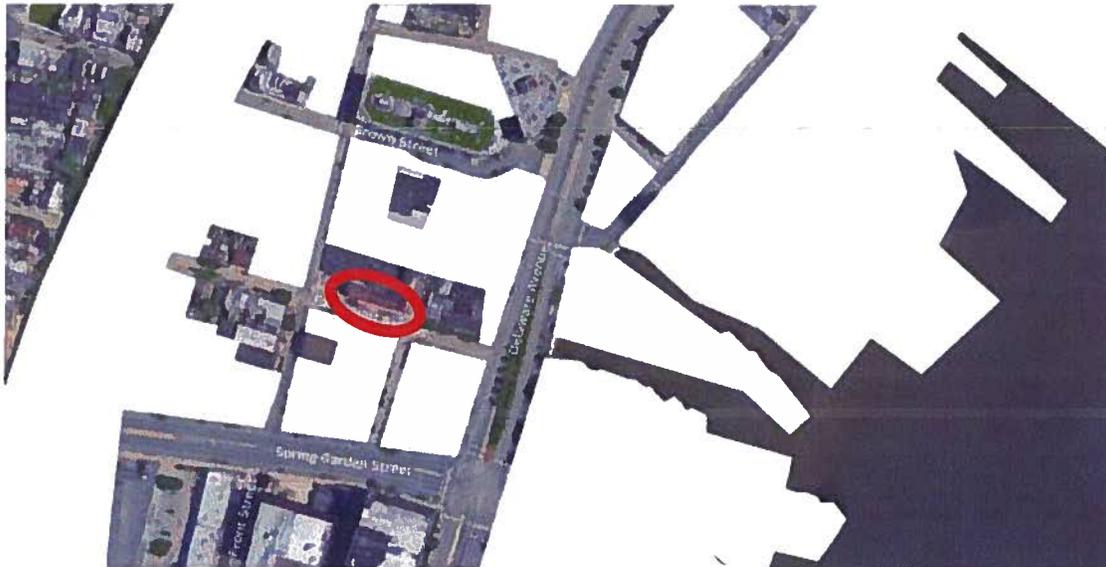
- An early twentieth century building that formed part of the industrial context, which stood directly across the street, has been demolished as recently as last year (pages 4 and 5) . Clearly the city's urban planners have intended a different, contemporary context since they began planning the district after World War II.
- This district was, in the early 20th century, composed of workforce housing and buildings for bulk industries, storage, and shipping-related businesses that were shifting to automobile-related industries. With the planning and later construction of I-95 to the west of Front Street beginning in the 1950s, essential elements of the community were removed beginning with the transportation link of the elevated line that once had a station at Front Street and Fairmount Avenue. With the demolition of the original Front Street alignment of the elevated line, the new line was incorporated into the construction of I-95 and the station was moved to Second Street and Spring Garden Street.
- The former work – residence district, evident in the crafts and trades of the residents who could find work in the immediate vicinity gave way to parking lots and drive in businesses.

² In 1880, *The City Mission Directory of the Benevolent, Charitable, and Humane Institutions in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Protestant Episcopal City Mission, 1880) listed 47 Charitable Organizations; 39 homes for adults and 39 for children, 38 infirmaries and hospitals, 31 dispensaries, 25 relief societies soup houses, etc.

³ Martha Paxon Grundy, *The Bethany Mission for Colored People: Philadelphia Friends and a Sunday School Mission*, *Quaker History* 90: 1 (Spring 2001): 50-82.

⁴ August Sartorius von Waltershausen, *The Workers' Movement in the United States, 1879 – 1885*, ed. David Montgomery, Marcel van der Linden, tr. Harry Drost (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1998) especially pages 174-180 which lists 171 organizations at the time of his survey.

These changes are apparent in historic aerial views and contemporary photographs of the immediate vicinity that make it clear that what was a standard work and residence district as late as the mid-twentieth century has been completely dismantled by the early twenty-first century:



Redevelopment of the fabric around 81-95 Fairmount Avenue since 1959; Delaware Avenue on left. 81-95 Fairmount in red circle. Wharves closed and some adapted for parking and apartment houses.



Setting: Looking from site toward river; parking lots and Lukoil.



Dallin Aerial Survey, 1930 Elevated transit line to the west of the block; industrial buildings and small residences and workshops in a continuous fabric with easy access to the waterfront; 81-95 circled in red.



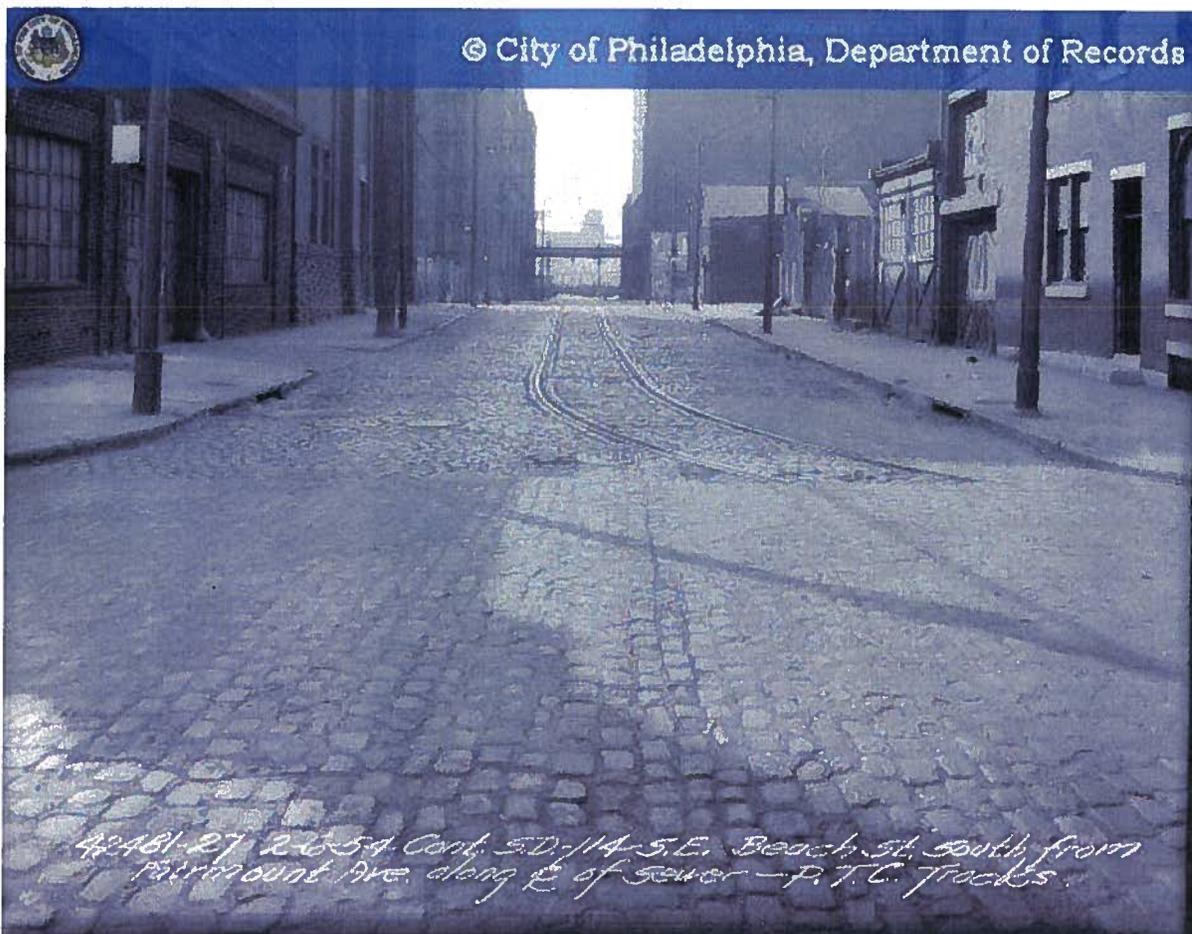
1959 Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Aerial Photograph, district largely unchanged from 1930; wharves emptying; some losses along Spring Garden Street; 81-95 circled in red.



