

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF  
HISTORIC PLACES

FOR PHC USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

10 March 1999

TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1. NAME

HISTORIC

Society Hill (and Pennsylvania Hospital of Washington  
Square West) Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Society Hill

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER

Various

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

IN PROCESS

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

BEING CONSIDERED

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Various

STREET AND NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

ZIPCODE

5. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached boundary description and map.

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

On National Register of Historic Places

DATE

updated 28 July 1987

FEDERAL  STATE  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Keeper of the National Register, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

DC

**7. DESCRIPTION**

## CONDITION

- EXCELLENT       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD             RUINS  
 FAIR               UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

- UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

- ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The densely developed blocks of the Society Hill (and Pennsylvania Hospital of Washington Square West) Historic District reflect the evolution of domestic architecture in Philadelphia from the mid-eighteenth through the mid-twentieth century. The district's overall character rests on one of the nation's largest concentrated collections of eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings. The area retains the harmony, scale, materials and rhythm of rowhouse construction and the original pattern of streets, altered only by the redevelopment plan of the 1950s-60s which, itself, has historical significance.

The Society Hill (and Pennsylvania Hospital of Washington Square West) Historic District, bounded roughly by Front Street on the east, Naudain, Gaskill and Lombard Streets on the south, Eighth and Ninth Streets on the west and Walnut Street on the north, covers an essentially rectangular area in east Center City Philadelphia. The streets follow the grid pattern of the 1682 Thomas Holme plan for Philadelphia. The City Charter of 1701 ordained that these streets "shall for ever continue as they are now layd out and regulated", with the notable exception of Dock Street which traces the irregular curve of the covered Dock Creek. In addition to the original north-south numbered streets and the east-west streets (Walnut, Spruce and Pine), other smaller streets and alleyways further divided the original blocks, fostering denser development than initially planned. In some cases, the creation of courtyards allowed the construction of several very small houses within one or two building lots. There exists a hierarchy of larger houses facing the Charter streets and smaller houses along the narrower mid-block streets. This block division and the density it produced are typical of Philadelphia development. The carefully planned redevelopment of the 1950s and 1960s added new features to the strict pattern of the neighborhood. Several blocks or large portions of blocks were cleared and rebuilt as modern residential developments with shared mid-block courtyards. These large courtyards contain either parking or plantings and recreational areas. In addition, selected lots were razed to create mid-block passageways and landscaped areas, called greenways. These "greenways", along with Washington Square and the original churchyards, provide a measure of open space.

In addition to dwellings, Society Hill contains religious structures, several apartment towers, commercial and institutional buildings, and, particularly in the northern portion of the district, mid-rise offices. The fabric of Society Hill, however, consists predominantly of individually constructed two- to four-story brick Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival rowhouses from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The earliest houses in the district exhibit characteristics of Georgian vernacular building, including a heavier appearance, Flemish bond red brick walls with glazed headers, gambrel or steeply pitched gable roofs, shed or gabled dormers, box cornices and pent eaves above the first floor. Particularly good examples of this include 220-222 Spruce Street (1743-45) and 236-238 Delancey Street (c. 1765).

With the greater accumulation of wealth and sophistication in the second half of the eighteenth century, colonial Philadelphians constructed buildings in the Georgian high-style, already popular in England. These structures have red brick Flemish bond walls, steeply pitched gable roofs and multi-pane wooden sash windows. They also incorporate such Renaissance elements as doorways with columns and entablatures, pedimented dormers, modillioned cornices and horizontal stringcourses expressed in brick or stone. The Bussey-Pouison House at 320 South Fourth Street (c. 1783) and the Abercrombie House at 268-274 South Second Street (c. 1759) offer particularly fine examples of Georgian domestic architecture. St. Peter's Church at 300 Pine Street (1758-61), carrying a later tower (c. 1842), expresses high-style Georgian design in features such as its Palladian window.

# 8. SIGNIFICANCE

<b>PERIOD</b>		<b>AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE - CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW</b>					
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHELOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1601-1700	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHELOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1701-1800	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1801-1850	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1851-1900	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1901-1950	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1951-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify) _____			
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT				

SPECIFIC DATES **Various**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT **Various**

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Introduction**

The Society Hill (and Pennsylvania Hospital of Washington Square West) Historic District occupies an extraordinary place in the history of urban planning, architecture, development, society, culture, commerce and religion. It not only contains the largest concentration of eighteenth and early-nineteenth century buildings in the country, but also illustrates the course of urban design well into the second half of the twentieth century. The streets and blocks of Society Hill reveal the perseverance and practicality of Thomas Holme's 1682 plan of a grid and square for the city - a plan already modified by events before 1700, yet still adaptable to mid-twentieth century planning concepts and goals. Within this context stands a broad spectrum of architectural styles ranging from modest Colonial dwellings through elegant Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival houses to modern high-rises. These buildings illustrate more than the evolution of architectural fashion. They also reflect the history of diverse social and economic classes, ethnic groups, religions and institutions in the churches and temples, hospitals, bath houses and workplaces of the neighborhood. The long history of the district includes decades of social change and urban expansion that led to the conversion of many Society Hill houses into multi-family residential, commercial and industrial uses, and in the erection of buildings for light industry and institutions. Most recently, redevelopment and restoration have returned the area once again to a residential neighborhood.

