

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**THURSDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2015, 9:30 A.M.
ROOM 578, CITY HALL
RICHARD DILWORTH, PH.D., CHAIR**

PRESENT

Richardson Dilworth III, Ph.D., chair
David Schaaf, R.A., Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Janet Klein
Bruce Laverty
Douglas Mooney
Jeffery Cohen, Ph.D.

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Broadbent, Historic Preservation Planner I
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner I

ALSO PRESENT

Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Joseph Menkevich
John Manton
Michael Bixler, Hidden City
Jared Brey, PlanPhilly
John Buffington, Historical Society of Frankford
Dimitrios Boufidis, Drexel University
Sam Margalies
Rachel Hildebrandt, Partners for Sacred Places
Moe Brooker
Tony Dominick
Mark Wagenveld
Tom McAvoy
Joseph Taylor
Leon Brantley
Steven Blackburn
Kathy Dowdell
John Weiner
Blaise Tobia
Constance Johnson
Mary McGettigan
Robert Roomet
Melani Lamond
Mike Lehman
Helma Weeks
Alina Macneal
Elaine Simon
Faye Anderson
Charles Haub

Alden Doyle
James Wright
Carolyn Healy
Patricia McCarthy
Tara Strickler
Murray Dubin
Oscar Beisert
Lilian Henderson
Frederick Davis
Lynn Singletary
Mike McIlhenney
Gloria Robinson
Jaquelyn M. Reese
Evelyn A. Hankinson
Prudence Harvey
Joyce Brown
Oscar H. Hankinson, Ph.D.
Bill Mellix
Janet E. Bernstein
Nancy Drye
John Phillips, Powleton Village Civic Association
George Poulin, Powleton Village Civic Association
Sharif Street, Esq.
Pastor Terrence Griffith
Pastor Larry Marcus
Sherman Aronson
Elizabeth Stegner, University City Historical Society
Lucia Esther, West Powelton Saunders Park Registered Community Organization
Liam Brandley
John Buffington

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Dilworth called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Ms. Klein and Messrs. Cohen, Lavery, Mooney, and Schaaf joined him.

1600-06 CHRISTIAN STREET, FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Nominator: Oscar Beisert

Owner: First African Baptist Church

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1600-06 Christian Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. The nomination argues that the building, designed by architectural firm Watson & Huckel and constructed in 1906, is significant as one of few examples from its period of an architect-designed church for an African-American congregation. The nomination further contends that the building is significant as a major community center in the neighborhood, and as the only extant resource representing the history of Philadelphia's oldest and largest African Baptist congregation.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Nominator Oscar Beisert represented the nomination. Pastor Terrence Griffith and attorney Sharif Street represented the property owner.

Mr. Beisert provided an overview of the nomination. He noted that the building is already protected by a 30-year covenant with the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC), and that his intention with the Philadelphia Register nomination is to ensure that it is protected eternally and that, if the building is sold and the congregation has to move on, a new owner will be compelled to reuse the building, which should remain as a representation of the African American community in that neighborhood.

Attorney Sharif Street, counsel for the First African Baptist Church, opined that the nomination is flawed, specifically in that the building was not purpose-built for an African American congregation, and was not the first home of the First African Baptist Church. He stated that the structure existed prior to the church acquiring it, and that it was the third home of the First African Baptist Church. Second, he noted that whether the covenant is binding is a matter of dispute at this time. Third, he contended that, since the bell tower from the original structure was removed ten to fifteen years ago, the existing structure no longer represents architecturally the original manifestation of the church from 100 years ago. Fourth, he said, there are other locations where the church existed prior to this building. Fifth, a spin-off congregation of the First African Baptist Church exists at another location, so this is not the only manifestation. Sixth, to designate the property would impose a financial hardship, which threatens the real historical entity, the congregation itself.

Mr. Street requested that the Commission not make a determination until after the issues with the Department of Licenses & Inspections (L&I) are resolved, and noted that the outcome of the L&I determination could impose a financial hardship on his client. Mr. Schaaf asked Mr. Farnham whether the Committee was required to make a recommendation. Mr. Farnham responded that the Committee should make a recommendation to the Commission, but that recommendation does not necessarily need to relate to the merits of the nomination; the Committee could recommend that the Commission table the nomination and remand it back to the Committee after the court case is decided, or it could make a recommendation based on the merits of the nomination.

Mr. Dilworth opened the floor to public comment. Oscar Hankinson commented that, while he understood Mr. Street's argument that the building is one of several that the congregation has occupied over the years, this building is significant because it was constructed by African Americans at a time when African Americans were not building churches, but were simply

buying into other churches. This building, he continued, is probably one of the older black Baptist churches and it would be a crime to destroy that building. Furthermore, over the years, he said, there has not been very much money put into the church, and it is time for black people to understand that they have a heritage. He observed that there would be no historic structures around if people did not take the time to say "we need to preserve this." He noted that, although he and the people he represents would prefer to see the congregation remain in the church, he understands that that may not be an option, and regardless of where the congregation goes, they would like to see the building preserved. He opined that funds are available, such as through the sale of one of the church's other buildings that on today's market would sell for more than \$.5 million and could be sold for funds to reconstruct the damaged wall of the church.

Mr. Beisert clarified that he received a letter from PHMC stating that they conducted a preliminary determination that the building is still eligible for the National Register, even with the alterations that have been made to it. Mr. Street objected.

Mr. Schaaf asked Mr. Beisert to address the claim made by Mr. Street that the building was not "purpose-built" for an African American congregation. Mr. Beisert suggested that Mr. Street was objecting to the fact that this was not the congregation's original building, and that it had occupied several other buildings before moving to this building. Mr. Laverty asked who commissioned this structure. Mr. Beisert directed the Committee's attention to page 25 of the nomination, which shows the original building drawings titled "First African Baptist."

Pastor Griffith commented that he is an advocate for preservation. He noted that, when he became pastor, the church was in deplorable condition and the bell tower had already been removed. At the time, he spoke to a man named Tom Chris, who was involved with exhuming bodies at a First African Baptist burial ground when the Vine Street Expressway was being built. He recounted that Mr. Chris had told him that the bell tower had not needed to be removed and that the man who removed the tower had been nothing more than a cement pourer and done a terrible job. Pastor Griffith noted that, when he became pastor, he learned that the bodies of former members had been exhumed and reinterred at Eden Cemetery without tombstones, and he had commissioned a marker to commemorate them.

Pastor Griffith noted that he had pursued the listing of the building on the National Register and had gone to Governor Rendell and the PHMC, where he spoke with PHMC staff member Scott Doyle. He stated that he met with Mr. Doyle and Mr. Hankinson, and Mr. Doyle had told him that the church would never be historically certified because of the removed bell tower, and so they dropped the application. Pastor Griffith had tried to get the building listed on the National Register because he had been told that there were pots of money available for repairs to designated properties. He said he set out on an ambitious plan to restore the church, and they even talked about having the tower restored, but were stopped dead in their tracks by Scott Doyle at PHMC, who said that the church could not be designated as historic.

Pastor Griffith expressed frustration that Mr. Beisert, someone who has never had any interest in the church, someone he has never seen before or heard of, has nominated the church. He opined that there are two competing priorities: the preservation of a historic congregation, the First African Baptist Church, and the preservation of a church building. He opined that the discussion is about the survival of the most historic African Baptist Church in the State of Pennsylvania, and, as far as the members of his congregation are concerned, the survival of the congregation is much more important than the preservation of the building. He noted that there is a historic marker outside the building, but it does not speak to the history of the building, it speaks to the history of the congregation. He commented that they want their congregation to

be preserved for centuries, so the members of the church, after spending a lot of money on restoration, voted overwhelmingly to divest of the building and find another building. The survival of the congregation depends on the sale of the building. The congregation is the important historic artifact, not the building, which is just one in a long line of buildings the congregation will occupy. Pastor Griffith noted that, even if someone has money to spend on the repair of the building, the congregation will still move because the neighborhood has gentrified and the congregants have moved on. He noted that over the years he has not anyone with an interest in preserving the African American congregation provide funding. Regarding the potential designation, he opined that if the building becomes historically certified, the value of the building will drop, and it will prevent congregation from moving where they want to move. He reiterated that Scott Doyle told them that National Register designation “is not going to happen.”