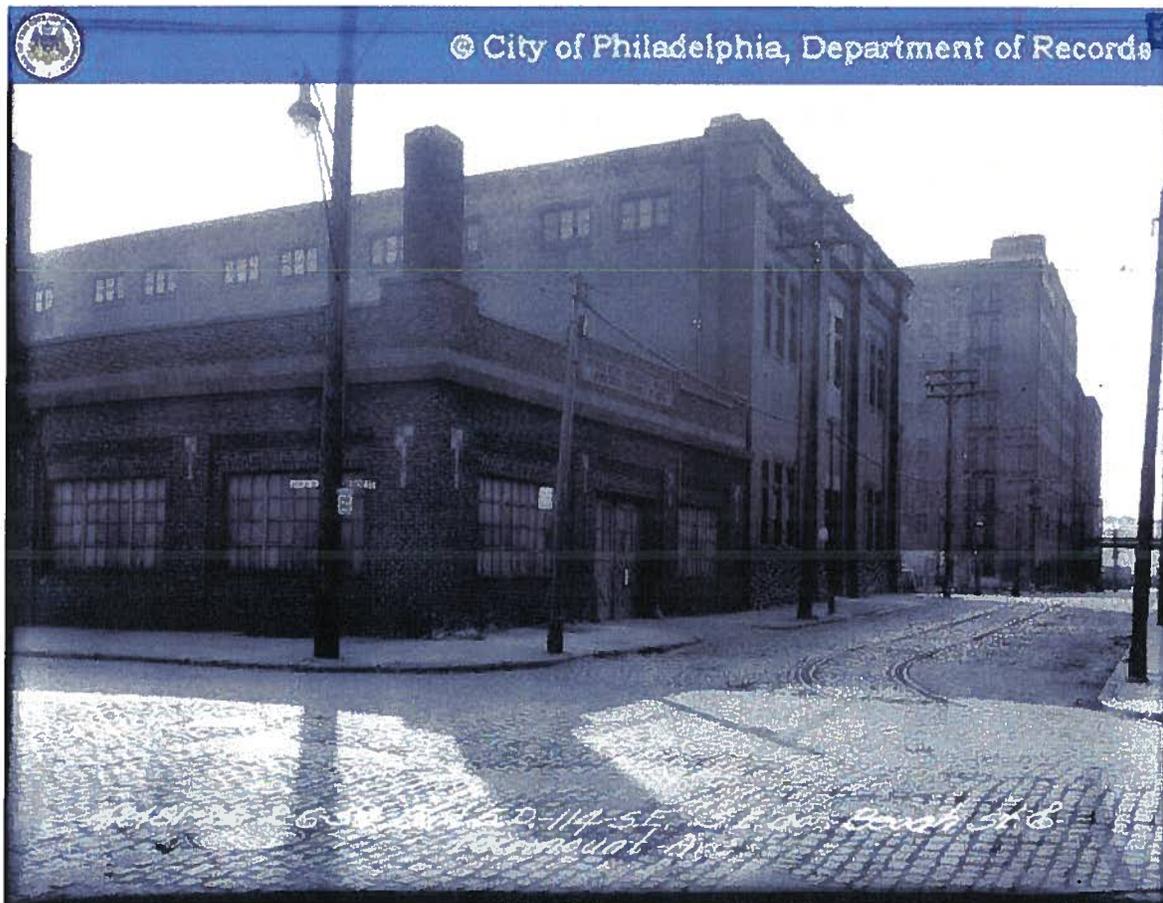
1995 Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission aerial photo, demolition of most of the area east of I-95; large parking lots and open spaces; 81-95 circled in red.



Google Earth View, 2015, Demolition continuing east of I-95. Surviving building for PTC garage since demolished in yellow circle; 81-95 circled in red.



Beach Street across from Fairmount Ave, looking south with dense urban fabric, 1954 (City of Philadelphia Archives).

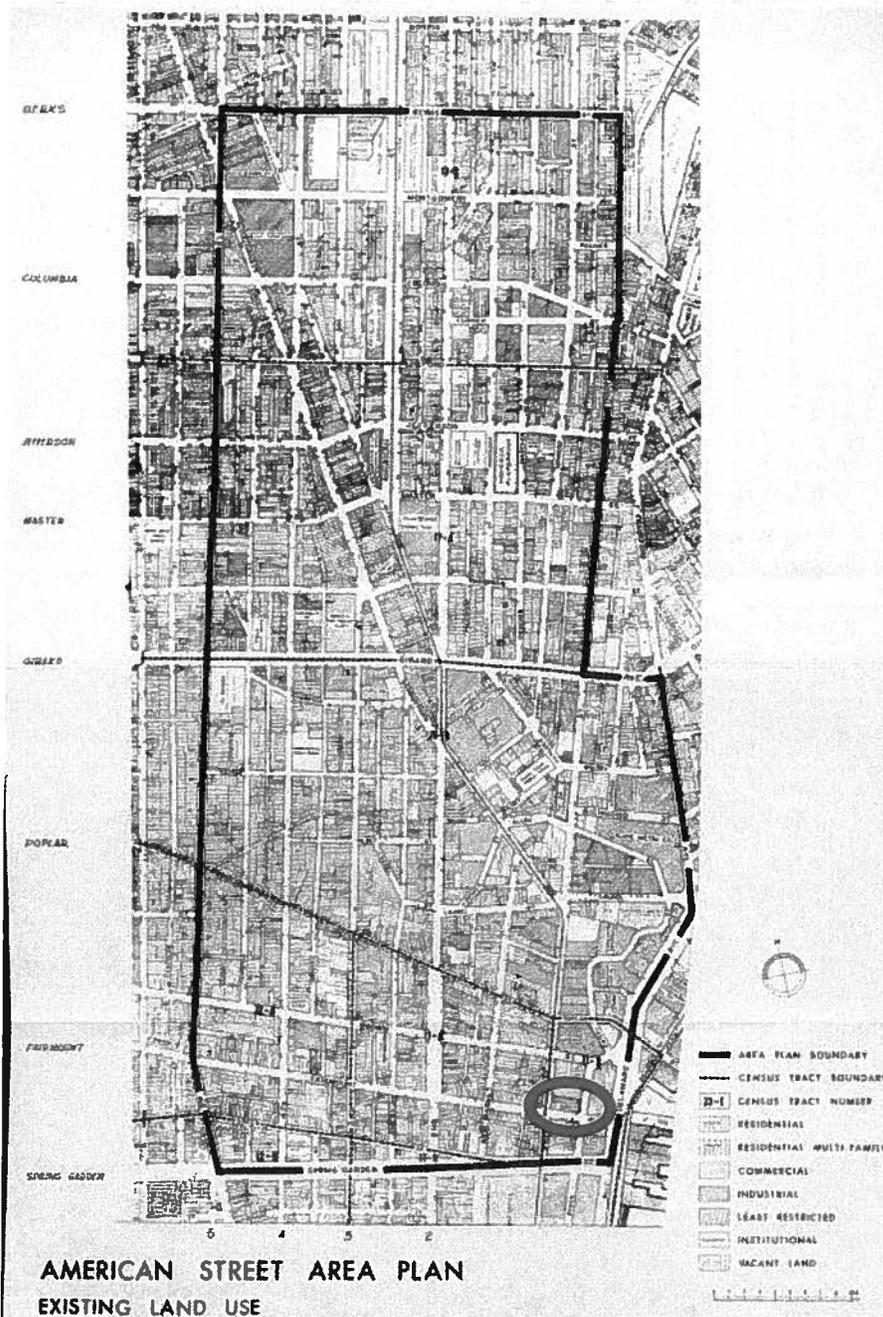


PTC Garage across Fairmount Avenue with warehouses to the south, 1954; one story building in foreground demolished 2015. (City of Philadelphia Archives)

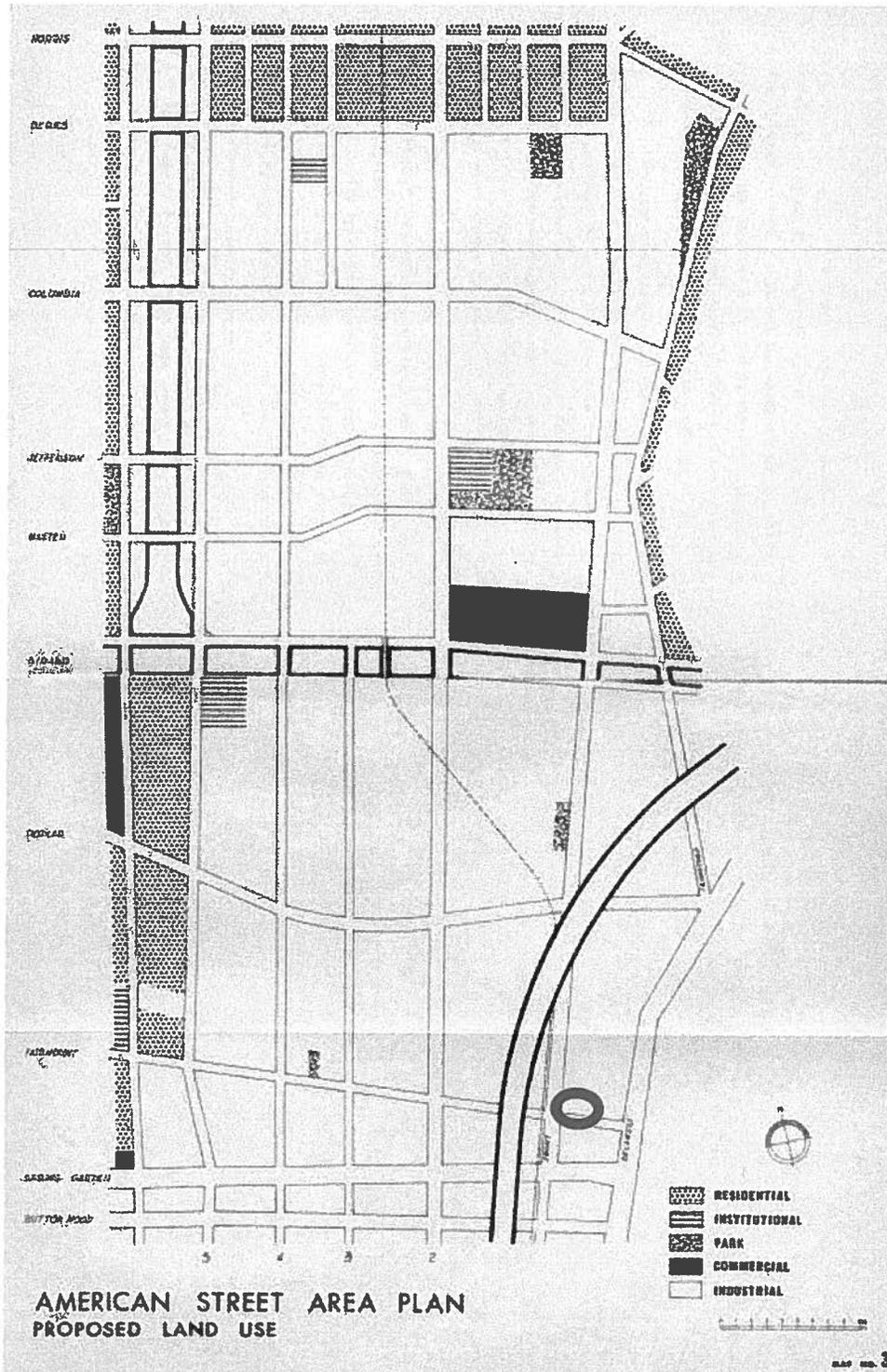


Google Streetview 2016 Demolition of PTC garage clearing entire site across Fairmount Avenue, east of Beach Street. Yellow oval area of recently demolished

