

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

**14 FEBRUARY 2018, 9:30 A.M.  
1515 ARCH STREET, ROOM 18-029  
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

**PRESENT**

Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair  
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.  
Janet Klein  
Bruce Laverty  
Douglas Mooney  
R. David Schaaf, RA

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director  
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner I  
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner I

**ALSO PRESENT**

Harry Pollack  
Joseph J. Menkevich  
William Martin, Esq., Fox Rothschild  
George Thomas, CivicVisions  
Fred Baumert  
Kenny Pollack  
Oscar Beisert  
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia  
David S. Traub, Save our Sites  
Michael Phillips, Esq., Obermayer  
Jake Ketcham  
J.M. Duffin  
David Evans

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Cooperman called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. Ms. Klein and Messrs. Cohen, Laverty, Mooney and Schaaf joined her.

**REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES**

Ms. Cooperman noted that property owners had requested continuances for three nominations: 6369 Germantown Avenue, 6567-67 Germantown Avenue, and 208-10 Rex Avenue. She explained that the Committee would review the continuance requests in two batches, as she needed to recuse for the review of the nomination for 208-10 Rex Avenue, owing to her association with the nominator, the Chestnut Hill Conservancy.

**ADDRESS: 6369 GERMANTOWN AVE**

Name of Resource: "Genteel Two-Story Stone Dwelling"

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: TVC PA 6365 Germantown Avenue LLC

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 6369 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and J, but that the property does not satisfy Criterion G.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 6365-67 Germantown Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the building is significant under Criteria for Designation A, C, G, and J. The nomination contends that the property holds significance to the development and heritage of Germantown and is one of several properties purchased by developer Thomas Reilly following the subdivision of the Chew estate. The nomination further argues that the building, while potentially constructed decades earlier, currently reflects the bracketed mode of the Italianate style popularized in the mid-nineteenth-century and applied extensively to other Germantown Avenue properties. The nomination also suggests that, owing to its inclusion in the National Register's Colonial Germantown Historic District, the property is part of and related to a distinctive area.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Cooperman explained that the Committee had received a continuance request for the review of the nomination. Attorney Michael Phillips represented the owner of both 6369 and 6365-67 Germantown Avenue. Oscar Beisert represented the nominator.

Mr. Phillips explained that they are in the process of finalizing an agreement with the nominator. Mr. Beisert supported the continuance request.

Ms. Cooperman opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue and remand the nomination for 6369 Germantown Avenue to a future meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

**ADDRESS: 6365-67 GERMANTOWN AVE**

Name of Resource: Richard and Sophia Thewlis Bew Store and Residence

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: TVC PA 6365 Germantown Avenue LLC

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 6365-67 Germantown Avenue satisfies any Criteria for Designation.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 6365-67 Germantown Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the Richard and Sophia Thewlis Bew Store and Mill are significant under Criteria for Designation A, C, G, and J. The nomination contends that the property represents the less common industrial typology that included domestic, commercial, and residential buildings

located on a single parcel and that the property contributed to Germantown's industrial landscape through the manufacturing of rag carpets. The nomination further argues that the store and residence exemplify the Queen Anne style, while the rear mill building serves as an example of Second Empire architecture. The nomination also suggests that, owing to its inclusion in the National Register's Colonial Germantown Historic District, the property is part of and related to a distinctive area.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Cooperman explained that the Committee had received a continuance request for the review of the nomination. Attorney Michael Phillips represented the owner of both 6369 and 6365-67 Germantown Avenue. Oscar Beisert represented the nominator.

Mr. Phillips explained that they are in the process of finalizing an agreement with the nominator. Mr. Beisert supported the continuance request.

Ms. Cooperman opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue and remand the nomination for 6365-67 Germantown Avenue to a future meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

**ADDRESS: 208-10 REX AVE**

Name of Resource: William L. Hirst/H. Louis Duhring Residence

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Virginia, William, and Hewson Baltzell

Nominator: Chestnut Hill Conservancy

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov), 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 208-10 Rex Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and E.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 208-10 Rex Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the house, constructed about 1857-60, with alterations around 1893 and a substantial rear addition in 1927, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and E. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the property has significant character as one of the early prominent suburban villas constructed in the first period of the development of the suburban character of the Chestnut Hill area of the city after the introduction of the first railroad from Center City. The nomination also argues that the building is significant under Criterion A for its association with architect H. Louis Duhring, who owned and lived in the house between 1919 and 1946, and under Criterion E as a representative example of his influential architectural work. The nomination also contends that the property is significant under Criterion C as reflecting the environment of both the period of its original Italianate construction and its Arts and Crafts addition.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Cooperman recused from the review of the nomination, owing to her association with the nominator, the Chestnut Hill Conservancy. Mr. Mooney assumed the role of chair and presented a continuance request to the Committee. No one represented the owner or nominator.