Although marked changes have occurred in Society Hill over time, important features remain that characterize and define the district and its importance - the buildings themselves, the grid street pattern, and Washington Square, another legacy of the Holme plan. As demonstrated by archeological and construction excavations and by the developmental history of Society Hill, archeological features survive in the basements and under the streets, gardens and yards of this district. Above and below ground, Society Hill meets the criteria for designation as an historic district prescribed by the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 14-2007(5) of the Philadelphia Code.

**Colonial Planning**

William Penn (1644-1718) issued instructions and established "Conditions or Concessions" for the planning of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia and for the allocation of land in the province and city shortly after receiving Charles II's charter of 4 March 1681 for the colony. Indeed, the formulation of the plan for Philadelphia began before the selection of its site, which necessitated Penn's qualifying his initial assurances to potential purchasers of land in the city "if the place will allow it."

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See attached.

**10. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME/TITLE

Laura M. Spina & Elizabeth Harvey, Historic Preservation Planners

ORGANIZATION

Philadelphia Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER

1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor

CITY OR TOWN

Philadelphia

DATE

September 1998

TELEPHONE

215.683.4590

STATE

PA

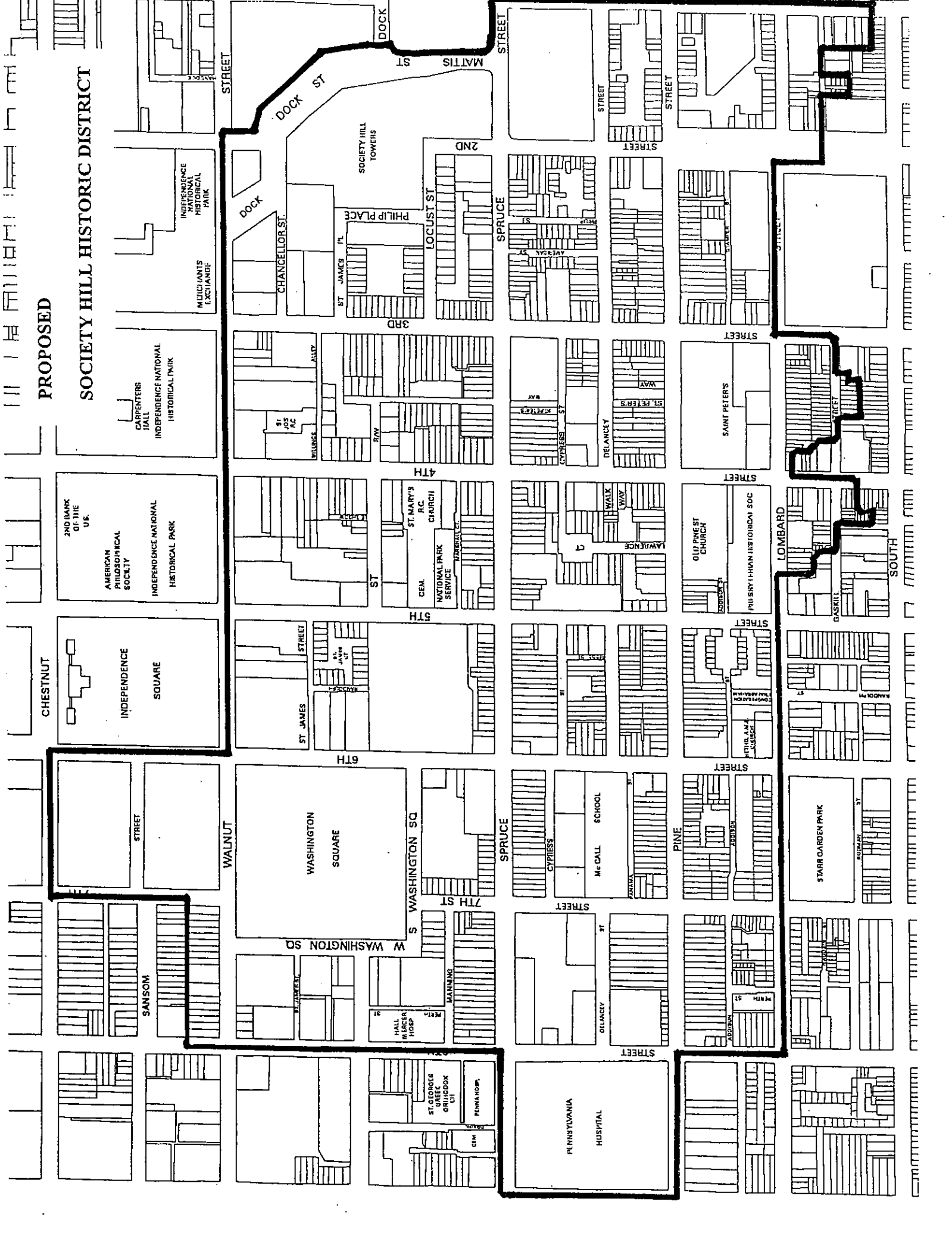
## **Section 5: Boundary Description**

The proposed boundary for the Society Hill Historic District begins at the corner of Walnut and Docks Street. The line goes west on Walnut to Sixth Street, north on Sixth to Chestnut Street, west on Chestnut to Seventh Street, south on Seventh to the rear of the properties on the north side of Walnut Street then west to Eighth Street, south on Eighth to Spruce Street, west on Spruce to Ninth Street, south on Ninth to Pine Street, east to Eighth then south to Lombard Street, east on Lombard to midway in the 400 block where the boundary goes south to include the properties backing the rear of the South Street properties.

The line continues east to Third Street then north to Lombard, east to Second Street, then south to Naudain Street, including South Hancock Street, then south on Howard to the rear of the South Street properties, then east to Front Street. The boundary travels north on Front to Dock Street, along the curve of Dock to Walnut.

PROPOSED

SOCIETY HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT



INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK  
 MEDICANTS EXCHANGE

CARPENTERS HALL  
 INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

2ND BANK OF THE U.S.  