The vast difference between the intentional and nearly total demolition of the zone between I-95 and the Delaware River north of Vine Street and Society Hill Historic District is apparent. While both Society Hill and the Delaware Avenue sites were relatively intact in the late 1950s, as evidence by the aerial photograph and the plan (below), it was the intention of the city planners to preserve large areas in the historic city that became Society Hill and to demolish and redevelop the areas to the north. This was apparent in city planning commission studies:



American Street Planning District, 1960, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, red oval, site of 81/95 Fairmount, intended as industrial zoned



American Street Area Plan, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 1960; route of I-95 lower right; red oval site of 81/95 Fairmount in area intended to be developed as industrial land use.



1965 Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, aerial view from Delaware River Front to Eighth Street and from Locust Street to Bainbridge Street; some urban demolition accomplished and large areas of intact urban fabric west of Third Street, south of Locust Street and south to Bainbridge Street.



Philadelphia City Planning Commission, plan of Washington Square Redevelopment Area with Pennsylvania Hospital, surviving dense fabric of 18th and early 19th century houses; St. Peter's Church in yellow oval.

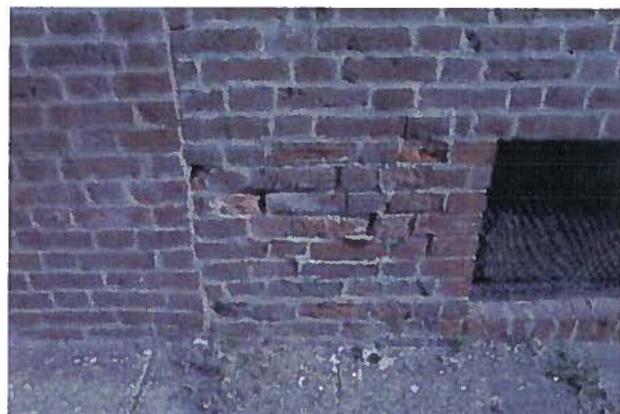
Comparably altered non-contributing buildings, Old City Historic District:

Several older buildings located within the Old City District, approximately a half mile south of the subject property, have been altered in manners similar to the extensive alterations at the subject property. For this reason they have been listed as non-contributors to the Old City District, and therefore would never be considered individually significant.

- Even if 81-95 Fairmount Avenue were located in a historic district, due to its similarity to such non-contributing buildings, the subject property could not be considered a district contributor, and there is no rationale for considered the building to be individually significant.
- As architecture, 81 / 95 Fairmount fails to meet Criterion J because the building has lost its essential cultural form as a block of Philadelphia rowhouses.
- This change is evident on the exterior in the removal of all of the original doors with the resulting loss of scale that provides the evidence of eight units to one single unit.
- This change is exacerbated by the removal of the party walls between the units that created separate residential properties. What exists now is essentially an office building with large spaces in single loft-like rooms and is so far removed from the original design character that it does not reflect the cultural norm.

Other condition issues:

The description continues to be flawed with inaccurate descriptions of materials and no apparent understanding of the extent of deterioration. This is particularly noticeable in the extent of surface damage to the brick from the sandblasting and now extreme weathering that will necessitate additional masonry replacement. Sills of the windows, are not as described in the nomination of stone – but rather wood, now capped with metal that further damages the underlying material.



Sandblast damage to brick; west end, center, typical damage from sandblasting brick



Modern brick, metal clad wood sills, modern shutters, east end of façade

Inappropriateness of 81-95 Fairmount Avenue for Historic Designation

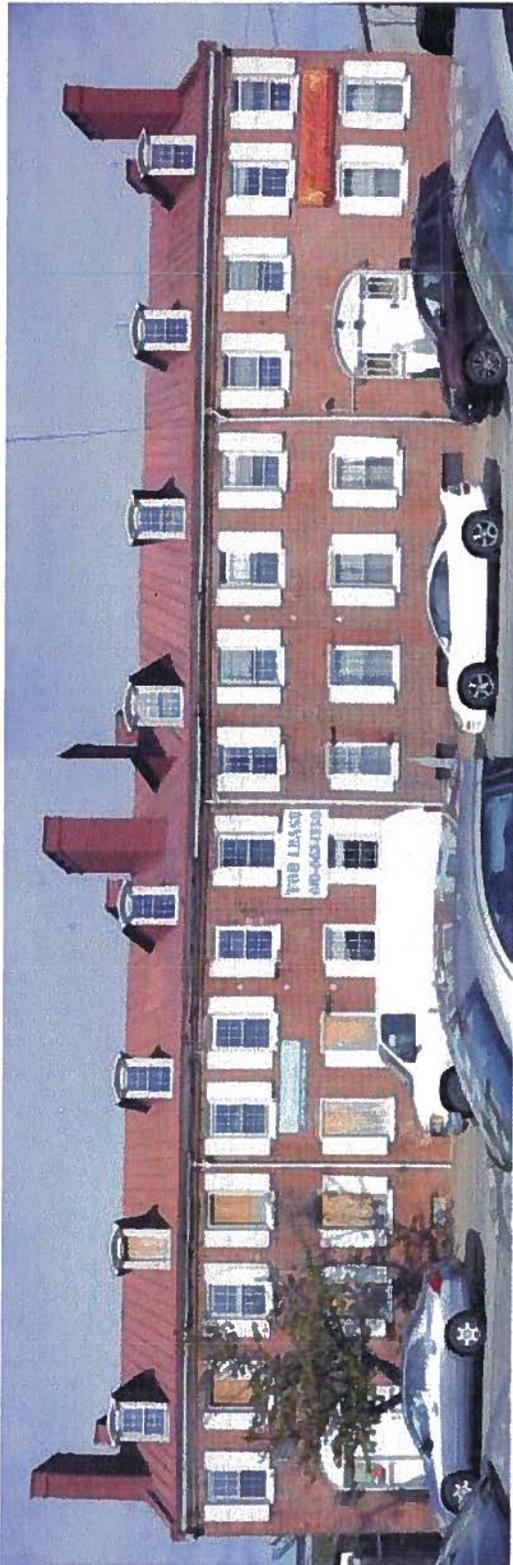
for:

**Piazza Management Company
401 South Schuylkill Avenue
Norristown, PA 19403**

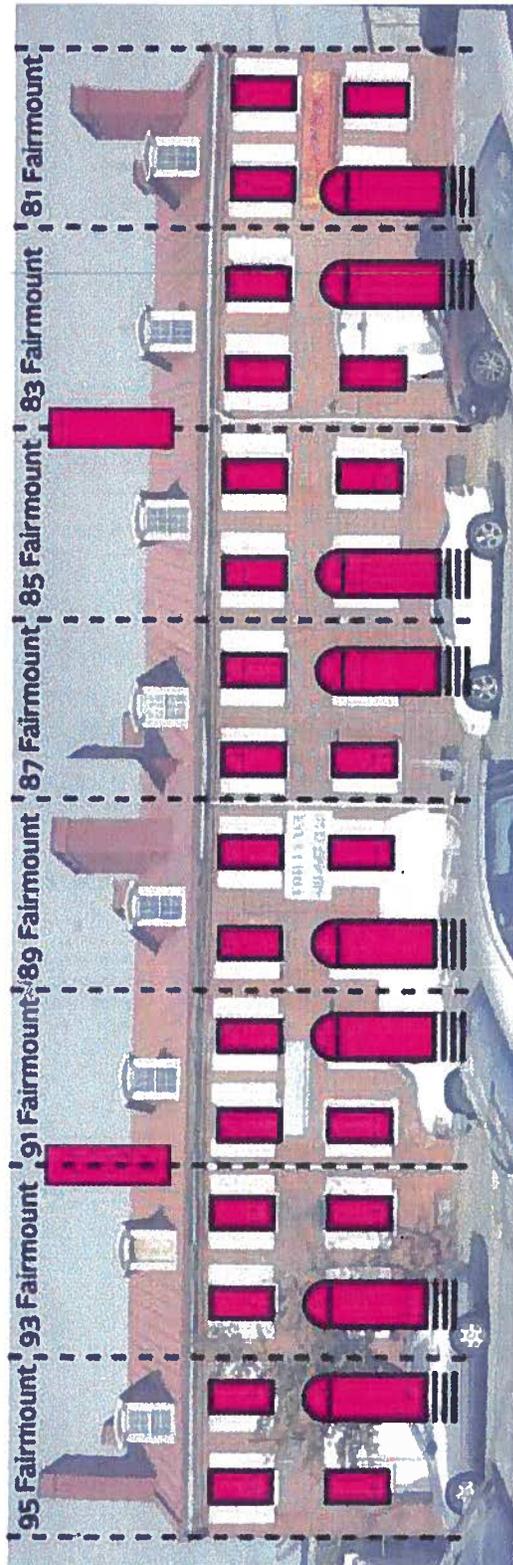
by:

**George E. Thomas, Ph.D.
CivicVisions LP**

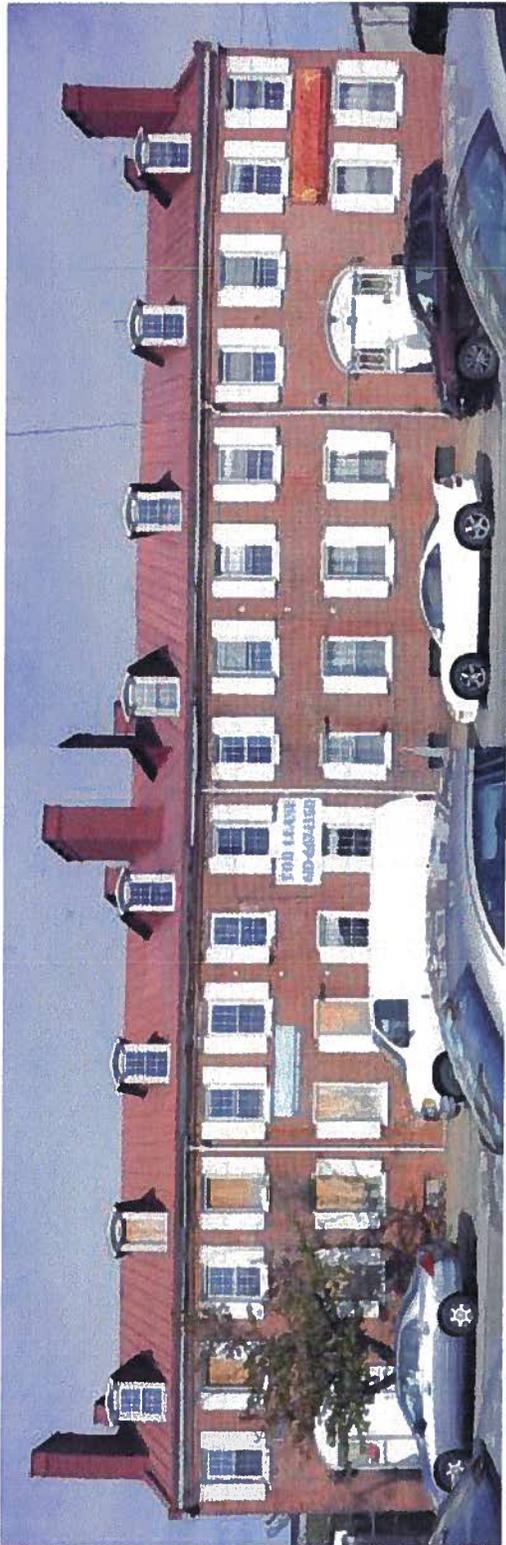
4 March 2016



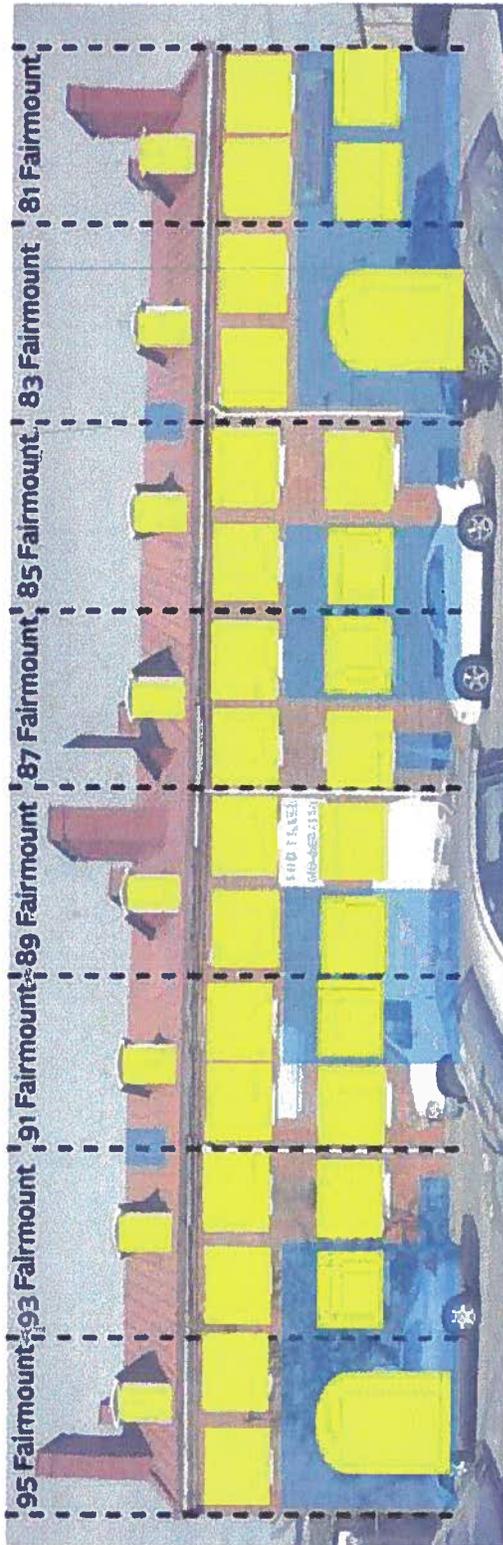
Existing Fairmount Elevation



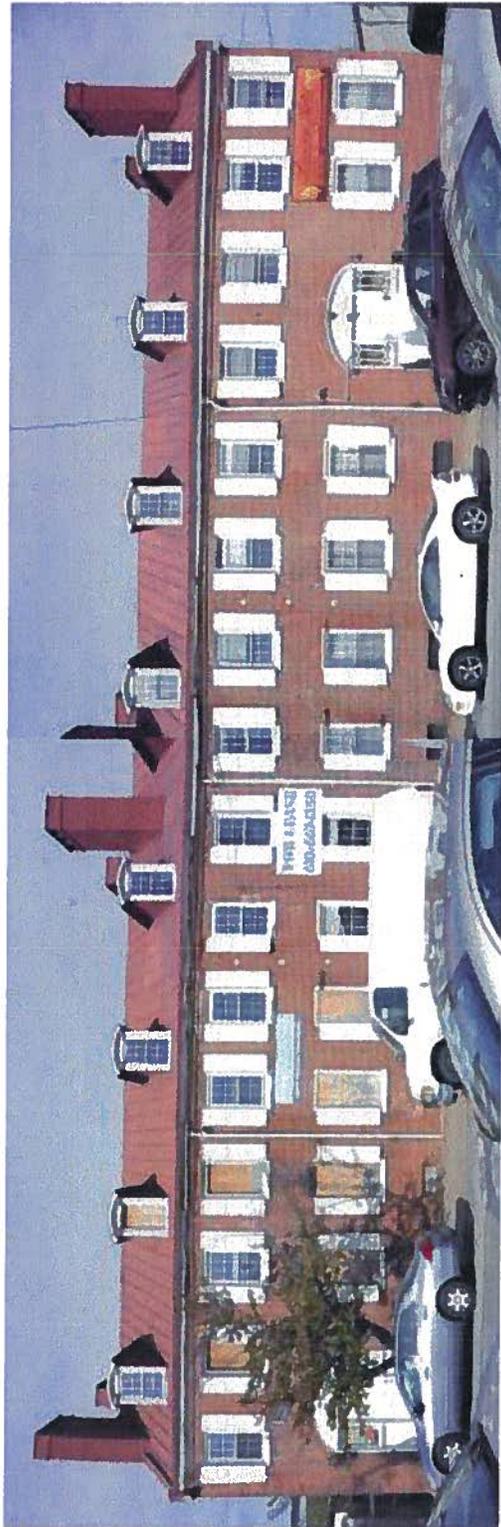
Original Fairmount Elevation: 8 rowhouses each with entrance door; party walls, three shared chimneys and 2 end chimneys