Mr. Cohen asked who had requested the continuance. Ms. DiPasquale explained that the property owner had requested the continuance.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue and remand the nomination for 208-10 Rex Avenue to a future meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

**ADDRESS: 401-29 N 10TH ST**

Name of Resource: Esslinger's Brewery

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: NCL Realty LP

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 401-29 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J, but not A, provided the section titled "Recommendations for Categorical Designation" on page 31 is deleted. Although the staff appreciates the nominator's attempt to limit future regulation of some sections of this property, the staff contends that the Historical Commission does not have the authority to bind itself for future reviews in this manner under the current preservation ordinance and Rules & Regulations. The staff suggests that the nominator indicate the relative significances of the various sections of the complex, which will allow the Historical Commission to tailor its reviews to those sections in the future.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 401-29 N. 10<sup>th</sup> 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; an appendix argues that the property satisfies Criterion E. The nomination states that the former George Esslinger & Son's Brewery complex represents the development and heritage of Philadelphia as a brewing center between 1879 and 1967, and is an important representative firm within the larger context of breweries, representing the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the community. Additionally, the nomination assigns greater significance to the altered building at the corner of N. 10<sup>th</sup> and Callowhill Streets, which is said to have been constructed circa 1826 for Elijah Dallett's Residence, Soap Manufactory, and Stable.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Attorney William Martin and Harry Pollack of NCL Realty represented the property. Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society represented the nomination.

Ms. Cooperman reminded the Committee and public that the purview of the Committee is limited to the merits of the Criteria for Designation, and questions of financial hardship and physical condition are beyond that purview. She referenced the staff recommendation, and asked about the difference between identifying certain sections of a parcel as contributing or non-contributing, as the Commission has done in the past, compared to the scheme outlined in the nomination. Mr. Farnham responded that the nomination specifies what types of actions the Commission should or should not take at some point in the future when reviewing building permit applications. However, the staff does not believe the Commission can bind itself to coming to particular conclusions about permit applications that may not be submitted for years. The staff's suggestion is to limit the determinations to what is and is not historically significant, rather than specifying what is and is not appropriate in terms of alterations or additions to the building, and to allow those sorts of determinations about significance to guide subsequent reviews. Mr. Cohen suggested that a few clauses on page 31 could be removed to accomplish

this goal. Mr. Farnham commented that the staff applauds the nominator for taking this initiative, and notes that the Task Force on Historic Preservation has discussed creating a formal system for accomplishing this goal, but the staff is concerned about dictating today what the Commission may and may not do in the future. Ms. Cooperman commented that the Committee can include something to this effect in its recommendation to the Commission.

Mr. Martin introduced George Thomas of CivicVisions, and Fred Baumert of Keast & Hood Engineering, who were hired to provide expert testimony. Mr. Martin described Mr. Thomas as the founder of the architectural preservation program at the University of Pennsylvania and the Critical Conservation Program at Harvard University, and an expert in architectural history. Mr. Martin described Mr. Baumert as Chair of Keast & Hood Engineering, and someone who has worked on City Hall, Independence Hall, Christ Church, and other historic buildings. Mr. Martin concluded that the property owner has expended significant expense to bring together these experts to provide additional perspective regarding the nomination. Ms. Cooperman reminded Mr. Martin that their comments should be confined to the technical merits regarding the Criteria for Designation. Mr. Martin responded that he understands, but it is valuable to have a perspective on the appropriateness of the buildings for reuse, as this Committee will be making a recommendation to the Commission. Ms. Cooperman responded that adaptive reuse is not within this Committee's purview, but is certainly within the Commission's.

Mr. Martin stated that the nomination is replete with errors, both factual and in terms of building descriptions. He stated that the buildings have lost character-defining elements throughout history, and are not architecturally significant, nor are associated with a significant architect. He noted that Criterion E is argued in an appendix but not checked on the nomination form, and the law is clear that a nomination must specify the grounds that it is seeking designation under, and this nomination is only seeking designation under Criteria A and J. Regarding page 31 and the mention that the Task Force is considering other approaches to how buildings might be designated or regulated, Mr. Martin explained that it is all prospective law, and does not exist currently. What is before the Committee is a nomination which, by its own terms, states that over a half-dozen of the buildings on the site are not worthy of preservation, nor do they meet the Criteria required for designation. He asked the Committee to consider whether it is appropriate to recommend historic designation of the complex when the nomination itself is acknowledging marginal significance.