Mr. Cohen asked if the pastor could speak to whether the building was constructed for the congregation. Pastor Griffith responded that, yes, the African Americans built the church, but there are other churches that African Americans built in the city. He noted that, unlike other denominations, such as the A.M.E or Catholic churches, Baptist churches are autonomous and cannot rely on the support of a centralized church government to assist them monetarily. He articulated that every Baptist church runs itself, so even though they are the oldest African Baptist church in the State of Pennsylvania, no one else has a vested interest in seeing the church preserved. Because Mother Bethel is the oldest A.M.E. church in the country, and there is a centralized church structure, they are duty-bound to preserve it. Mr. Cohen clarified that he was asking a much more focused question regarding Mr. Street’s statement that the nomination was flawed in saying that the building was purpose-built for the congregation. Mr. Street responded that his understanding was that the nomination claimed that this was the first purpose-built African American church. Mr. Cohen responded that that is not what the nomination claims. Mr. Beisert responded that this church is one of the oldest purpose-built African Baptist churches, and the oldest African Baptist congregation. Pastor Griffith responded that an earlier church still exists on Cherry Street. Mr. Hankinson replied that the Cherry Street church was not built for the congregation, but was purchased by the congregation. Pastor Griffith noted that they marched from the Cherry Street church to the current church when they launched their capital campaign. Mr. Cohen reiterated that the nomination does not claim it was the oldest African American church. Mr. Street responded that he was pointing out that there are several purpose-built African American churches. Mr. Schaaf noted that the building’s architect, Samuel Huckel, was also one of the architects for Mother Bethel.

Mr. Hankinson commented that the original vote of the church regarding whether the congregation should sell the building and relocate was contested. He stated that no vote was taken. Pastor Griffith responded that Mr. Hankinson was not there because he is not a member. Mr. Hankinson said that significant amounts of money have not been spent on the church, either before or after Pastor Griffith arrived. Mr. Hankinson noted there was a campaign that raised money, including through the sale of buildings on Christian Street, and helped pay off one of the contractors. He estimated that the amount of money spent over the last 15 years, on the building was about \$200,000. Mr. Street responded that that is not true. Mr. Dilworth responded that that information is not particularly relevant to the Committee’s review.

Prudence Harvey, a member of the congregation, asked to speak about the building as a historic building for African Americans. Ms. Harvey stated, “I’m looking around the room and it is somewhat disgraceful that we seem to have most of these black folks in here who want to tear down their heritage. For those of us born in America, this is our heritage. For those of us born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, this church is our heritage. And we are willing to tear this building down and not respect the folks who came out of slavery to help build this church, because when

the church started, some of those folks were still slaves. And 109 years ago, we had not been out of slavery that long.” Pastor Griffith responded that he takes offense to Ms. Harvey’s comments regarding those who were born in Philadelphia. He stated that he was born in Grenada, but he takes pride in the church. He again noted that, when he became pastor and discovered there were bodies reinterred at Eden Cemetery with no marker, he ensured that a marker was installed. He stated that, if it is black heritage, it is his heritage.

Mr. Street responded to Ms. Harvey, noting that he was born in Philadelphia and is connected to the church. His mother, Helen Smith, was baptized in the church along with her 12 brothers and sister. He reiterated that the intention is to preserve the congregation, which may fold if the building is designated. He stated that L&I has cited the east wall as imminently dangerous and that it could collapse at any time. That would be a disaster that could endanger all African Baptists in the country, all for the sake of a building that is the fourth building of the congregation. If the congregation has survived the move to four buildings, it can survive the move from this one, and it is not that the people here do not value their heritage, but the true heritage is found in the people and not the building.

Mr. Schaaf asked if the building is still used for worship services. Congregants in the audience responded affirmatively. Pastor Griffith noted that a judge had ordered that gatherings in the building cease, and that they had to provide an engineer’s report. He noted that the L&I inspector’s main concern was with a parapet, and that he feared that if the one wall collapses, there would be a domino effect. He noted that the hearing regarding the violation is coming up soon.

Moe Brooker commented that there are two issues at stake: the idea and the building. He opined that ideas move into the future, but buildings do not. As one looks at Christianity generally, he continued, it is not based on a church or a building, but an idea that continues to grow and can involve itself in any building. This building, he noted, is an old building with outdated systems that are inadequate. To refit the building, he continued, would cost an inordinate amount of money that the congregation cannot support. So, in his mind, it is a question of an idea, and whether that idea is more important than a building. He stated that he thinks that ideas are more important because ideas continue to grow and develop.

Faye Anderson, the director of All That Philly Jazz, a public history project, expressed her support for the nomination. On 9 June 2009, she noted, City Council passed a resolution thanking First African Baptist Church for its contribution to Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the nation. That acknowledgement, she continued, that First African Baptist Church is important not just to Baptists and not just to Philadelphia, was echoed at the 9 August 2015 hearing on L&I’s complaint, when Municipal Court Judge Craig Washington said it is a very important building to America, not just to Philadelphia, not just to the Baptists. Ms. Anderson discussed a study conducted by the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia that stated that the black church was a refuge. First African Baptist Church, she continued, was no exception. It was a place of refuge, a great rock in a weary land, from emancipation to the Great Migration, through the Civil Rights Movement era, First African Baptist Church tells an American story of faith, defiance, and triumph. Almost 86 years ago, on 4 September 1929, Thurgood Marshall wed Vivian Burey at First African Baptist Church. As chief counsel for the NAACP, Marshall won *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, the landmark Supreme Court decision that desegregated public schools. Marshall later went on to become the first African American to serve on the Supreme Court. Ms. Anderson urged the Committee, in the names of Samuel and John Bivens, the two free men who sold themselves into slavery to free the first pastor of First African Baptist Church, to recommend the designation of First African Baptist Church.

Mr. Street responded that, while Judge Washington did mention the historic nature of the church, he also noted the dangers of the church. The preliminary report, he stated, shows that several areas of the church are about to collapse. Mr. Street passed a report around the Committee table. Mr. Street noted that the judge requested additional documentation before he made a determination as to whether the building would need to be demolished. Mr. Hankinson commented that, if the building is in imminent danger of collapsing, he did not think anyone would object to its demolition.

Ms. Harvey commented that people from all over the world travel to other parts of the world to visit old churches that were not torn down, in order to learn and understand the history of them. Future generations, she noted, will be able to come to the building, to these stones, to tell their children and generations to come about this church and this particular spot. She reiterated that it is horrendous that black people would want to tear down a building that represents their heritage. If it is the congregation they are concerned about, she noted, the congregation can move on. Other congregations in this city have not torn down their churches and have moved on and become bigger churches, she said. Pastor Griffith responded that a lot of people who want to preserve the building are just talking to talk, but have not put money towards preserving the building. He noted that no one in the room disagrees that preservation is good, but it has to be done with reason, and again, what is significant here is the people. He noted that they would repair the church if they had the money. He challenged the nominators to go out and raise the money to preserve the church. Pastor Griffith expressed displeasure with the fact that anyone can nominate any building and then just walk away. He noted that there may be many churches that should be listed on the Register, but that people should not be crusading to nominate a building because they have disagreement with a congregation.

Mr. Street commented that some of this controversy began not from the congregation seeking demolition, but L&I contacting the church about safety concerns, after which time the church took actions to divest itself of the structure. After contacting an engineer, he continued, it is clear that the church does not have the money to make the necessary repairs that L&I has requested. He noted that the nomination was submitted after L&I had already issued the violations.

Ms. Klein asked whether the court-ordered engineer's assessment has been undertaken yet. Mr. Street responded that L&I's internal city engineers reviewed the property and determined that it is dangerous, but that the judge ordered the City to hire a third-party independent engineer to conduct an inspection and complete a report, which has not yet been conducted. He noted that Joanna Klein at the Law Department is handling the case.

Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance expressed the Alliance's strong support for the designation of the property. He noted that there is nothing to suggest that the PHMC covenant is non-binding, and that that has yet to be worked out. He disagreed with the assertion that the absence of the bell tower makes the building ineligible. He noted that this building is not significant because it had a bell tower; it is significant because it is one of the oldest extant homes of an independent black congregation in the United States and the city of Philadelphia. In an era when the city has lost numerous icons of black history, he continued, this building is a clear candidate for designation for its historical significance and the way that the built environment speaks to a shared past.