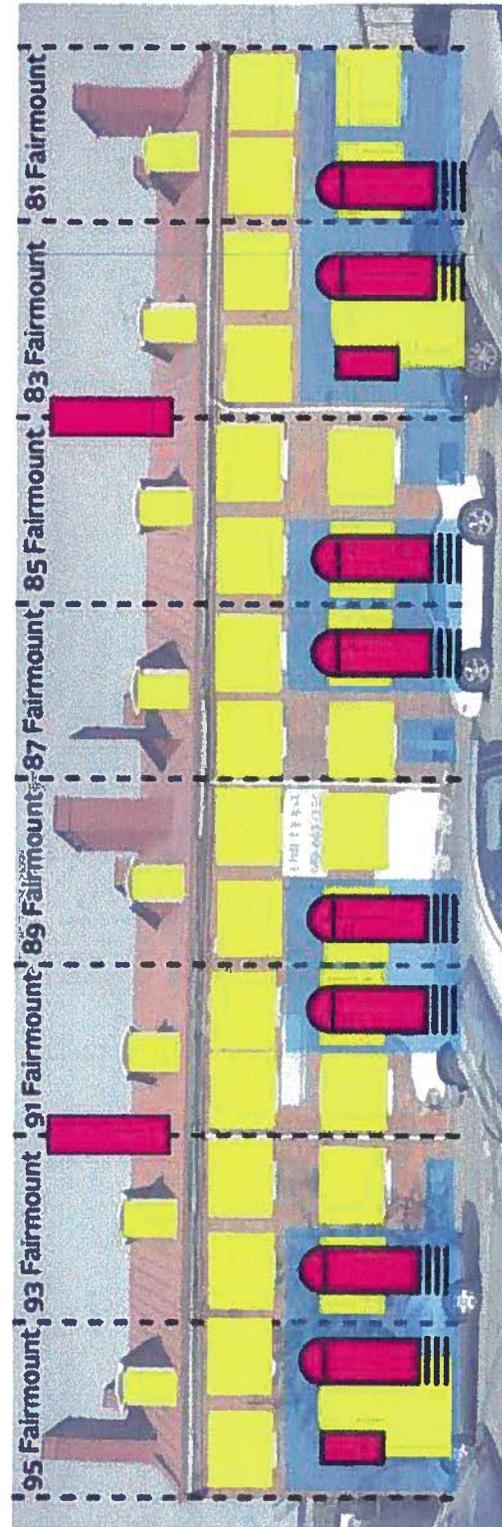
Existing Fairmount Elevation



Original Fairmount Elevation non-historic materials: window units, shutters, dormers (shown in yellow); new brick (shown in blue)



Existing Fairmount Elevation



Original Fairmount Elevation non-historic materials: window units, shutters, dormers (shown in yellow); new brick (shown in blue); missing chimneys and changed openings (shown in magenta)

Summary

The nomination for 81-95 Fairmount Avenue and 704 North Beach Street was submitted to the Philadelphia Historical Commission in April 2015; it was resubmitted on 11 February 2016, listing only 81-95 Fairmount Avenue. The original and the present nominations are without basis in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Code and both fail to make a case for designation of the subject properties.

The Philadelphia Code provides for designation when a property: 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.

As is demonstrated below, because of the extent of alterations to the building and because the connections to significant individuals and institutions are at best minor and largely removed by the alterations, and because those individuals are better represented by other sites and properties elsewhere in the city, this group of hugely altered and otherwise compromised buildings, whose context is largely demolished, does not meet the criteria for designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Further:

- The nomination is laden with errors too numerous to fully list.
- The nomination fails to discuss or explain the drastic loss of integrity which has removed most of the character-defining features of the building on Fairmount Avenue
- As defined by the National Park Service, integrity expresses a variety of characteristics, most of which are now lacking in the subject property because of the extent of alterations to both the building and the context. This alone should negate designation.
- The current nomination mistakes the loss of original, character-defining features such as the front doors all of which have been removed. The present nomination refers to "some signs of alteration." In fact as is evident from the attached illustrations the main façade of the building has been largely reconstructed. The removal of the massive mid-row pairs of chimneys is ignored, as is the transformation of the individual row units into an open interior loft.
- Finally the nomination is blind to the extraordinary loss of context, first by changing uses, then by being cut off from its neighborhood by I-95, and now by new development to the east along the river and to the west and north.

The actual condition of this generally undistinguished row, through drastic and irreparable alterations, and the extensive loss of context, does not warrant being designated by the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Significance:

Among the most egregious problems with the nomination is the creation of a false category of one as the basis for significance. Both the original and the revised nomination assert that the row forms "...the oldest intact row of houses in Philadelphia between the Delaware River and Front Street." In point of fact, the zone between the Delaware River and Front Street, in the course of the regional history, was largely given over to commercial warehouses, shipping sites, and the service streets that immediately bordered the port because this area was always considered too vital to the commerce of the port to be used for housing. Contrary to the nomination, across the older portions of Philadelphia in the immediate vicinity of the port there are dozens of examples of this building typology – a row of houses built at the end of the 18th or the beginning of the 19th century using a so called "London-plan" house with a front and rear room and no rear wing. The nomination misinterprets the *Hexamer Atlas* which only shows the footprint – not the interior plan. The evidence of front and rear chimneys, coupled with the evidence from the fire insurance plan make it clear that these were standard row houses.

Examples of this type in the immediate Northern Liberties include early houses just to the west on the 100 Block of Fairmount Avenue as well as others on the 100 block of Brown Street, the 200 block of E Allen Street to the north east. Up and down the river front are numerous examples of the type including the well-known and largely original 18th century houses on Elfreth's Alley just west of Front Street and the 100 block of Cuthbert Street immediately to the south of Elfreth's Alley. Carstairs' Row on the 700 block of Sansom Street is a larger version of the typology; more can be found on the 500 block S. Front Street and on and on. Moreover, there are more houses of this type from the same period on the Schuylkill River front, notably the 2400 block of Pine Street, marking the expansion of commerce and residence to the other river in the early 19th century. All of these examples possess far higher integrity than 81-95 Fairmount Avenue, are in settings that better reflect the original design context, and are better examples for understanding the typology.

Conclusion: A category of one created by close definition of the search area is historically meaningless. This row is part of a common building type along both the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers. Many of the factual and historical errors in the nomination could have been avoided if the nominator had referred to the standard literature on the Philadelphia row house beginning with William J. Murtagh's "The Philadelphia Row House," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 16,4 (December 1957): 8-13. The specifics of the London House plan and other common row house types have now been incorporated into the digital *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia* but was apparently missed in the nomination. The more recent literature includes Donna Rilling's *Making Houses, Crafting Capitalism: Builders in Philadelphia, 1790- 1850*. (2001, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press). This book does not reference any of the builders or owners cited in this nomination. Reference to the scholarly literature would have avoided numerous assertions that are demonstrably inaccurate and misstate the significance of the building.

Integrity:

The National Park Service has developed an extensive text on the meaning of integrity, including Location, and continuing with Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. While none of these categories of integrity are addressed directly in the nomination, the row can be evaluated against these criteria. The nomination makes numerous demonstrably untrue statements regarding the integrity of the buildings.

Location:

While the buildings remain where they were originally constructed, their location has been drastically transformed by the construction of I-95 to the west, which cut the buildings off from the rest of the City, and by the re-construction of Delaware Avenue, which largely cuts the buildings off from the port. With the decline of shipping on the middle and upper Delaware River front, the site is no more original than if the buildings had been moved to some new location. The transformation of the immediate vicinity and its impact on the row is discussed below in "Setting."

Design:

Much of the discussion of the buildings in the nomination covers what NPS would consider design. At the core of the evaluation of design is the belief that the structure should retain critical features of "form, plan, space, structure, and style." These issues are represented in the nomination with the claim that the buildings form an "intact row."

"Intact Row"

The nomination asserts that "81-95 Coates Street is significant as the oldest intact row of houses in Philadelphia between the Delaware River and Front Street and represents the development of Northern Liberties, as well as Coates Street."

This assertion raises the question of what an "intact row" of houses consists of in Philadelphia. The row house is a well-known historical building type, the most widely used in Philadelphia and its parts and the characteristics of the row house are well known.

- The building typology presumes a continuous façade – usually of brick.
- The front façade is articulated by entrance doors, usually paired, that denote the separate units.
- These entrances in this period are usually accented with a fanlight or transom above the door to light a vestibule.
- In Philadelphia, marble front steps form the transition from the sidewalk to the first floor level providing entrance to each house.
- The façade is articulated with regularly spaced window openings that reflect the interior divisions of the separate building units.
- In the case of the standard row, two or three windows on a story represent one spatial unit each of which is separated from the next by a continuous masonry party wall that provides structural bearing for the wood floor joists and fire and sound separation between the buildings.

- Finally, in the case of earlier houses of this vintage, large chimneys representing the heating and cooking systems are part of the upper elevations.

Despite the presence of the number and pacing of windows that would suggest eight separate houses, the only doors that are to be found today are in the units at the east and west end of the block – the other six doors are missing. In other words, these either were not eight separate houses of the usual sort -- or the row has been drastically altered with the principal defining element of their purpose – the entrances to the house systematically removed.

What does the word “intact” mean? The standard meaning is “not damaged or impaired in any way; complete”.

- A row of houses missing all of its front doors by definition is not complete.
- A row of housing missing its front steps by definition is not complete.
- A row of buildings missing its interior structural walls, by definition is not complete.
- A row of buildings missing most of its oversized chimneys, by definition is not complete.
- A row of buildings whose lower façade is largely reconstructed along new lines is, by definition, not complete

The nomination suggests that there may have been a few changes to the buildings but the larger goal appears to be to obfuscate the extent of these alterations. Toward the end of the earlier draft nomination, in the discussion of what the nomination calls the 1920 “restoration,” a sentence began: “Aside from rearranging some of the apertures...” This was intentionally misleading. It has since been removed but the present nomination still proclaims misleadingly: “While the façade has remained largely intact, there are some signs of alteration” (p. 1). And following that misleading statement is the remark that “Several of the original doors have been filled in with windows and brick” (p. 1).

In fact, and contrary to the nomination, all not “several” of the doors have been entirely removed and the areas where they were removed has been carefully infilled with twentieth century brickwork and the voids were infilled with twentieth century windows. Given the date of construction and the characteristic doorways of the period, it is likely that what was removed was not just a door and door frame but also a fanlight or a transom light above the door.