 AMERICAN PHILOSOPIHICAL SOCIETY  
 INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

CHESTNUT  
 INDEPENDENCE SQUARE

WALNUT  
 WASHINGTON SQUARE

W WASHINGTON SQ  
 S WASHINGTON SQ  
 7TH ST

HALL BLECKER HOSP  
 ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH  
 PENNA HOSP.  
 CEM

DOCK ST  
 SOCIETY HILL TOWERS  
 PHILIP PLACE  
 LOCUST ST  
 2ND

4TH  
 ST. MARY'S R.C. CHURCH  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

5TH  
 ST. JAMES

6TH  
 ST. JAMES

SPRUCE  
 Mc CALL SCHOOL

GLANCY ST

PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL

PINE  
 STARR GARDEN PARK

ST. PETERS

ST. PETERS

LOMBARD  
 SOUTH

ST. PETERS

ST. PETERS

## Section 7: Description, continued

In the Federal Period, circa 1780-1805, Society Hill experienced an accumulation of capital that fueled continued construction, including the first speculative rowhouse development in Philadelphia. Sansom Row, built in 1799 on the 700 block of Walnut Street, is the first such row in Philadelphia. Federal period houses, while still rendered in Flemish bond, gabled roofs and classical ornaments of Georgian houses, have generally larger, flatter and more attenuated details. In England, Robert Adam had introduced a more delicate architecture with fine detailing and ornament, and the Federal period reflected his influence on this side of the Atlantic. The Hill-Physick house at 321 South Fourth Street (1786), the finest free-standing Federal house in Philadelphia, also reflects Penn's vision of houses sited in gardens and orchards, a vision more honored in the breach than the realization.

New residential development in Society Hill persisted into the mid-nineteenth century, as evidenced by the Greek Revival rowhouses such as 700-714 Spruce Street built circa 1835-36. The distinctive elements of these houses include flat, tall red brick facades, shallow gable roofs, marble watertables and stoops, and pedimented frontispieces. Another fine example of Greek Revival architecture, 709-19 Pine Street (c. 1835-36), incorporates such typical features as coupled-window dormers with pediments and marble lintels with decorative cornerblocks.

Although no vacant land remained in Society Hill by 1855, several fine Italianate houses replaced earlier dwellings within the district. An example of this style appears in the brownstone-fronted Bouvier Row, 258-260 South Third Street, built circa 1849-50 with bracketed cornices, balconies and window lintels. Several of Society Hill's extraordinary institutional and commercial structures also represent the Italianate style. The Athenaeum at 219 South Sixth Street, built 1845-47, stands as proto-typical of the revival of the Italian Renaissance palazzo in the United States. The Philadelphia Saving Fund Society building at 700-710 Walnut Street (1868-69) and the bank at 304 Walnut Street (c. 1859) remain as other distinguished examples of the Italianate style.