Ms. Anderson claimed that the fact that L&I has not completed the review and the hearing is not scheduled until 1 October shows that the building is not imminently dangerous. She noted that no one is holding the congregation hostage; they are seeking to preserve the building. She

noted that anyone can nominate a building, because that is the law. Mr. Street disagreed and stated that L&I has determined that the building is imminently dangerous. He claimed that the judge has not allowed L&I to proceed with the demolition, but that does not indicate that the building is not imminently dangerous. He stated that attorney Joanna Klein at the City's Law Department could confirm that the building has been declared imminently dangerous. Mr. Dilworth asked when the determination of imminently dangerous was made. Mr. Street responded that it was made in June. Mr. Dilworth asked when the last worship service was held in the building, and the congregants in the audience responded that the last service was held on Sunday, 12 September 2015. Mr. Laverty asked why, if the building is imminently dangerous, they are still meeting in the church. Mr. Street responded that there are portions of the building that they have had to stop using because of an agreement with L&I, and there were things that were put up inside to prevent people from entering those portions of the building. He noted that, when the weather gets colder and water gets into the building and freezes, it could collapse, which is why L&I told the judge to make the determination no later than October. Mr. Street claimed that a designation of imminently danger is made by the City when the City believes that a building could collapse within six months, but does not mean that it is going to collapse tomorrow. He stated that a potential collapse tomorrow would be categorized as immediate harm, and if the building was found to be an immediate harm, the city could demolish it right away.

Mr. Dilworth asked if being at risk of immediate harm would disqualify its historic significance. Mr. Laverty wanted to know why, if the leaders of the church are saying that the building is imminently dangerous, they are still meeting there.

Mr. Cohen pointed out that the purview of this Committee is whether the building is historically significant; it does not judge whether a building is dangerous or not, or whether there is a financial hardship. All these other conversations can be held in other venues, he stated. Mr. Street responded that it is not for this Committee, but he is trying to create a record that will be relevant to the Historical Commission. He contended that a designation would create a financial hardship for this building. The costs of repairs to the building, Mr. Street continued, are relevant to the Historical Commission. Mr. Schaaf responded that the applicant could appear before the Committee on Financial Hardship once the building was designated. Mr. Cohen reiterated that that the hardship argument is germane to the Committee of Financial Hardship and the Commission, but not the Committee on Historic Designation.

Mr. Dilworth attempted to summarize the discussion thus far into three major points. First, he noted, anyone can nominate a building; that fact is not up for debate. He stated that the vast majority of buildings nominated to the Philadelphia Register are done so by people other than the property owner, and frequently the property owner is opposed to designation. He noted that the Commission, not the Committee, does discuss and may take into consideration owner consent. Second, Mr. Dilworth noted, the question of the physical condition of the church would fall under the question of financial hardship, which could be addressed after the building is designated. If the building were going to collapse tomorrow, he continued, it would still be historically significant today. The Committee typically draws a clear line between the questions of historic significance and financial hardship. Third, Mr. Dilworth noted, is the argument that what is truly significant about the building is the congregation and the formation of the church as an institution, but not the building. He opined that what the Committee is considering here is a physical building, which is a manifestation of the long-time congregation. He noted that, of course, the congregation could move somewhere else, but they have been at this building for a long time. He stated that the Committee has recommended designation for events that have occurred in buildings that are of historic significance but that do not necessarily have much to do

with the actual physical structure of the building. He opined that often the historic use of a building is reflected in the physical structure of the building, and that in this case, the fact that this building was purpose-built for a certain congregation certainly suggests that there might be some level of overlap between the historic use of the building and the physical structure of the building. Finally, Mr. Dilworth advised that the Committee offers a non-binding recommendation; it does not decide whether the building becomes listed on the Philadelphia Register. The Commission, he noted, has a broader purview. Designation is a discretionary act. The Commission is never required to designate. He also noted that a separate Committee on Financial Hardship could address questions related to the financial burden of having to repair a church that is designated.

Mr. Lavery noted that there was nothing mentioned about architecture in the nomination. The Criteria for Designation A and J speak only to the social significance of the building. Since the architectural significance was not claimed in the nomination, Mr. Lavery suggested that the Committee not get sidetracked by the question of whether the building maintains its architectural significance, and should focus solely on the significance discussed in and the merits of the nomination as submitted. For himself personally, he noted, there is no question of the historical importance of the building as a built manifestation of major themes in American history, particularly African American and Baptist history.

Mr. Beisert commented that if there are other areas of significance that the Committee would like to see addressed in the nomination, he would be open to amending it. Mr. Lavery replied that he does not recommend amendments at this time.

Pastor Larry Marcus of the Greater Faith Baptist Church asked whether the Committee's recommendation would be based on the presentation made today or if the people opposed to a designation could submit their opposition in writing to the Committee. Mr. Dilworth responded that unless someone has something with them that they would like to present to the Committee, this would be the only venue in which the Committee would be reviewing the historical significance of the building. Mr. Dilworth noted that those who wished to express their positions could submit them in writing for presentation to the Historical Commission, or present them in person at the Historical Commission meeting. Mr. Schaaf noted that the Historical Commission meeting is an additional venue for offering testimony. If someone would like to submit something in writing for the record, they may do so prior to the Commission meeting on 9 October 2015, he noted.

Pastor Griffith asked whether the Committee had to make a recommendation to the Commission. Mr. Lavery responded that the Committee could make one of three recommendations: no, the building is not historically significant as outlined in the nomination; yes, it is significant; or the nomination should be tabled for additional review. Mr. Farnham agreed, stating that the Committee could make a recommendation that the nomination does or does not satisfy either or both of the Criteria for Designation, or it could recommend that the Commission table it in anticipation of additional information. Mr. Farnham noted that, if someone were to develop additional information about the building's historical significance, unrelated to its condition or to the financial capacity of the congregation to rehabilitate it, they could certainly present that information to the Commission at its meeting and request that the Commission table the nomination and remand that information back to this Committee, its Committee of expert historians, to assess it. If someone develops information over the next few weeks following the Committee meeting that contradicts the nomination, such information would be significant, and the Commission would likely refer the nomination and new information back to the Committee for evaluation.

Mr. Farnham clarified for the audience that the Historical Commission is given authority by the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance to designate a property if it satisfies one or more of the ten Criteria for Designation laid out in the ordinance. The Commission, he noted, is never required to designate; the ordinance states that the Commission "may designate." Designation is a discretionary act. The Committee on Historic Designation looks at the technical aspects of the nomination, the historical information. The Commission may look at the universe of considerations and be able to take into account the claims about condition and finances. Mr. Farnham noted that the majority of the concerns raised by those in opposition to the designation are better suited for the Commission meeting. The Commission does not necessarily have to make a decision at its 9 October 2015 meeting, but could, if it feels it needs additional information, postpone that decision.

Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Farnham if a nomination does not include architectural significance as one of the criteria, whether that weakens the Commission's authority to protect the historic fabric of a building. Mr. Farnham responded that it is a complicated question, but that it likely would not. He noted that a building may be important solely for its social or cultural associations, and not its architectural significance, but it is ultimately the material fabric of the building that represents its history and would be protected. Mr. Cohen noted that this building specifically still retains a great deal of integrity. He stated that he hoped that a nomination based on social and cultural history would not diminish its protection.

Pastor Griffith asked what protocols the owners of the building would have to follow in the context of repairs if the building were to be designated. Mr. Farnham responded that, if designated, the Commission would have the authority to review every building permit application submitted to the Department of Licenses & Inspections to ensure that the work proposed in the application satisfies preservation standards. Pastor Griffith clarified that no work could be done unless the Historical Commission approves it. Mr. Farnham agreed, noting that the Historical Commission would have to review and approve the work prior to the issuance of a permit. The Historical Commission, he noted, would not unilaterally require the owner to work on the building, but would only review within the scope of work proposed by the property owner. The only exception to that case is if a building falls into such disrepair, the Historical Commission could then attempt to compel the owner to repair the building through the courts and L&I. Mr. Street asked if court or L&I-mandated repairs would be subject to the Historical Commission's review. Mr. Farnham responded that, if the building is designated, the Historical Commission would have the authority to review any proposal for work, including demolition. If the Department of Licenses & Inspections declared the building imminently dangerous and it was truly a threat to public safety, Mr. Farnham continued, the Historical Commission would not stand in the way of demolition, but would promote public safety.