The nomination is equally deceptive when it came to describing the doors that were added in the early twentieth century.

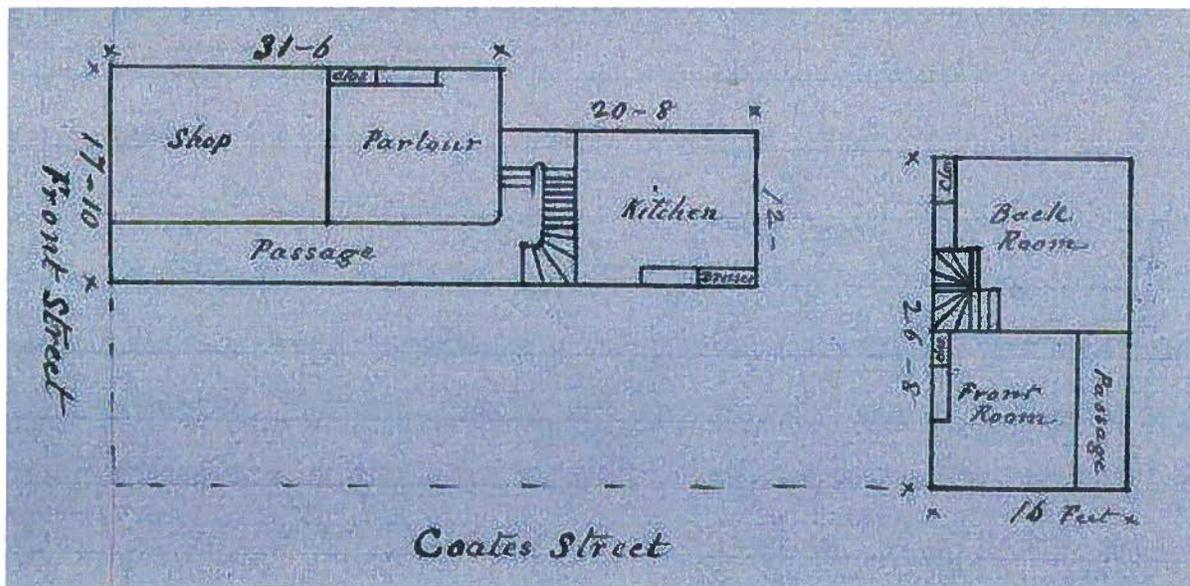
“Within the western two bays [of 81-83 Fairmount] at the first floor is a very elegant, double Federal style doorway, which may or may not be original” (p.1)

In the history of the standard sixteen-foot wide Philadelphia rowhouse, “extant doublewide, arched doorways” would be a rare, indeed, a unique feature. No such doorways are known that occupy the entire first story of a unit. It is obvious that these giant doors are an alteration – though the nomination comments:

“Within the western two bays at the first floor is a very elegant, double Federal style doorway, which *may or may not be original.*”

Like the earlier statement that the façade “remained largely intact, [but with] some signs of alteration,” this statement is either disingenuous or it is intentionally misleading. There is no other Philadelphia row of the period with such a configuration. The oversized doors at each end exist in this building for the very simple reason that this is not an intact row but rather a converted loft office structure. In fact, the row has been so significantly altered in the twentieth century that it no longer functions as a row of houses. Does the nominator not know that row houses have doors in every house – or that in the early 19th century no row house has an entire front given over to a giant door?

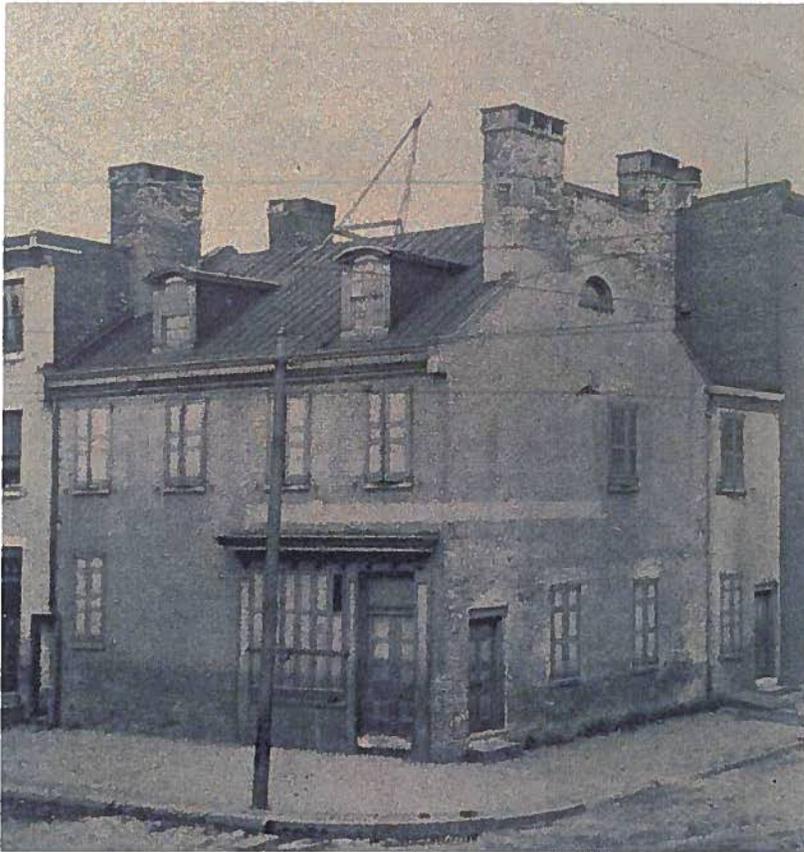
Within the nomination are clues that should have made it obvious that both oversized doorways are the results of alterations. The clearest pieces of evidence are the photograph included in the nomination, showing the east end of the block, and the insurance plan of the west end of the block. The former shows the corner of Beach and Fairmount at the time when the building had been converted to a shop with a door on the right east wall and no giant Federal door anywhere in sight. Clearly this door did not exist when the photograph was taken – and therefore cannot be original. Similarly the insurance plan included in the nomination shows the westernmost house of the row, with a plan that is the standard so-called London house plan with a front and rear room connected by a side passage that opens into the front room and terminates at the rear room. That passage is always entered from the front door, thereby providing clear evidence—again-- that the original front door in 95 Fairmount was on the east side of the unit and not the present oversized door in the center.



Insurance Survey showing plan of 91 Coates Street on right with passage against the party wall and fireplaces serving the front and rear rooms of the house on the west end.

The late 19th century photograph included in the nomination clearly predates the 1920s alteration. This photo shows no large door in the first units at #81 and 83. Therefore it must

have been obvious that the present door was not original to the initial construction because the large present door is not in the 19th century view.



Late 19th century photograph of the corner house showing a commercial shop front on 81 Fairmount; an altered door on the east end wall of the same unit, and faint evidence of the bricking in of the door on the second unit, #83. It also shows banks of oversized chimneys that would have heated the buildings as well as original paneled shutters – all of which have been removed. There is no evidence of the present oversized door in 83 Fairmount Avenue. Also removed is the tiny rear alley door between #83 and #85. This was a common feature of the period and was likely removed from the row as well.

Far from being “intact” the nomination includes images that together demonstrate that the row has been so extensively altered as to have lost its integrity. In the course of their history, the buildings in the row

- have lost all of the original front doors and stoops;
- all of the windows have been replaced,
- all of the shutters have been replaced;
- basement windows with iron lintels have been installed.
- stories have been added and removed;
- finally, careful examination – with the knowledge that the original front doors have clearly been moved shows that nearly a third of the masonry of the front façade is from the 20th century.

In short the exteriors are dramatically different than their original condition and are far from being intact.

But even these egregious errors do not fully capture the extent of the alterations that have occurred in the row between 81 and 95 Fairmount Avenue. The previous state of the nomination recounted what it called the "... 1920s restoration by Thomas Sullivan's Terminal Warehouse Company, paying homage to the Colonial and Georgian Revival styles." This has been revised to state that the later owner combined "the small dwelling units into offices" (p.4). The extent of that combination was not addressed despite clear evidence of the changes.

Apart from removing the doors and front stoops, there is another visual anomaly that should have been obvious in looking at the buildings from the street. At each end of the row, the end walls have a pair of chimneys that served the front and rear fireplaces of the houses of # 81 and # 95 Fairmount Avenue. There is another pair of chimneys between # 87 and # 89. However there are no chimneys for units # 83, #85, # 89, # 91 and #93. In the late 19th century this might have been a minor issue, as stoves with skinny brick chimneys and sometimes little more than stove pipes replaced massive chimneys – but in the case of buildings of this era, the chimneys were an integral and significant visual element that would have reiterated the cadence of the row of houses and, together with the front doors and stoops, would have made evident the individual units. Thus, in addition to the removal of the doors of the main façade, the buildings have lost much of their skyline – the row of large chimneys that marked both the heating and cooking systems of the houses. The removal of the chimneys eliminated the secondary binary cadence of the row as pairs of houses with paired doors and paired chimneys.

The removal of so integral an element as the chimneys should have made it apparent to the nominator that something else had happened to these houses that ended their utility as a row of separate houses. The chimneys were removed because the supporting interior masonry party walls between each unit were also removed to create an open, loft-like work space within the former row. In fact, as a result of the loss of all of the original front doors, most of the interior party walls, and the giant chimneys that formed the skyline, this group of buildings is no longer anything like an "intact" row of houses: instead it is an altered twentieth century office space. While the usual Philadelphia nomination does not take into account interior issues, it should have been obvious, simply from looking at the windows and the lack of doors, that interior spaces are impossibly large for a row of small houses.