By the late 19th century, residential construction had subsided and later styles became expressed in alterations to older houses and by the scattered new buildings that replaced earlier dwellings. Several structures in Society Hill represent the presence of large African-American and Jewish communities that once occupied the area. The Romanesque Revival Mother Bethel Church, built circa 1889-90 at 419 South Sixth Street, stands as a proud reminder of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century African-American settlement along the southwestern edge of the district. The late nineteenth-century Eastern European Jewish presence in Philadelphia is represented by the Byzantine Revival B'nai Abraham Synagogue, built circa 1884 at 521-525 Lombard Street.

The insurance, banking and printing industries, which grew up along the northern edge of the district and Washington Square, introduced into Society Hill the Queen Anne Style with the American Fire Insurance Company at 308-310 Walnut Street (1881) by Furness, Evans & Company; the Colonial Revival Style of the Curtis and Public Ledger Buildings, at 128-148 South Sixth Street (1910-14) and 600 Chestnut Street (1926-27) respectively; the Renaissance Revival Style of the Lea & Febiger building, built in 1913 at 700 Locust Street, and Art Deco with the N.W. Ayer Building, built in 1928 on West Washington Square.

Most recently, the redevelopment of the district included low-rise townhouses such as Bingham Court (1967) and Blackwell Court (1968) as well as high-rise apartments construction such as Hopkinson House (1961) and Society Hill Towers (1964). These new buildings in the modern style leave the mark of the mid-twentieth century within the district.

Paving materials and street furnishings contribute to the character of Society Hill. Although asphalt covers most of the streets, a few, such as the 200 and 300 blocks of Delancey Street, Dock Street and Second Street, retain their exposed Belgian block surfaces. Granite and bluestone curbs, found throughout the

district, border brick sidewalks that date from the redevelopment period of the 1950s and 1960s. Pedestrians can find numerous pieces of sculpture in the greenway system and the center block courtyards, dating from the redevelopment period. During redevelopment, the City also installed replicas of eighteenth century streetlights. These electric lamps even replicate the horizontal braces used historically to support the lamplighter's ladder when refilling the lamp oil. Additional street furnishings include some original marble carriage steps on the sidewalks in front of some houses and the horse troughs on the south side of Washington Square and east side of South 9th Street.

Typical architectural accoutrements in this district include the "busy bodies" (mirror viewing sets) attached to many second story windows and original and reproduction fire markers as well as Philadelphia Historical Commission designation and State historical markers.

Society Hill contains a major collection of eighteenth and early nineteenth century American architecture. Its developmental history, however, did not end at some arbitrary time after this early phase. Scattered throughout this collection stand important buildings in later architectural styles designed in some instances by prominent architects such as Thomas U. Walter, John Notman, Addison Hutton, Frank Furness, Ralph Bencker and I. M. Pei. The post-World War II redevelopment of Society Hill constitutes a unique urban renewal project that forms a model for the restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures within a revitalization context. As a district, the buildings of Society Hill reflect the history of the heterogeneous mix of class, ethnicity and faith -- wealthy, poor, middling, European, African, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish -- all within walking distance of each other that characterized Philadelphia for at least the first two centuries of its history. Few other neighborhoods or cities in the country offer such a collection of residential, religious and commercial buildings or such a perspective on urban development.



## Section 8: Significance, continued

Penn's original concept for the city - his much quoted "greene Country Towne" - assumed a settlement of 10,000 acres of free standing houses surrounded by orchards or gardens on large lots. The site, however, actually selected for the city contained only 1,200 acres. Thomas Holme (1624-1695), Penn's surveyor-general, responded to the proprietor's previous instructions, the immediate demands of settlers and investors, and what "the place will allow" within 1,200 acres. In 1682 and 1683, he laid out the plan published in "A Portraiture of the City of Philadelphia" of deep, narrower lots on streets in a grid pattern with five public squares. Introduced in English North America by Holme in Philadelphia, this plan of the grid and public squares became common throughout the south, middle west and beyond, as the country grew westward. Yet as early as 1700, the imperative for proximity to the Delaware River, poor transportation and unpaved streets led to the intrusion of small alleys to afford access for development to the interior of the blocks defined in Holme's plan.