Pastor Griffith asked whether the Historical Commission currently has jurisdiction over the property. Mr. Farnham responded that the Historical Commission's jurisdiction began on the date of the notice letter sent to the property owner announcing the consideration of the nomination, and will persist until the Commission chooses not to designate the property. Mr. Street suggested that the ongoing proceedings in court with L&I, while perhaps not germane to this Committee, would be relevant to the Commission's determination.

Mr. Dilworth asked what would happen if the property was designated and then the court ordered the demolition of the building. Would the Historical Commission then have jurisdiction over any new construction on the site? Mr. Farnham responded that the site would remain designated until the Historical Commission released it from that designation. If the building were

designated and then ordered to be demolished, Mr. Farnham believed that the Commission would rescind the designation upon the request of the owner.

Mr. Schaaf asked if there was any support among the Committee members for recommending the addition of Criterion D, to add the architectural content to the nomination. Mr. Lavery responded that, if the Committee were to recommend tabling the nomination, he would be in favor of that addition, but if they planned to make a recommendation today, they should leave the nomination as presented.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Cohen moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the nomination demonstrates that property at 1600-06 Christian Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. Ms. Klein seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5710 WISSAHICKON AVENUE, FRANCIS R. STRAWBRIDGE HOUSE

Nominator: Oscar Beisert

Owner: Eastview Realty Association

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5710 Wissahickon Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and E. The nomination argues that the house, constructed in 1905-06 for Francis R. Strawbridge, is significant as an intact example of a Brockie & Hastings interpretation of the Colonial Revival style, as well as for being a fine example of the Georgian tradition of architecture in Philadelphia, and in Germantown specifically. The nomination further contends that the house is significant for its association with its first owner, Francis R. Strawbridge, the son of Justus C. Strawbridge, co-founder of the Strawbridge & Clothier Department Store, as well as his son G. Stockton Strawbridge.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.

The Committee members discussed the continuance request. Mr. Dilworth asked if there were comments from the audience, but none were offered.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Dilworth moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the Historical Commission table the nomination and remand it back to the Committee for review at its December 2015 meeting. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2176-78 E. YORK STREET, MR. THOMAS SHRINER HOUSE

Nominator: Laura DiPasquale, Philadelphia Historical Commission

Owner: Mohammed and Julie Sabur

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2176-78 E. York Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and H. The nomination argues that the purpose-built home and office, constructed in 1886, is significant as a remarkably well-preserved example of a Frank Furness interpretation of the Queen Anne style, and as a landmark building in the Kensington neighborhood. The nomination further argues that the building is significant for its association with its first owner, John Ruhl, a conveyancer and Councilman turned criminal, as well as its second owner, Dr. Thomas Shriner, one of the most prominent physicians in northeast Philadelphia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Likely commissioned using the ill-gotten gains of Ruhl's embezzling scheme, the elegant and intricately-detailed home and office is visually striking in a neighborhood of primarily working-class homes.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented, and represented, the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.

Ms. DiPasquale noted that the staff is having an internal debate about the meaning and use of Criterion H. Mr. Cohen asked if Ms. DiPasquale believes there is a case for H, and she responded that she feels that the building is a visually striking landmark in the neighborhood. Mr. Cohen agreed.

Mr. Cohen provided Ms. DiPasquale with friendly amendments, noting that she referred to the building in the staff overview as a "Frank Furness interpretation of the Queen Anne style," but that she should be careful in specifically saying that the building was designed by Frank Furness, as there is no definitive evidence to support the claim aside from the stylistic elements. He noted that the style is very much of Frank Furness, and that it clearly represents his influence, but that by the time of construction, other architects who had come out of Furness's office could also design buildings in such a manner. Ms. DiPasquale responded that she had been sure to make it clear in the nomination that the building has been attributed to Furness and reflects his influence, if not necessarily his own hand. Mr. Cohen agreed that her argument in the nomination was more nuanced than in the overview.

Mr. Cohen opined that the building is really in essence an example of the anti-Queen Anne style in that the language of the building is that of inventing new forms popular in the High Victorian. Furness and his protégés afterwards were insistent on making a modern architecture that departed from previous designs, Mr. Cohen noted. Most of the Queen Anne buildings, he continued, go back to old fashioned forms. This building still has the new-fangled forms that could not be found in the historic source books. The only thing that is Queen Anne about it, Mr. Cohen opined, other than its redness, is the small panes of the upper sashes of the windows. However, the telescoping cornice work belongs to a vocabulary of its own. Other than those small modifications, Mr. Cohen noted, he fully supported the nomination.

Mr. Schaaf noted that it is fascinating that, if indeed one was setting out to make a house and office together, maybe the way that form would be expressed would be more congruent and single-minded, whereas the functions in this building are expressed quite individually. There is the house, and there is the office. It's so easy to see. However, the rich detailing of what you would think would be the more superior structure, the house, is reflected almost exactly on the

office, which is very special. It looks like a building that has had many accretions over decades; however, it is all built at the same time, which is very striking. Mr. Cohen noted that there are a number of doctor's offices that have a similar form, for example one on Spruce Street.

Mr. Dilworth opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none. Ms. DiPasquale noted that she had spoken to the owner, Julie Sabur, and that she and her husband are in support of the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Schaaf moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the nomination demonstrates that property at 2176-78 E. York Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and H. Ms. Klein seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3600-30 LANCASTER AVENUE AND 3612-28 LANCASTER AVENUE

Nominator of 3600-30: Staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission

Nominator of 3612-28: Powelton Village Civic Association

Owner: Lancaster Mews Partners

OVERVIEW: The Historical Commission received two nominations for this property. Although a row of 16 separate buildings, the row has been consolidated into one tax parcel.

The staff of the Historical Commission authored the first nomination. It proposes to designate the entirety of the tax parcel at 3600-30 Lancaster Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, H, and J.

The second nomination, submitted on behalf of the Powelton Village Civic Association, proposes to designate the 3612-28 Lancaster Avenue portion of the tax parcel as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the portion of the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, F, H, and J.

The row was built between about 1870 and 1880 by speculator James A.L. Wilson and others. This row is classified as contributing to the National Register Powelton Village Historic District.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the property at 3600-30 Lancaster Avenue meets Criteria for Designation A, C, H, and J, but not Criterion F. Criterion F allows for the designation of resources that contain elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation. The staff contends that this row is historically and architecturally significant, but its design and construction are not innovative. The staff recommends that the Commission adopt the nomination proposing the designation of the entire tax parcel.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the nominations and staff recommendation to the Committee on Historic Designation.

Mr. Farnham stated that the staff would recommend to the Commission that it adopt one but not both nominations and that, if it elects to designate, it designate the entirety of the parcel, not merely a piece of it. He stated that he is concerned that the adoption of both nominations might lead to claims that they are contradictory and thereby pose problems during a potential appeal of the designation. He also suggested that designating a piece but not the entirety of the

property could prompt regulatory complexities. He noted, however, that these questions are best answered by the Historical Commission, not the Committee, which is charged with determining whether the nominations demonstrate that the property meets one or more of the Criteria for Designation.

An unidentified woman in the audience spoke out, stating that, in the scenario proposed by Mr. Farnham, she is concerned that the Commission might only adopt the nomination prepared by the City and then the City might withdraw that nomination, leaving the property unprotected. Mr. Farnham responded that that scenario is impossible. He explained that, once the Commission has acted, designating a property, the nomination cannot be withdrawn.

Mr. Lavery stated that, in his time on the Committee, he had never experienced a situation in which two nomination were simultaneously presented for one property. He asked whether the Committee should select one and provide a recommendation on it, or offer recommendations for both. Mr. Farnham advised that the Committee should review and offer recommendations on both nominations. He stated that the Committee's charge is to determine whether the nominations successfully demonstrate that the property is historically significant. The Commission can sort out any potential problems resulting from dueling nominations.

Mr. Lavery asked if the group of buildings was proposed for individual or district designation. Mr. Farnham replied that the nominations propose individual designation. The entire block of buildings is consolidated as one tax parcel, one property with one owner.