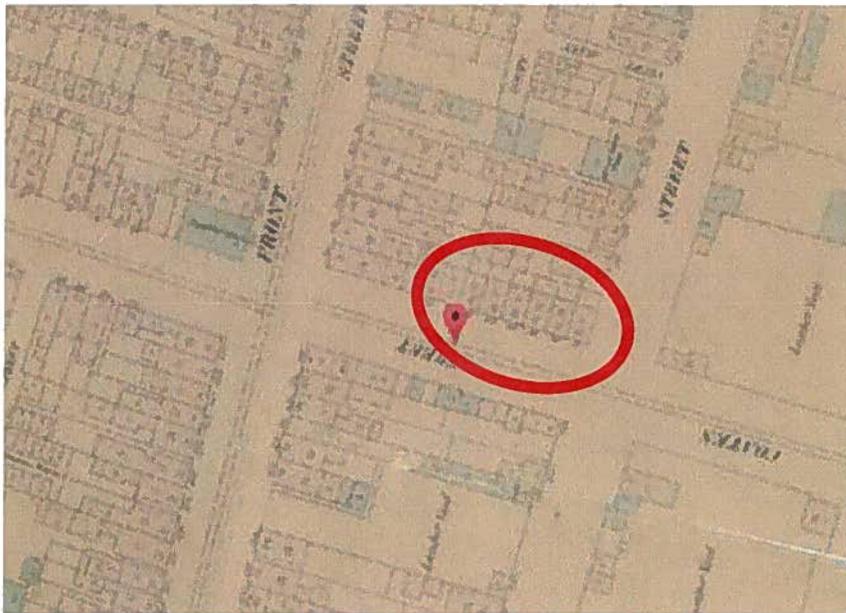
Conclusion: As demonstrated above, the design of the row has been severely compromised to the point that the row functionally does not exist; its original design features are largely gone, and its original materials have been largely replaced. The work in the 1920s was not, as described in the original nomination, a "restoration," but was instead a massive alteration that eliminated nearly all of the critical craft features of workmanship. What survived that massive alteration has since been replaced in later alterations.

Setting:

Integrity in setting, according to the NPS is achieved by maintenance of the physical environment around a structure.

A walk around the neighborhood reveals the extent of transformation. If the neighborhood remained in largely original condition, it might be possible to make a case that the row, despite its massive alterations, somehow contributed to the character of the neighborhood. However, the immediate vicinity has been utterly transformed, not just once, but twice since the original construction of the row. In the 19th century property atlases show an area that was largely residential in the immediate vicinity and with work sites along the Delaware River. By 1870, several of the business along the Delaware had expanded west across Beach Street, but the area remained residential with corner stores, and small houses.

The earliest detailed atlas of the area is the Hexamer and Locher *Atlas of Philadelphia* of 1858, which shows the original row with numerous small frame band-box type houses to the rear, accessed through an archway from Beach Street that filled out the remainder of the block. Larger brick houses faced on to Front Street including the house shown in the insurance plan included above. Already by 1858 however, the seeds of change were in evidence with lumber and coal yards predominating to the east of Beach Street where they were part of the bulk shipping sites of the waterfront. This pattern persisted in the 1862 Samuel Smedley *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*. After the Civil War, the district shifted toward industrial, light manufacturing, and warehousing as secondary aspects of these uses crossed Beach Street.



The Hexamer *Atlas* (Philly Geohistory) shows the immediate vicinity of the block in 1858 as largely residential with numerous small workingmen's houses filling in to Beach Street but with bulk shipping and warehousing to the east.

To the north of the Fairmount row (the street had been renamed before the 1880 census from its earlier name of Coates Street), much of the block was taken over by the A. Wilt & Sons Sash, Door & Shutter Factory (*Hexamer General Surveys*, 1873, 1889). These uses are confirmed by the G. M. Hopkins *Atlas of Philadelphia* of 1875 that shows the planing mill and a variety of heavy industrial uses in the vicinity. By the 1910 Bromley *Atlas of Philadelphia*, the district was largely given over to chemical and medical manufacturing plants with the planing mill and the adjacent building materials uses continuing. The J. M. Brewer 1934 "Appraisal Map" of

Philadelphia shows the district with its large mills in dark red, indicating that the district was “controlled” by its industrial buildings extending east to Front Street and with the neighborhood to the west largely African American in population – and therefore “red-lined.”

A significant change occurs again in the 1940s, as evidenced by the City’s Works Public Administration map of 1942, which shows the arrival of the Philadelphia Transit Corporation’s electrical substation and warehouse to the south, and Department of Public Works Garage across Fairmount Avenue. The ultimate transformation of the area occurred beginning in the late 1950s when the Delaware Expressway (I-95) project was begun that extended through the eastern side of the City roughly bordering the Delaware River. This resulted in the clearing of the entire route and the isolation of the area from its former network of streets and urban fabric. Aerial views from Google Earth show that most of the area was already cleared by the time of the earliest posted Google aerial of 1992. According to the 1962 “Land Use Map of the City of Philadelphia” (Philly GeoHistory) the area east of Front Street was almost entirely devoted to industrial uses with vacant properties and transportation related sites predominating.

Conclusion: The extent of change to the district means that there is no integrity of setting.

Materials:

While the brick of the façade was relatively carefully matched in the massive reconstruction of the lower façade, it should be obvious from the extent of the removal of the original doorways that as much as one third of the main façade has been rebuilt. The other secondary elements of the façade have been entirely replaced with twentieth century materials while other elements are entirely missing.

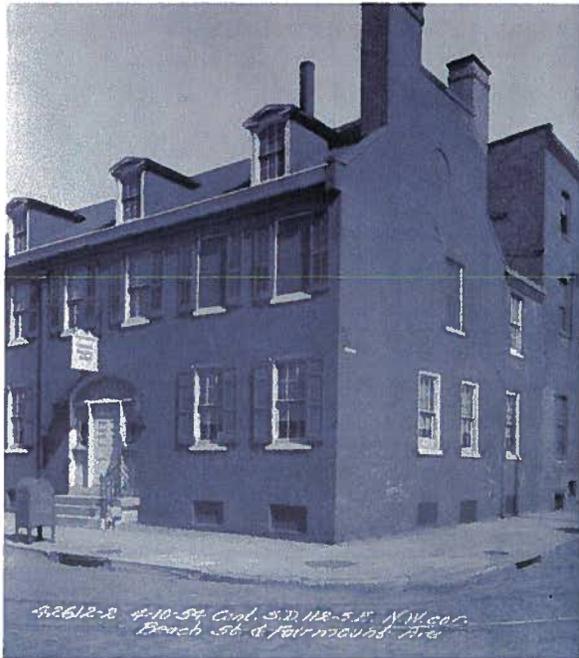
- Shutters which would have been made of the standard frame and panel construction were replaced twice – the most recent of plywood with a raised edge.
- Windows that were the standard small pane wood sash have been entirely replaced with a cheap metal sash with plastic snap-in muntins.
- Roofing for the period would have certainly been of wood shingles. The roof was replaced at some point before the late 19th century photograph with a standing seam metal roof.
- The Google Earth view shows that the rear half of the roof, not visible from the street, is now black roofing paper.

All of these changes undermine the materiality of the building and mark the use of later industrial rather than craft processes.

Conclusion: As much as one-third of the front façade – including the area represented by the replacement windows, shutters, the replacement doors, transoms, and steps, and the related masonry infill are 20th century.

Workmanship:

Under the category of “Workmanship” would come such features as the original door casings, the paneled doors, the fan or transom lights above the doors– all of which have been removed. These would have given the building a hand-crafted character – which is now lost.



City of Philadelphia Archives, Photograph, April 10, 1954 showing the altered entrance at the east end of the row as well as different operable panel shutters on the upper stories from those on the late 19th century photograph above (p. 10).

- Another example of twentieth century industrial era workmanship replacing earlier craft-era workmanship are the louvered shutters that flanked the windows of the houses in this 1954 view.
- Evidence of the original shutters is clear in the late 19th century photo (p. 10 above).
- The small paned wood sashes, evident in the 1954 city of Philadelphia photograph, were presumably made for the 1920s renovation. These have been entirely replaced with modern aluminum sash with snap-in muntins.
- The 1954 photograph shows that the row was painted, presumably brick red. That paint has been removed on the Fairmount facade, evidently by sand-blasting, which accounts for another significant and visually apparent loss of integrity – the degraded surface of the brick. This will create a long term maintenance issue for the building evidenced in the extreme weathering of large areas of the front facade.
- The extent of rot and water damage of the underside of the roof at the front edge of the house is further demonstration of the deteriorated condition of the buildings.
- One final piece of disinformation also might have been readily corrected. The nomination discusses the metal roof: “The roof appears to be the original standing-seam metal material or a nineteenth century replacement. Some parts of the roof have been patched.” Again there is an extensive literature on metal roofing that is made readily accessible in the National Park Service’s Technical Preservation Services brief “Roofing for Historic Buildings” by Sarah M. Sweetser. Given that galvanized metal was not available until the late 1830s, it is obvious that the original roofs were shingled. Moreover, given the ready access to Google maps it should also be evident that the rear half of the roof, visible in the overhead satellite view, has been replaced with tar paper.