Society Hill occupies a large portion in the southeastern quadrant of Penn's city. The district derives its name from the Free Society of Traders in Pennsylvania, a joint-stock company chartered by Penn in 1682 to foster development in the colony. Penn granted to the Free Society one hundred acres of city land in a strip approximately 350 feet wide from the Delaware River toward the Schuylkill between Pine Street and Spruce Street with no frontage on the latter. This parcel contained a hill overlooking Dock Creek at Front Street known as the Society's Hill. The name prevailed even after the demise of the Society itself and the sale of its remaining lands in 1723.

The sale of the defunct Society's land permitted development southward along the Delaware waterfront by private investors. The early infilling of the south fork of Dock Creek further facilitated this expansion. In 1745, developers Edward Shippen and Joseph Wharton erected shambles, market stalls, at Second and Lombard Streets to provide a "New Market" for the City's southern extension. Given the condition of the streets, the High [Market] Street Shambles were too far away. Later, Wharton and Powell offered free lots to schools and other establishments to improve the area. All this encouraged building of various kinds of structures in Society Hill, including several large, free-standing mansions by the elite, diverse churches and many houses of gentlemen, merchants, sea captains, tradespeople, laborers, servants and transient visitors. Attracted by community facilities such as churches and the New Market, Society Hill's population grew and its northern and southern neighborhood boundaries arrived at approximately their present positions.

### Social History

Society Hill maintained stability throughout most of the eighteenth century as a socially and economically mixed community experiencing continued construction of houses whose architectural styles reflected the evolution of domestic design. Well into the first half of the nineteenth century, mid-wives, harness makers, blacksmiths, and layers-out-of-the-dead, servants, slaves, people of color and new immigrants lived in close proximity with physicians, merchants, lawyers, gentlemen, masters, whites, established families. During this era of the "walking city," Society Hill was characterized by socioeconomic diversity, and size of housing rather than location denoted affluence and social status. Dwellings ranged from the two-story bandboxes for workers on Drinker's Court, built circa 1765 on Delancey Street, to the nearby four and one-half story house erected circa 1759 for Captain James Abercrombie, a prosperous seagoing merchant, at Second and Spruce Streets.

Although the condition of the streets and the absence of affordable - if any - public transportation in the walking city contributed significantly to the high degree of residential intermingling in Society Hill, some clusters did emerge by the end of the eighteenth century. In the earlier years, people of color had tended to live dispersed throughout the city. The census of 1790, however, reveals a concentration of African Americans west of South Fourth Street and from Pine Street to below South Street. The distribution of African American churches demonstrates this same clustering. Extending westward as the city grew, this corridor became the center of black Philadelphia from the era of Richard Allen who founded Mother

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church at Sixth and Lombard Streets to that of W.E.B. Dubois' *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, a century later, and beyond. Relatively few black households existed in the commercial core above Spruce Street and below Race Street. Despite these concentrations and trends, the continued lack of cheap public transportation and the availability of small, inexpensive houses on the side streets and alleys kept Society Hill somewhat diverse socially and economically until the second half of the nineteenth century.

Late nineteenth-century improvements in transportation and the growth of large factories in other parts of the industrializing Philadelphia reshaped city space, creating segregated communities centered on job opportunity while spacious living arrangements were developed elsewhere for the elite. Workers often moved to the city's peripheries where large factories and new housing were built on less expensive land. Many well-to-do residents moved west to new, more fashionable, and generally larger houses around Rittenhouse Square. Meanwhile, Philadelphia's constantly increasing population, bolstered by immigration, kept Society Hill's older and less expensive houses occupied.

In the 1890s and 1900s, Philadelphia received a flood of immigrant refugees from Russia, Eastern Europe and Italy, and the City's population jumped to over 1,549,000. Finding work in the needlecraft trades and tobacco business, Eastern European Jews started to settle in the port neighborhood of Society Hill. Although the new occupants altered many dwellings to provide ground-floor stores, the houses of Society Hill escaped the widespread demolition and replacement experienced in "Old City" Philadelphia. Many well-to-do Russian Jews bought and preserved intact the handsome houses on Spruce and Pine Streets. Additional surviving structures that illustrate the Jewish presence during this era include the Rebecca Gratz Club, a foundling hospital (built in 1913 at 536 Spruce Street), and B'Nai Abraham, a synagogue (built circa 1884 at 521 Lombard Street). Often financially backed by Philadelphia's older German Jewish population, these Russian Jews constructed meeting halls, lodge headquarters, funeral parlors and organizations concerned with health, mutual aid, temporary shelter and social work. Jewish religious and political groups were established. Although efforts were made to improve deteriorating housing, economic stress led to the decline of the neighborhood. In the early twentieth-century, Philadelphia's expanded electric street-car system provided efficient and economical transportation that opened new residential areas for middle class development, and an exodus of the upwardly mobile Jewish population from Society Hill followed.