Oscar Beisert introduced himself as the author of the Powelton Village Civic Association nomination. He stated that he would be willing to drop the claim that the property satisfies Criterion F, as the staff recommended. Mr. Schaaf asked Mr. Beisert why he had included Criterion F. Mr. Beisert responded that he may have misunderstood the criterion. He stated that Criterion A addresses the significance that he was hoping to represent with F. Mr. Dilworth asked if the ground rent discussion related to F. Mr. Beisert stated that it does, but A can also cover that discussion.

George Poulin of the Powelton Village Civic Association stated that he has concerns about dropping one of the nominations at this point in time. He stated that he understands that the City may be in discussions to withdraw its nomination. He claimed that the City might withdraw its nomination before it is reviewed by the Commission. He stated that he is "reticent" to limit the discussion to the City's nomination because the Powelton Village Civic Association does not control that nomination. Mr. Poulin stated that his organization believes that the entire row deserves designation. He explained that the Association decided to nominate the row in sections, eventually nominating the entire row. He stated that they were unaware that the City was preparing its own nomination for the entire row. He reported that they did not prepare nominations for the other sections once they learned that the City had nominated the entire row. He stated that he is "a little bit reticent" to look at one nomination over the other at this time because he is not sure what the City will do between now and the Commission meeting. Mr. Lavery asked whether a nomination could be withdrawn between the Committee and Commission meetings. Mr. Farnham replied that it was the Commission's practice that a nomination could be withdrawn at any point until the Commission has voted on it. He noted, however, that Mr. Poulin's concerns were unfounded because no one had suggested that the Committee ignore or reject one of the nominations. Mr. Farnham pointed out that he had just advised the Committee to consider and offer recommendations on both nominations. He explained that the staff had recommended that a case had not been made for Criterion F in the Powelton Village Civic Association nomination, but he stated that the staff agrees with the

claims about Criteria A, H, and J in the Powelton nomination. Mr. Farnham added that he had authored the City's nomination and was not aware of any discussion regarding withdrawing the nomination. Mr. Farnham again advised the Committee that it should consider and offer recommendations on both nominations. Mr. Farnham stated that his suggestion regarding the Commission's adoption of one rather than both nominations related to regulatory decisions that would follow after designation; it had nothing to do with a withdrawal before designation. Mr. Poulin stated that he wanted to ensure that his nomination remained "relevant" after the City withdrew its nomination. He asserted that his organization wanted to maintain full control over its own nomination so that it could be heard if necessary by the Commission. Mr. Dilworth asked Mr. Poulin if he had any reason to believe that the City was intending to withdraw its nomination. Mr. Poulin said that he did have reason to believe that the City would withdraw its nomination, but did not elaborate. Mr. Farnham stated that no one but the Powelton Village Civic Association can prevent its nomination from moving forward to the Commission meeting. He suggested that they move beyond this discussion and review and make recommendations on both nominations. Mr. Cohen noted that the Powelton Village Civic Association can control its own nomination and can have it heard by the Commission. He suggested that they move forward in the discussion. Mr. Lavery noted that the Powelton Village Civic Association's nomination does not include several of the buildings in the row. Mr. Dilworth asked the Committee to focus on the task at hand, reviewing and making recommendations on both nominations, and give the Commission "a choose your own adventure" opportunity.

Ms. Klein stated that the nominations differ on Criteria C and F. Mr. Beisert again stated that he would not object to the removal of F from the Powelton Village Civic Association nomination.

John Manton asked if the corner store was located at 3630, next to 3629. The Committee members responded that 3629 is located on the opposite side of the street; the adjacent building is 3628. Mr. Manton stated that the storefront at the corner is impressive.

Mr. Poulin asked if the Powelton Village Civic Association could amend its nomination to include the contents of the City's nomination. He stated that the City did a "phenomenal job." Mr. Farnham responded that the nomination could not be amended as suggested without restarting the process because the property owner would need to be provided with 30 days notice of the substantially amended nomination. Mr. Lavery reminded Mr. Poulin and the audience that the City and the Association appeared to be on the same side in this matter. He questioned the distrust.

Mr. Cohen noted that there are a few issues raised in the Powelton nomination that were not included in the City nomination including the ground rent issue. He noted, however, that the ground rent discussion is not necessary to the nomination. Mr. Lavery suggested that the ground rent discussion is interesting, even if it does not point to significance. Mr. Beisert contended that the bonus building aspect of the nomination is important. Mr. Cohen agreed that it is interesting research which is not summarized anywhere else, but it does not have a bearing on significance.

Mr. Dilworth asked how the Commission might designate 3612 to 3628 under the Powelton nomination, when the Commission designates by tax parcel, which, in this case, includes 3600 to 3630. Mr. Farnham stated that, if the Commission adopted the Powelton nomination, it might designate the entire parcel, but only consider those buildings at 3612 to 3628 as historically significant.

Ms. Klein stated that she was considering making a motion to recommend that the Historical Commission designate the property at 3600-30 Lancaster Avenue pursuant to the City's nomination with the information in the Powelton Village Civic Association nomination incorporated into the City nomination. Mr. Beisert stated that the Powelton Village Civic Association would only agree if it were considered one of the nominators. Mr. Farnham asked the Committee to find a way beyond this futile discussion. He again advised the Committee that it should consider the merits of and offer separate recommendations on each of the two nominations. Mr. Dilworth asked the Committee and audience to discuss the historic significance of the property.

Mr. Poulin stated that 3600-30 Lancaster Avenue represents the most intact commercial block of all of Lancaster Avenue and perhaps of all of the commercial corridors in West Philadelphia. That alone makes it worthy of designation. The property was rehabilitated to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards in 1987. Several of the storefronts are intact Victorian storefronts. The two-over-two windows remain. The continuous cornice line, the brick, and the rhythm of the windows makes it architecturally significant. The property was until recently was fully occupied. There has been some vacancy recently owing to the threat of demolition. The row contributes to the vitality of Lancaster Avenue.

Nancy Drye introduced herself as a neighbor and member of the Powelton Village Civic Association. She informed the Committee that about 100 community members attended a meeting convened by Councilwoman Blackwell regarding this property. The block is a gateway to the community and contributes to its character and vibrancy. It will serve as a buffer to the large development underway to the south and west. She concluded that it is an important block that should be saved.

John Phillips, the president of the Powelton Village Civic Association, asked those in support of the nomination to raise their hands. Several people in the audience raised their hands.

Sherman Aronson, the former president of the Powelton Village Civic Association, stated that there was a concerted effort in 1984 to ensure that this block was included in the Powelton Village National Register Historic District. In 1987, the property was transferred to a new owner by the Redevelopment Authority with the intent that it would be restored. The goal of the community is to ensure that this block is protected as much as possible.

Elizabeth Stegner, the president of the University City Historical Society, stated that she and her organization support the designation of the property.

Blaise Tobia, a professor at Drexel and a resident of the neighborhood, stated that the row of buildings behind the one in question is also worthy of designation. It is the last block of what was called the "Bottoms."

Lucia Esther of the West Powelton Saunders Park Registered Community Organization stated that her organization supports the nomination.

Mr. Poulin stated that, although they submitted a nomination owing to the threat of demolition, the Powelton Village Civic Association had been considering nominating this block for many years, before any threat of demolition.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Ms. Klein moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the nomination submitted by the Powelton Village Civic

Association for the 3612-28 portion of the property at 3600-30 Lancaster Avenue demonstrates that that portion of the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, H, and J. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Ms. Klein moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the nomination submitted by the staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission demonstrates that property at 3600-30 Lancaster Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, H, and J. Ms. Laverty seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Cohen stated that he found both nominations to be excellent examples of scholarship. He stated that they were well researched and written. Ms. Klein noted that they will be available for researchers.

6769 RIDGE AVENUE, ST. ALBAN'S RECTORY

Nominator: John Manton

Owner: Church of St. Alban

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the rectory at 6769 Ridge Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation D, G, H, and I. The rectory was built in 1879 and the nomination contends that it embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Carpenter Gothic style, which is rare in Philadelphia. It is situated on a large corner lot in Roxborough, which the nomination claims has the potential to yield archaeological information related to Native American occupation. A one-car garage located on the parcel is considered non-contributing in the nomination.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the property at 6769 Ridge Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation D, G, H, and I.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Broadbent presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Nominator John Manton represented the nomination.

Mr. Laverty asked Mr. Manton why he did not include Criterion A. Mr. Manton responded that the staff had suggested that he not include Criterion A. Ms. Broadbent explained that the staff considers the significance of this building to be based on its unique architectural style, and does not feel that the rectory has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation.