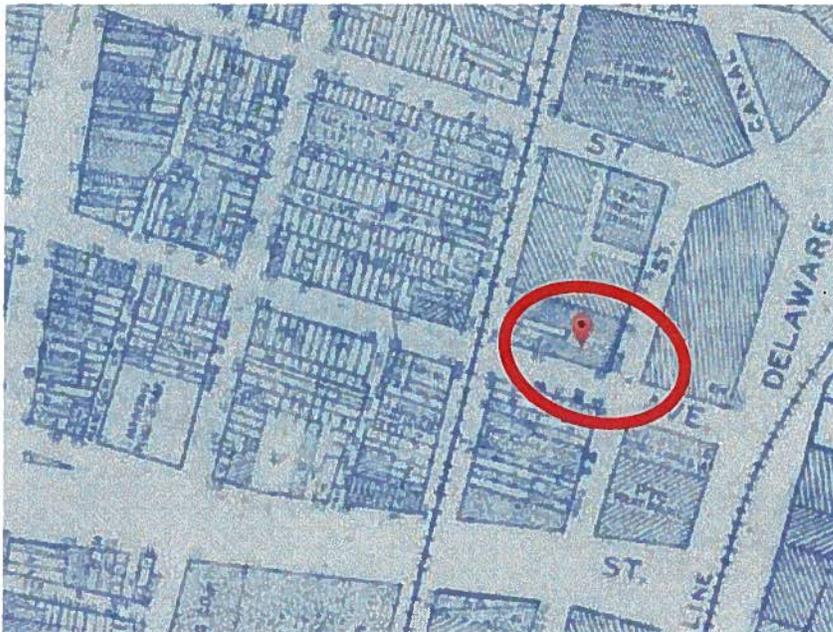
Conclusion: These buildings are clearly not as claimed in the nomination (#4) in “good” or “fair” condition with workmanship representing the period of their construction. Instead they are significantly damaged with critical pieces of the usual stabilization of a row of houses missing. Further the brick surface has been degraded by sandblasting which can only accelerate deterioration in freeze-thaw cycles. Finally much of the original fabric has been replaced.

Feeling

The Park Service uses the idea of feeling to represent the contextual and experiential nature of the present versus the original experience.



The 1895 Bromley Atlas of Philadelphia shows the transition of the immediate vicinity into workshops, many related to building construction, with wharves and transportation to the east and west.



PhilaGeoHistory, 1962 Land-use map shows the area turning into garages and freight terminals.



Present day conditions: Google Maps 2016, shows the area cut off from the Northern Liberties by the Delaware Expressway to the upper left; apartment houses along the Delaware replacing the warehouses to the right and most of the area now given over to surface parking with a few new row-houses being built to the west. Yellow outlines parking and other losses of context.

The visual evidence of both the historic planning maps and the current aerial photographs makes it clear that the site is now largely surrounded by parking that has resulted from the demolition of most of the buildings in the vicinity.

Conclusion: Nothing of the original feeling of the setting remains nor does the industrial and small-scale work settings of the late 19th century context of the houses remain. The roar of the trucks along Delaware Avenue to the west replaces the sounds of wood planing and craft activities that characterized the zone in the late 19th century; on the east, no ships arrive to unload their cargoes. High rise towers and rows of modern townhouses are the future of the district

Association:

The final area of integrity that the Park Service addresses is association, a topic that assesses the relation of the building to its significant tenants. Again, because of the extent of alterations to both buildings and site, most of the associations raised in the nomination have no remaining connection. The original builder's design is largely removed along with almost all evidence of original craftsmanship; the retail function as a whiskey store was removed when the exterior was reconstructed; the Friends' Neighborhood Guild association is better represented by the Venturi and Rauch Guild House that the organization built on Spring Garden Street. The transformation of the building to offices removed most of the exterior features of #81 and 83 Fairmount that were visible in the late 19th century photograph. The only other connection to its past is the to the Thomas Sullivan era when it provided offices for the Terminal Transfer Company. The Terminal Transfer Company, while large, is not of particular consequence in the history of the City and the demolition of the warehousing and transportation businesses that

once lined the waterfront again undermines the significance of the property in that dimension. The Guild operated several other sites, the longest serving of which was at 4th and Green Streets, beginning in 1913 and remaining there, refining its mission to serve the East Poplar Redevelopment zone. Since the early 1950s it has been located at 8th and Fairmount Avenue with the Friends Housing Cooperative.¹

Conclusion: As a consequence of changes in every dimension to this site, this isolated and much altered building, shorn of context, has lost its integrity in every dimension – and does not warrant designation.

General notes:

Apart from the failures to describe with clarity the actual extent of the alterations, the nomination misrepresents the regional and cultural history. The United States census is readily available to understand the residents of the community. These include large clusters of Irish and English immigrants, together with native born workmen, ranging from tavern operators and engineers to laborers and hucksters.

George E. Thomas, Ph.D.

CivicVisions, LP

February 12, 2016

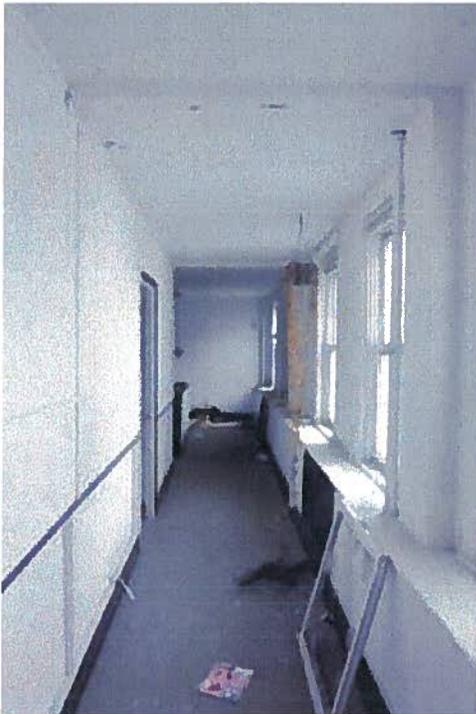
¹ The history of the organization is briefly treated in Alyssa Ribeiro, "Friends Neighborhood Guild," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia* <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/friends-neighborhood-guild/> (accessed February 2016). See also the Temple Urban Archives Finding Aid for Friends Neighborhood Guild, <https://library.temple.edu/scrc/friends-neighborhood-guild> (accessed February 2016).



Attic: single interior space, party walls removed



Second floor, single interior space, party walls removed



Second floor corridor, party walls removed

INTEGRITY

The National Register traditionally recognizes a property's integrity through seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. These qualities should also be discussed under the Statement of Significance, Section 8 of the registration form.

Location

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event took place. Integrity of location refers to whether the property has been moved or relocated since its construction. A property is considered to have integrity of location if it was moved before or during its period of significance. Relocation of an aid during its active career if the move enhanced or continued its function is not a significant loss of integrity. For example, in 1877, the 1855-built Point Bonita Light was relocated from a high bluff to a rocky promontory to improve its visibility to mariners. Aids to navigation relocated to serve new purposes after being decommissioned suffer a serious loss of integrity of location, but are not automatically precluded from listing.

Design

Design is the composition of elements that constitute the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. But properties change through time. Lighthouses may be raised or shortened; buildings may be added or removed from a light station; sound signal equipment and optics may change to reflect advancing technology. Changes made to continue the function of the aid during its career may acquire significance in their own right. These changes do not necessarily constitute a loss of integrity of design. However, the removal of equipment that served as the actual aid to navigation--a fog signal, lens and lamp, or the distinctive daymarkings on a tower--has a considerable impact on the property. Removal of an optic from a lighthouse, a fog horn or bell from its building, or painting over a historic lighthouse's pattern has a serious adverse effect on its design integrity. The design integrity of light stations is reflected by the survival of ancillary buildings and structures. The decision to nominate a station should include an assessment of the design integrity of the property as a complex. The loss or substantial alteration of ancillary resources, such as keeper's quarters, oil houses, cisterns, and tramways, for example, may constitute a significant loss of design integrity.

Setting

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property that illustrates the character of the place. Integrity of setting remains when the surroundings of an aid to navigation have not been subjected to radical change. Integrity of setting of an isolated lighthouse

would be compromised, for example, if it were now completely surrounded by modern development.

Materials

Materials are the physical elements combined in a particular pattern or configuration to form the aid during a period in the past. Integrity of materials determines whether or not an authentic historic resource still exists.

Workmanship

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period of history. Workmanship is important because it can furnish evidence of the technology of the craft, illustrate the aesthetic principles of a historic period, and reveal individual, local, regional, or national applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles.

Feeling

Feeling is the quality that a historic property has in evoking the aesthetic or historic sense of a past period of time. Although it is itself intangible, feeling is dependent upon the aid's significant physical characteristics that convey its historic qualities. Integrity of feeling is enhanced by the continued use of an historic optic or sound signal at a light station. The characteristic flashing signal of a light adds to its integrity. While sounds themselves, such as the "Bee-oooohhhh" of a diaphone, cannot be nominated to the National Register, they enhance the integrity of feeling. The mournful call of fog horns on San Francisco Bay is an integral part of experiencing life there.

Association

Association is the direct link between a property and the event or person for which the property is significant. A period appearance or setting for a historic aid to navigation is desirable; integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, materials, and feeling combine to convey integrity of association.