### **Redevelopment and Preservation**

By the mid-twentieth century, Society Hill had become a deteriorated area that housed disadvantaged immigrants and minorities, and a variety of manufacturing and distributing facilities. Most of the housing stock had minimal amenities and some lacked even the most basic, such as hot water and central heating. After World War II, Philadelphia found itself with a shortage of housing adequate for the standards of the day; at the same time political and social reformers sought to establish that access to well-built housing was the right of all members of society. With this in mind, and in an attempt to revitalize and beautify Philadelphia, increase its declining tax base and provide an enhanced context for the development of Independence National Historic Park and Independence Mall, Philadelphia's leaders recognized the potential of the Society Hill area.

Several Philadelphians proved instrumental in redeveloping the City and Society Hill in particular. Several private individuals, including Robert Trump, Arnold Nicholson and Charles Peterson purchased houses and restored them with the hope that the area would be recognized and redeveloped. Stationed in Philadelphia in 1947 by the National Park Service, Charles Peterson formed a team of architects and researchers that recorded the early historic buildings in the area. Richardson Dilworth (1898-1974), Mayor of Philadelphia for six years beginning in 1956; Edmund Bacon (1910- ), Executive Director of the City Planning Commission; and Albert Greenfield, Chair of the City Planning Commission, strongly influenced the rehabilitation of Society Hill. Their recognition of the rarity of the architecture in the area and their commitment to creating a strong urban environment set the stage for Society Hill's redevelopment. The City Planning Commission and Redevelopment Authority, with assistance from the newly created

Philadelphia Historical Commission, instituted the Washington Square East Urban Renewal Plan in 1958, utilizing federal urban renewal monies. This plan gained national attention as one of the first attempts in the country to upgrade a deteriorated neighborhood through the restoration and revitalization of existing housing stock. The new residential scheme included not only housing, but "greenways", parks and public art with an emphasis on outdoor sculpture, to create a neighborhood sympathetic to its historic structures.

The redevelopment plan included two major goals: sympathetic infill of new structures around existing historic buildings and increased density of population. In the main, the infill housing approved by the City Planning Commission for the historic zone reflected the current design philosophies of the mid-twentieth century. All of the low-rise buildings adapted to the scale and materials of the older Society Hill houses, but experimented with fenestration sizes and patterns, roof-lines and door designs. These offered potential residents the option of living in a new building within the historic area. Redevelopment also required immediately increasing the density of middle-class residents to support the neighborhood economically; the Society Hill Towers, built in 1964, fulfilled that requirement. Designed by I.M. Pei, the three towers anchor the eastern end of Society Hill and offer individual apartments in a well-landscaped area. However, the towers occupy several blocks of Second Street, interrupting the street plan established by Holme.

Society Hill's planned redevelopment displays an evolution in preservation theory. As the nation's first urban renewal project based on preservation, it exemplified "reconstruction" - the earliest restoration standard of American preservation theory. As such the Redevelopment Authority focused on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: anything built later was expendable. The Authority generally required the return of designated buildings to their earliest appearance, including removal of later alterations, such as the small storefronts introduced in the nineteenth century, and reconstruction of original, residential facades. Although, the Redevelopment Authority based the restorations on the best possible research available at that time, current scholarship has proven that some of the reconstructions are not completely accurate. In other instances the architects provided interpretations for the new facades. Many buildings erected in the nineteenth century were razed to make room for greenways or new construction. Even in cases where the later alteration proved more important than the original construction, the Redevelopment Authority directed that original facades be reconstructed. For example, at 238 South Third Street, the Philadelphia Historical Commission approved the removal of a nineteenth-century facade designed by Wilson Eyre; a decision that would not be made today.

Although the redevelopment period resulted in the preservation of a substantial portion of the historic fabric of Society Hill, it drastically changed the neighborhood composition. Most of the buildings had been converted to apartments and tenements as well as commercial and industrial uses that serviced a large African-American and Jewish population. The Redevelopment Authority offered property owners a choice: redevelop the property according to the Authority's building and preservation standards, sell the property to the Authority or face condemnation. However, the many tenants of the neighborhood had no such choice and had to leave the neighborhood. This large-scale displacement of residents, mostly minorities, led to the widespread impression that preservation promotes gentrification.