Mr. Schaaf asked Mr. Manton to explain the significance based on Criterion G. Mr. Manton responded that the rectory sits on a very large park-like lot, which is surrounded by commercial buildings. Owing to the large lot and the nearby buildings, it stands out as a small park on the corner.

Mr. Manton stated that the nomination does not include the church building, and noted that the church and rectory are separate deeds.

Mr. Mooney thanked Mr. Manton for the inclusion of Criterion I. Mr. Manton responded that the parcel was never farmed, and Ridge Avenue was an Indian trail, so there is the potential for artifacts in the ground. Mr. Mooney stated that Ridge Avenue was one of the major Indian trails

in the state, and noted that there is also the potential for artifacts associated with occupants of the rectory.

Mr. Schaaf stated that the rectory is unusual for Roxborough in that large domestic buildings are not usually framed structures, but rather are schist or brick, which makes this building all the more interesting. Mr. Manton explained a few alterations to the building that have taken place over the years, including the enclosure of the rear porch and the installation of aluminum siding over the historic clapboard. Oscar Beisert, who took the photographs of the building, stated that he believes the original siding is under the current aluminum siding. Mr. Cohen asked about the window frames. Mr. Manton responded that the window frames appear to be capped. Mr. Cohen asked the Committee if it is concerning that elements of the building are obscured. Several Committee members responded that the coverings are reversible and there is still original detailing remaining at the front porch.

Mr. Cohen offered a few specific suggestions about word choice, including expanding the periods of style in the first paragraph of the Statement of Significance that refers to pattern books. He asked Mr. Manton if he had found anything in pattern books that shows the exact detail from this building. Mr. Manton responded that he had not. Mr. Cohen suggested that Mr. Manton read *The Only Proper Style: Gothic Architecture in America*, a book by Calder Loth that discusses the Carpenter Gothic style.

Mr. Dilworth asked if the property owner was made aware of the nomination. Ms. Broadbent responded that the staff mailed two letters regarding the nomination, one addressed to the building and one addressed to the address on file for the property owner, which are one in the same. The staff heard nothing back from the property owner. Mr. Manton stated that the new rector of the Church of St. Alban's recently moved into the rectory.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Cohen moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the rectory at 6769 Ridge Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation D, G, H and I. Mr. Laverty seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

WEST OF 14700 TOWNSEND ROAD, BYBERRY CEMETERY

Nominator: Joseph Menkevich

Owner: City of Philadelphia

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the Byberry African-American Cemetery, a City-owned property at the intersection of the former line of Townsend Road and Burling Avenue, as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property does not have a street address assigned by the Office of Property Assessment. The nomination wrongly identifies the address as 14700 Townsend Road, an adjacent property that is owned by the Flynn Company and leased to the National Archives & Records Administration. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, B, I, and J. The African-American burial ground was established by the Byberry Quakers in 1780 for African Americans who had been freed from slavery. It has remained largely undisturbed and may have potential to yield archaeological resources.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the Byberry African-American Cemetery, at the intersection of the former line of Townsend Road and Burling Avenue, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, B, I, and J. The nomination should be edited to clarify that this property is not

14700 Townsend Road, but rather a parcel to which the Office of Property Assessment has not assigned an official street address.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Broadbent presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Joseph Menkevich represented the nomination.

Ms. Broadbent directed the Committee's attention to a map of the area, showing the cemetery location just outside of the boundary of the 14700 Townsend Road parcel. She noted that the staff received a letter of support for the nomination from the Friends of Northeast Philadelphia History, which was distributed at the start of the meeting. Mr. Lavery stated that he is concerned about the lack of clarity regarding the boundaries of the proposed designation. Ms. Broadbent explained that there was a survey done that provides a legal description of the cemetery boundaries, which is contained on the second page of the nomination.

Mr. Menkevich presented a book published in 1782 and explained that his nomination is based on the information contained in the book. Mr. Schaaf noted that the book was published by John Dunlap, who also published the Declaration of Independence.

Mr. Menkevich provided Ms. Broadbent with an addendum to the nomination.

Mr. Dilworth asked for public comment. Liam Brandley, a resident of Northeast Philadelphia and former City of Philadelphia employee in the Department of Survey and Design stated that this location was a part of his survey district in the early 1970s, and he attended today's meeting to offer support for the nomination. He stated that, as a commander at a large veterans' service organization, he knows that there are African American patriots from various wars buried at this and other local burial grounds.

John Buffington offered prepared remarks to the Committee.

My name is John Buffington. I do neighborhood history rather like Joe Menkevich.

I know a bit about Orphan Cemeteries.

Four generations of several sides of my family rest in a rural Cemetery in South Alabama. My ashes will be there too eventually.

Both of my grandmothers, during near impoverished widowhood, managed to scrape together a modest amount every year to contribute to the informal system for caring for the resting place of the people that they loved.

We buried one of my grandmothers quite close to the fence that runs alongside a 2 Lane State Road.

A few years later the Alabama highway department anticipating the need to someday widen the route from Montgomery to Mobile, condemned additional right of way on both sides of that road.

No one had standing to speak for our dead.

My grandmother now lies in highway right-of-way. If the highway department decides to widen on our side of the road, her grave may be desecrated.

Eventually descendants of the folks in that cemetery got together and organized "The Buffington Cemetery Trust". We got our federal tax exemption and conducted a fund drive. I was the founding chair of the Board of Trustees. When I wrote the trust indenture, I stated our intention to maintain and protect that cemetery forevermore. Then I took the Trust indenture to the Conecuh county courthouse and recorded it in the land records. Now if anybody ever wants to mess with that cemetery, they know who they have to call. I also wrote organizing documents and served as chair of the Knowlton Preservation Committee.

When the last standing country house designed by Philadelphia's greatest architect, Frank Furness, went on the market, neighbors and preservationists and Furness devotees were alarmed to learn that the leading proposal for reuse would have taken most of the site for condominiums, utterly depriving that fabulous building of its remaining context.

The mere existence of an engaged organized constituency, coupled with the legal protections that this great city has put in place, headed off development plans until Jack Conroy, the world's most acute caterer, came along with a plan that made the most of the architectural asset and sacrificed only the orchard (for parking), a single cut in the rear of the building for a door, and part of the view from the rear.

Twenty-five or so people who immersed themselves in that matter bless the name Conroy and the existence of legal strictures on the development of historic properties every time Knowlton is mentioned.

I want to be on the mailing list whenever the independence or budget of The Philadelphia Historical Commission is threatened. Who speaks for recognized African-American cemeteries? Doug Mooney mostly.

Who speaks for the restless dead who lie in unlisted ground like Byberry African American Cemetery, Hart Cemetery and Wilmot Playground? Right now that would be Joe Menkevich.

I know several African Americans who know that their families have been in Frankford longer than my family has been in south Alabama. They are as proud of their heritage as I am of mine.

My fond hope is that Joe is not the only person who cares about orphan cemeteries of many anonymous souls who labored and served in colonial Philadelphia. I hope that this application will be the catalyst for organizing to speak for the dead. I am ready to write another set of organizing documents. I will hope for a call.

Mr. Mooney thanked Mr. Menkevich for preparing the nomination. He stated that the site is immensely important as the oldest known largely intact African American cemetery in Philadelphia. He questioned whether the boundaries of the nomination could include the survey buffer zone, and explained that there is currently zero protection for the site, and the buffer zone that was established during previous archaeological investigations only tested outside of the cemetery, but not inside of the cemetery, and the buffer zone was established as protection around the site to ensure that future development does not encroach upon it. He stated that the addition of the buffer zone would ensure a greater measure of protection for the property. Mr. Cohen asked if there is a description of the buffer zone. Mr. Mooney responded that there is a

map included with the nomination that shows it, but that part of it may extend into the 14700 Townsend Road parcel. Mr. Menkevich commented that a portion of the cemetery may be under the road because the roads have been altered over time. Mr. Farnham stated that the nomination could be amended to propose to designate a portion of the site that the National Archives warehouse stands on, which is privately owned by the Flynn Company. However, the Commission could not do that at the 9 October meeting because sufficient notice cannot be provided to the owner of the 14700 Townsend Road parcel. He also noted that the Commission does not have the authority to designate state property, which is located to the west of the cemetery boundary. Ms. Klein asked who owns the buffer zone. Mr. Farnham responded that a Section 106 review was conducted for the development of the National Archives warehouse site, and, during that review, it was specified that there would be a buffer zone around the cemetery to ensure that the new development did not disturb artifacts. The buffer zone is on the 14700 Townsend Road parcel and is therefore owned by the Flynn Company. Mr. Menkevich commented that there is a large fence around the National Archives warehouse.