### Architectural History

The housing stock and other buildings saved through the redevelopment of Society Hill provide a context for understanding eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century life. The Rhoads-Barclay house at 217 Delancey Street testifies to the fine architectural talent in early Philadelphia. Built 1756-58 by Samuel Rhoads, this Georgian house stands as one of the many remaining substantial homes built for sea captains and government officials. Also of prime architectural value, the Georgian Abercrombie House, built circa 1759 at 268 South Second Street, once held the title of tallest dwelling in the city and is one of the grander buildings of its era. The Hill-Physick house (1786), situated at 321 South Fourth Street, is the grandest free-standing mansion of Early Federal Society Hill. At the other end of the socioeconomic spectrum, Drinker's Court (circa 1765) and the houses of Bell's Court (1813-15) survive as reminders of the working class of the area. Buildings that provided services to the residents, such as the New Market Headhouse (1804) and Shambles (1745; enlarged in 1797-97) and Man Full of Trouble Tavern (circa 1761) also stand

restored.

The architecture in Society Hill provides an understanding of the evolution of architectural styles in Philadelphia through the subsequent centuries. The Old Pine Street Church, in its modernized form, represents the Greek Revival Style (erected c. 1768; alterations c. 1837), and the Bouvier brownstones built circa 1849-50 at 258-62 South Third Street exemplify the later Italianate style. Some Victorian fabric remains in the district's western section, such as the mansard roof at 638 Spruce Street (c. 1805; altered c. 1890). Much twentieth-century domestic architecture, interspersed throughout the neighborhood as part of the redevelopment program, brings this evolution to the present. This includes single-family dwellings such as the Kellogg House at 415 South 3rd Street, built in 1970, as well as multi-unit construction like Blackwell Court of 1968.

Society Hill's architect-designed buildings display the talents of major professional architects of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Three examples must suffice here. In 1799, Benjamin Latrobe designed a row of houses on the north side of the 700 block of Walnut Street for the developer William Sansom, an excellent example of Federal architecture. This block of twenty houses formed the city's first large-scale, speculative real estate development. In 1847, John Notman designed the first major Italianate building in the United States, the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, on Washington Square. In the twentieth century, Ioh Ming Pei gained public acclaim for his award-winning Society Hill Towers (1964).

Society Hill's many architecturally and historically significant churches reflect the fruition of Penn's Quaker belief, religious toleration. Among the district's five colonial churches is Old Pine Street Church at Fourth and Pine Streets, the last surviving colonial Presbyterian church in Philadelphia. Two Catholic churches tell the story of new-found religious freedom. Founded in 1734, Old St. Joseph's, the city's first Catholic parish, relied upon Penn's promise of religious liberty in his Charter of 1701, but hid its new church on tiny Willing's Alley. Less than thirty years later, in 1763, Old St. Mary's Catholic Church, this city's oldest Catholic church in continuous service, attested to the success of Penn's Holy Experiment by placing its highly visible building at 244 South Fourth Street. Two Anglican churches built in 1761, St. Peter's Episcopal Church at Third and Pine Streets and Old St. Paul's Church, remain. Built by Robert Smith under the direction of John Kearsley, St. Peter's carries a steeple added by William Strickland in 1842. Old St. Paul's at 225 South 3rd Street, also built by Robert Smith, supports alterations made by Strickland in 1830. Ironically, although the Pine Street Meeting House once stood on the Society's Hill, no Quaker meeting house survives in Society Hill. Recently, many of these churches have banded together to form an historic organization which has placed plaques at each of their sites, describing both Pennsylvania's commitment to religious toleration in general and the importance of each institution in particular.

Post-revolutionary churches in Society Hill express Philadelphia's sustained tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance. At Sixth and Spruce Streets, Holy Trinity Church (c. 1789), served a German Catholic congregation and founded the first Catholic orphan asylum in America. The Romanesque Revival building of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, built in 1889-90, stands on the oldest parcel of real estate owned continuously by African-Americans in the United States. Founded in 1793 by Richard Allen, a former slave, this is the mother church of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which became a national organization in 1816, with Allen as its first Bishop. At 521 Lombard Street, the Neo-Romanesque structure of B'Nai Abraham, was built in 1900 to serve the oldest Russian Jewish congregation in Philadelphia, founded in 1883. The history of Thomas U. Walter's Spruce Street Baptist Church, built in 1830 and remodeled in 1851, traces the ethnic patterns of Society Hill. First it changed to Congregation Beth Hamedrash Hagodal Nusach Ashkenaz, next to the Rumanian-American Congregation and then simply Society Hill Synagogue, a title it bears today.

Since the Colonial era, Philadelphia has been the nation's center for medicine and medical research. In 1751, Benjamin Franklin and Dr. Thomas Bond, who lived at 129 South Second Street, founded Pennsylvania Hospital. Samuel Rhoads designed the first purposely-built hospital in British North America for the site at Eighth and Pine Streets, then on the outskirts of the city. David Evans, Jr., designed

an extensive addition in 1794-1804. This new central pavilion, one of the finest examples of Federal architecture in the country, housed an oval operating theatre, located on the top floor beneath a skylight to provide adequate illumination. Over the centuries, Pennsylvania Hospital has expanded greatly and occupies several blocks in the western edge of the Society Hill neighborhood.