Patricia McCarthy offered her support of the nomination, and noted that there is a trail being worked on that will cut very close to the cemetery, and would be an ideal spot for a historic marker. She also commented that Robert Purvis, an important abolitionist, lived nearby so there may be fugitives from the underground railroad that are secretly buried in this cemetery. Mr. Manton asked about a historic marker for the site. Mr. Schaaf responded that the state administers Pennsylvania's historic marker program.

Mr. Cohen stated that the nomination is well researched. He suggested that the staff work with the applicant to reorganize the nomination so that some content is moved to appendices in order to provide a better narrative.

Mr. Mooney stated that he considers the proposed boundaries acceptable, excluding the buffer zone.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Mooney moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property known as the Byberry Cemetery satisfies Criteria for Designation A, B, I and J. Mr. Laverty seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4300-02 OSAGE AVENUE AND 4304-06 OSAGE AVENUE, SATTERLEE HEIGHTS

Nominator: Oscar Beisert

Owner of 4300-02: Osage Realty Investment

OVERVIEW: These nominations propose to designate the properties at 4300-02 and 4304-06 Osage Avenue as historic and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nominations contend that the properties satisfy Criteria for Designation A, C, F, H, and J. The nominations argue that the properties, which compose both halves of one twin constructed between 1871 and 1877, are significant as part of the Satterlee Heights development, one of the first large-scale, multi-block development projects in the area. The nominations contend that the twin, along with its three neighbors on the south side of the 4300 block of Osage Avenue, is unique in the context of nineteenth-century development in West Philadelphia, and is an integral component of an intact block of twins set upon large lots, which form a distinct visual feature in the area. The nominations further argue that the twin is an excellent example of the Second Empire style of architecture and reflects the environment in an era characterized by this

distinctive style, and that it contains elements of a design and associated details and materials that were part of the Satterlee Heights development.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Nominator Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

Ms. DiPasquale noted that the staff does not feel that the nominations make the case for individual designation, but rather that the entire argument is predicated upon their importance as part of a cohesive block and development. Mr. Beisert noted that at a previous meeting, Mr. Farnham had indicated that in order to avoid writing district nominations, nominators could write individual nominations for properties that might warrant district designation. Mr. Beisert asked for clarification as to whether a district nomination could be submitted and processed. He noted that the community groups are spending time preparing individual nominations when they should be working on districts. Mr. Farnham responded that there is no prohibition against submitting and reviewing historic districts. The problem, he noted, has to do with the Commission's staffing levels and that the process from the submission of the nomination to the appearance before the Committee for Historic Designation and Commission for districts will be protracted. If there was a recommendation regarding these specific properties, he noted, that was probably made on the belief that these properties could stand on their own for individual designation. Mr. Beisert responded that at the previous Committee for Historic Designation meeting, Mr. Farnham suggested that he file individual nominations rather than district nominations. Mr. Farnham asked if he had recommended that for these specific properties or in general, and Mr. Beisert responded that he had made the suggestion in general. Mr. Farnham responded that nomination for individual designation is a shorter path to designation, but that the non-binding staff recommendation for these buildings is that these properties do not have sufficient significance to merit individual designation. He apologized to Mr. Beisert if the advice was not clear. Mr. Beisert noted that the context in which Mr. Farnham had made that recommendation was in regards to the church, rowhouse, and court on N. Front Street.

Mr. Dilworth commented that he had never heard that a property that would be considered historic as part of a historic district would not be considered historic because it was not part of a district. Mr. Cohen noted that they could recommend approval of these properties, but it would not preclude a district designation in the future. Mr. Dilworth noted that these properties would certainly be considered contributing to the district.

John Manton asked whether, if all of these properties were certified individually, and all the research already done, it would be easier to complete a district nomination in the future. Mr. Dilworth responded that a district designation would have to go through the same designation process.

Kathy Dowdell commented that a district nomination was submitted for this area in the 1990s, and that there is already plenty of research and information. She sympathized with Mr. Beisert, noting that if the thinking now is that the initial district was too large or too unwieldy or disconnected, perhaps it could be modified. She noted that at the time that the nomination was written, the nominator and the community worked very closely with the then-staff of the Historical Commission to carefully define the boundary, but that perhaps thinking has changed about the proposed boundary. She opined that she would be disingenuous if she did not say there was some politics involved, but that she does think that what that has left the community with is a sense that there is no way to protect these buildings. As a result, she encouraged the Committee to have a more generous reading of the individual nominations, and asked for some

willingness on the part of anyone to start talking about redefining the initial district. The more that can be done to address the undesignated properties, she concluded, the better.

Melani Lamond seconded Ms. Dowdell's comments, noting that she is a past-president of the University City Historical Society, and was president during a portion of the time that the larger district was put together and proposed. She reiterated that there were local politics at play and the large district not only did not get approved, but also threw the Historical Commission into turmoil because some suggested that there needed to be a different process for historic designation. If the Committee members post-date that discussion, she opined, they would be unaware of how frustrating it would be to see something happen to these buildings because of the politics of the neighborhood. She expressed frustration that members of the neighborhood have felt that their only means of recourse is to nominate individual buildings. She stated that they would prefer to nominate a larger area. As a realtor herself, she noted, the pressure for teardowns in the neighborhood is increasing. Owners of large properties, such as herself, are being contacted by developers wishing to demolish the old homes and build on the extra land. She reiterated that the community is at a loss, and if they cannot have a large district, they at least want to start with individual designations.

Mr. Dilworth asked for someone to speak to the individual historical significance of the nominated properties, as the main argument they were making was for the significance of a district. Mr. Beisert responded that, to give the properties individual distinction, these were the first two houses of Satterlee Heights to be constructed. Subsequently the other houses on this block, and then partial blocks surrounding it were completed. As individual buildings, these two do have that distinction. Mr. Schaaf opined that that was a reasonable distinction.

Mr. Cohen suggested friendly amendments to Mr. Beisert, noting that there are places where more editorial scrutiny would help. For the future, he noted, nominations do not all need to start with the original landowners, and that it would help the process to have the nominations be more directed to the specific properties, and not all of West Philadelphia. Mr. Beisert responded that part of his reason for doing so is that they are preparing to submit multiple nominations for what should be a district; therefore, he provided a larger context of the area. He noted that there is a published chain of title for Satterlee Heights.

Mr. Cohen noted that plotting the location of the Civil War hospital on a current map would be helpful, and asked whether that was possible. Mr. Beisert responded that he did not find the specific location of the hospital. Mr. Laverty commented that that might be something one would have to locate at the National Archives. Members of the Committee and Messrs. Menkevich and Manton suggested looking at other repositories. Ms. Klein noted that Woodland Cemetery might have some documents that would be helpful. Mr. Beisert opined that it is important to remember that the name of the development commemorates the hospital, but perhaps did not mean that it was that exact location of the hospital. Some Committee members noted that Clarke Park encompasses most of the grounds of the Civil War hospital.

Mr. Cohen concluded that the nomination advanced three arguments: one, the local neighborhood significance; two, the process by which they were built; and three, a transition between houses that were built as "one-offs" and houses that started to be built in block-long developments. He noted that he would order his ducks and keep the arguments separate. He opined that the argument that this is an early block-long development argument is not strong, as there was already similar development along 41st Street, Hamilton, in the 1850s. By the 1860s and 1870s, that type of development was not new or innovative. Mr. Schaaf opined that 41st Street is a buffet of various buildings, while this block is the same building repeated. Mr. Beisert

commented this development faced many struggles. Mr. Cohen questioned whether the original developers planned to infill the large lots with additional buildings. Mr. Beisert responded that they started to build other buildings in between, but that that second developer went under.

Mr. Cohen noted that what surprised him was that the real estate atlases showed the development incorrectly. Mr. Beisert noted that this was intended to be a multi-block development, and that some remnants of double houses like this one remain in the neighborhood.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Schaaf moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the nominations demonstrate that properties at 4300-02 and 4304-06 Osage Avenue satisfy Criteria for Designation A, C, F, H, and J. Mr. Mooney seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1100-02 N. DELAWARE AVENUE, EDWARD CORNER BUILDING

Nominator: Oscar Beisert

Owner: 1100 Delaware Avenue Associates LP

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the Edward Corner Marine Merchandise Warehouse, the property at 1100-02 N. Delaware Avenue, as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, H, and J. The nomination argues that the Edward Corner Marine Merchandise Warehouse, constructed in 1921, represents the Fishtown section of Kensington as it evolved from a maritime community in its own right to part of the larger Port of Philadelphia in the early twentieth century. The nomination contends that the building represents a local response to the development and effects of the South Philadelphia Agreement and the eventual widening of Delaware Avenue as a major municipal effort to enlarge the capacities of the Port of Philadelphia. The nomination further argues that the Edward Corner business was a Philadelphia success story of an immigrant who built a rag business from the ground up and whose sons took over the family business, adapting it to the changing times. The nomination also contends that the design of the building is reflective of a distinctive commercial/industrial style of buildings on Delaware Avenue in the 1920s, and that it is a familiar visual feature.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the property at 1100-02 N. Delaware Avenue fails to satisfy Criteria A and C, but does satisfy Criteria H and J.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Nominator Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

Mr. Farnham suggested that this property does not satisfy Criterion A. He stated that, while the Corner building may have character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, it does not have significant character, interest, or value, as required by Criterion A. Moreover, it is not associated with the life of a person significant in the past. Nothing about the Corners or their business appears to rise to the requisite level of significance. The Corners were not the Cramps. Although it may not satisfy Criterion A, which is directed at significant resources, it may satisfy Criterion J, which allows for the designation of resources that exemplify the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community. Perhaps other surviving resources better exemplify the community's port heritage, but the Corner building arguably does speak to the community's economic and cultural heritage. Mr. Farnham explained that the staff recommends that the nomination fails to make the case

that the property satisfies Criterion C, reflecting the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style. The brief argument about this building's architectural relationship to the Quartermaster's Terminal is unconvincing. Mr. Farnham concluded that the best case that this property satisfies a Criterion for Designation can be made around Criterion H. With its ghost signs, a singular physical characteristic, one could convincingly argue that this building is represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood. He noted that, whether recent images on blogs demonstrate that it is an established visual feature, as the nomination claims, is open to debate. However, a photograph in the nomination appears to show the signs in place as early as 1930 and that would indicate that the signs and the building are established visual features.

Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance stated that his organization supports the designation of this property. He stated that he agrees with the staff that H and J are the strongest Criteria for Designation. He noted that the Alliance has indentified this building on its Endangered Properties list. He stated that this building is one of the last remnants of Fishtown's port area along Delaware Avenue.

Mr. Schaaf asked if this property includes the large surface parking lot. Oscar Beisert, the nominator, responded that the parking lot is located on a separate parcel, but noted that the parcels may be combined soon as part of a development project. Ms. DiPasquale stated that the building covers almost the entirety of the parcel proposed for designation. Mr. Schaaf stated that this site may have high archaeological potential, owing to its location along the Delaware River. Mr. Mooney, the archaeologist on the Committee, disagreed with Mr. Schaaf, stating that this building has a basement, the construction of which would have destroyed any archaeological resources on the site.

Mr. Cohen remarked that the name of the architect who designed the building is Raff, not Ruff. Mr. Laverty observed that Raff ran for mayor in the 1920s. Mr. Cohen stated that he did not win. Mr. Laverty stated that the story of the building is great and the illustrations are terrific.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Dilworth moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend that the nomination demonstrates that property at 1100-02 N. Delaware Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation H and J. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF THE REVIEW OF NOMINATIONS

Mr. Cohen requested from the chair an opportunity to discuss a general designation matter with the Committee and staff. He suggested that the Committee schedule regular meetings to make the process more predictable. He also suggested narrowing "the window of vulnerability" between the time a nomination is received and when it is determined correct and complete. He stated that there is much real estate activity in the city these days and owners seem to be filing for demolition permits as soon as they perceive activities potentially related to the preparation of nominations. He asked if there is a way to notify owners and initiate the Commission's jurisdiction more quickly when buildings are threatened. Mr. Schaaf remarked that it was his impression that the Commission's jurisdiction begins as soon as a nomination is submitted. Mr. Farnham disagreed with Mr. Schaaf, stating that the Commission's jurisdiction is initiated with the mailing of the notice letters to the property owner explaining that the Commission will consider a nomination. Those notice letters must provide the date, time, and place of the public meetings at which the Commission and its Committee will review the nomination. Mr. Schaaf asked how long it takes to review a nomination before it is determined correct and complete and

the notice letters are sent. Mr. Farnham explained that the time varies, but observed that such a review can require considerable staff time. Mr. Farnham added that the time to review a nomination is predicated on the staff's capacity. He noted that he has shifted additional resources to the designation process recently, but reported that most of the staff's resources are directed toward the review of building permit applications because the ordinance places time limits on their review; it places no such time limits on the review of nominations. He observed that, if the Commission had a larger budget and larger staff, it could review nominations more quickly.

Mr. Cohen asked if the scheduling of Committee meetings impacts the window of time to initiate the Commission's jurisdiction. He suggested that the Committee schedule regular meetings so that property owners can be notified more quickly. Mr. Farnham explained that the Committee has already moved to quarterly meetings. Prior to 2015, the Committee met on an as needed basis. This year, with the growing numbers of nominations, the Committee is meeting quarterly. Mr. Cohen asked how often the Historical Commission meets. Mr. Farnham responded that it meets monthly. Mr. Cohen suggested scheduling monthly Committee on Historic Designation meetings and then canceling them if there is nothing for the agenda. Several of his colleagues on the Committee objected. Mr. Cohen suggested that many or most of the meetings would be canceled, but the dates would be there if there was an urgent nomination to consider. Mr. Farnham explained that holding meetings of the Committee more regularly would not change in any way the length of time between receipt of a nomination and initiation of Commission jurisdiction. Mr. Cohen stated that the Committee should meet monthly if it will mean that buildings are placed under the Commission's jurisdiction more quickly. Mr. Farnham again explained that holding meetings of the Committee more regularly would not change the length of time between the receipt of a nomination and the initiation of the Commission's jurisdiction. He stated that the Commission is required to provide property owners with 30 days notice of the consideration of a nomination, but it can provide more notice. He stated that the staff is already notifying owners about nominations that will be reviewed by the Committee on 2 December 2015. The bottleneck is not the scheduling of meetings; the bottleneck is the staff's capacity to review nominations for correctness and completeness when most of the resources are devoted to the review of permit applications. Mr. Cohen commented that he now understands that it is the notice that initiates jurisdiction. He asked if the staff can assign levels of urgency to the reviews of nominations and review nominations first for those buildings that are most threatened. Mr. Farnham responded that the staff already does that informally, but formally prioritizing nomination reviews would likely be difficult. Mr. Cohen responded that the staff should prioritize nominations that are noted as urgent by nominators. Mr. Farnham responded that virtually every nomination is categorized as urgent by its nominator. Mr. Dilworth observed that the Committee has reviewed nominations recently for which the owner had applied for a demolition permit before the nomination was submitted. Mr. Cohen contended that there have been cases recently when the owner applied for a demolition permit after the nomination was submitted and before the jurisdiction was initiated. Mr. Farnham stated that he was aware of only one such instance and that may have resulted from extenuating circumstances. Mr. Schaaf suggested that the Committee could meet in emergency fashion if confronted with a similar situation. Mr. Cohen replied that the speed with which the Committee meets is not significant; the speed with which the staff notifies the property owner is the important factor. Mr. Farnham again observed that the staff is reviewing nominations and notifying property owners on a prioritized basis, but he noted that every nominator and every civic association thinks that its nomination is the most important. Mr. Farnham concluded that, ultimately, the way to narrow that window from submission to jurisdiction is to increase the staff's capacity. He stated that the capacity discussion is one that he has advanced as long as he has been associated with the

Commission. The Commission cannot significantly increase the speed with which it initiates jurisdiction without significantly increasing its staffing.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dilworth moved to adjourn at 12:45 p.m. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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