Architecturally and historically significant buildings tied to the insurance, banking, publishing and advertising industries are concentrated around Washington Square and along Walnut Street. The Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses from Loss of Fire, founded by Benjamin Franklin and the oldest fire insurance company in the United States, has occupied its Greek Revival headquarters designed by Thomas U. Walter on South Fourth Street since 1836. The Mutual Assurance Company for Insuring Houses from Loss by Fire was formed to answer a need that resulted from the 1781 decision of the Contributionship not to insure houses with trees. Commencing business in 1784, this country's second oldest fire insurance company used a green tree as its firemark. In 1912, the company moved to South Fourth Street, occupying the Shippen-Wistar House of 1798 and the neighboring Cadwalader House of 1828.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Walnut Street, especially the 300 block, became known as "Insurance Row." Today, two of its nineteenth-century buildings survive. The Italianate Pennsylvania Company for the Insurance of Lives Granting Annuities Building, erected circa 1859, still stands at 304 Walnut Street.

At 308-310 Walnut Street, the American Fire Insurance Company Building, built in 1840, remains with several significant alterations designed by Furness, Evans & Company. Two blocks west, the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company retained John Haviland's Egyptian Revival facade from circa 1839 which stands in front of its modern building erected in 1974.

Walnut Street, like neighboring Chestnut Street, also served as a banking center. In 1840, the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society (PSFS) built Thomas U. Walter's surviving Greek Revival building at 306 Walnut Street. PSFS, founded in 1816, ranks as the first savings bank in the United States. It moved from 306 Walnut Street to an Italianate building designed by Addison Hutton on Washington Square in 1869. Its Washington Square office still stands, with additions designed by Hutton; Furness, Evans, & Company, and Mellor, Meigs & Howe.

Just after the turn of the twentieth century, following the trend westward, Philadelphia's famous publishing houses moved to Washington Square, giving the Square the nickname "Publishers Row". J.B. Lippincott Company, famed for the country's most genteel periodicals, started the transformation in 1901. In 1912, W.B. Saunders Company, a major publisher of medical books, erected its seven-story building at Seventh and Locust Streets, and *The Farm Journal* took over the southwestern corner of the Square. In 1923, Lea & Febiger, the nation's oldest existing publishing firm, built its Italianate palazzo at 600 South Washington Square. By 1926, David McKay, Curtis Publishing, *The Catholic Standard and Times*, the Central News Company and the Pennsylvania Bible Society had also relocated around the Square. Complementing this publishing activity, the N.W. Ayer Building, housing the advertising firm founded in 1928, occupies a site on the west side of Washington Square.

Besides providing a backdrop for Publishers Row, Washington Square has played many roles throughout the history of Society Hill. In his grid plan for Philadelphia, Thomas Holme had created five squares of open space, one at each corner of the city and one in the center. Colonial residents used the southeast square as a potters field and pasture. Jacob Shoemaker paid rent for the privilege of pasturing his cows on the Square. During the Revolutionary War, it became the burial ground for many soldiers, which may earn the Square a place in Independence National Historic Park.

Historically the development of Society Hill proceeded with unplanned, piecemeal spot-building, reaching the Square in the early nineteenth century. In 1825, City leaders decided to name the squares to recall men who influenced Philadelphia history. They christened the southeast square, Washington Square in honor of George Washington. Today, Washington Square holds the City's war memorial and tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolutionary War, commemorating all those buried within its grounds.

The underlying soil in Washington Square, Headhouse Square and Shambles and much of the open space within Society Hill remains undisturbed and may yield significant archeological resources, especially the house sites in the area that had privy pits, cisterns, wells and yards. In general, all properties in the district, with the possible exception of those excavated to a depth of more than twenty-five feet (25'), have archeological potential and may yield information important in pre-history or history.

Changes in physical development, reliance on the Delaware River, ethnic and cultural diversity, and economic health shaped Society Hill as we know it today. In this, we see evidence of a neighborhood that exemplifies William Penn's tolerance for religious freedom; the remnants of a thriving commercial entity; a community of diverse peoples, and an integrated building fabric of old and new, academic and vernacular. The relationship between these elements allows us to understand the vibrant neighborhood that we see today. The preservation of Society Hill offers the opportunity to recognize the social and architectural fabric of an important and diverse area of Philadelphia that demonstrates changes made in each century since the City's founding.

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