Mr. Martin introduced Mr. Pollack. Mr. Pollack stated that he is one of the partners of NCL Realty LP, the owner of the property. The property has been in his family for over 60 years. It is currently used for the manufacture and packaging of cleaning products. There are approximately 65 employees at the property. An in-house maintenance department completes all interior work. Regarding exterior work, they hire outside contractors for work such as roofing and pointing at the lowest possible price they can get. They have boarded up many windows and doors.

Mr. Thomas began his presentation. He summarized that the nomination is an erroneous and speculative narrative that does not prove significance or importance; there is a lack of an evaluative framework; the National Register makes it clear that survival alone is not significance; it is an architecturally unimportant complex and is lacking key features of important Philadelphia breweries; it is physically deteriorating from interior steam and cooling that destroys building systems not designed for long-term use; and the context has been nearly totally eradicated by actions of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. He asserted that the nomination is sloppy and full of typographical errors, in addition to buildings and materials being misidentified. The pages in the nomination related to the Dallett Chandlery are amazing in their

ignorance, their total lack of understanding. What is there today is a 1950s building in its entirety, not a wood frame building from 1840. There is an incorrect understanding of building phases and inaccuracies in building dates.

Mr. Thomas noted that the nomination claims that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. He suggested ways to evaluate a brewery to determine significance, including determining if the brewer won prizes, determining how the brewery ranked against similar industrial complexes, determining if the brewery was technologically innovative, determining the character of the architectural design, and determining if the brewery was designed by a significant architect. He showed examples of breweries that exemplify significance in technology, science, and design, including Poth Brewery, Bergner & Engle, and Continental Brewery. The nomination states that this brewery is in the fourth tier of production. He displayed a bar graph showing production numbers, and a chart of brewery significance by size and gold medals, and concluded that Esslinger's was a very minor contributor to the industry. Mr. Thomas stated that breweries were extraordinary architectural complexes, and showed examples including Bergner & Engel, Frederick Poth, Continental Brewery, Betz Brewery, and Bergdoll Brewery. He explained that most significant breweries in Philadelphia were largely the creation of architect Otto Wolf, as Wolf was the premiere brewery architect. His Bergdoll Brewery at 29<sup>th</sup> and Parrish Streets has been adaptively reused as residential housing. Esslinger's buildings are far plainer. The architectural features that once defined them as a brewery are largely gone. The brew house cupola shown in a 1926 aerial photograph on the 1896 building has been removed. From the street, one sees brick boxes of the lowest architectural caliber. The nomination categorizes most of the complex as unimportant. The nomination categorizes buildings numbered 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 under Category B, which suggests a less stringent interpretation of the standards for reuse based on a lesser historical significance. This brewery complex was part of a widespread industrial district. In the early 1950s, this area was singled out as part of the Center City Plan of Philadelphia, and in the process, was slated for redevelopment by the City Planning Commission. The Planning Commission's plan for this area called for widespread demolition to create a modern industrial district. Mr. Schaaf noted that the circle highlighting the building complex in Mr. Thomas's aerial photograph was one block off of the actual building complex. Mr. Thomas agreed that it was mistakenly in the wrong spot on the aerial photograph. Mr. Thomas continued that the entire context was demolished, as seen in a 1960 aerial photograph. The City Planning Commission continues to certify areas of the neighborhood as blighted. Ms. Cooperman interjected that Mr. Thomas was not discussing the merits of the nomination. Mr. Thomas responded that the Committee needs to understand the context. Ms. Cooperman responded that it is not being nominated as part of a district. Mr. Thomas responded that it is being nominated on a Criterion that calls for it to "exemplify its community" and what he is showing the Committee is that its community has been demolished. Ms. Cooperman requested that he confine his comments to discussion of the Criteria. Mr. Thomas responded that he is doing just that.

Mr. Thomas continued his presentation. He asserted that there are more complete brewery complexes that retain their architectural and neighborhood context, if the goal is to designate breweries. He cited Weisbrod & Hess and the Gretz Brewery as examples. He described the Esslinger's complex as being in the process of self-destruction. He described existing conditions such as parapets replaced with cinderblock, large slabs where steel has been cut out, disintegration of brick, and parging of brick on lower levels. He stated that these conditions make these buildings very difficult to use. Additionally, the buildings have oversized stories and very few windows, making them difficult to adaptively reuse. The buildings were built for a very particular and specific use. The interior structure does not connect to the exterior structure except at little pinpoints. The reason is that by leaving a gap around the floors and walls through

the whole building, top-mounted cooling could pour down through the interior and chill the beer. This is common in historic breweries, and is now understood as a fire risk. The buildings exhibit extensive material failure from moisture.

Mr. Thomas concluded with the following points: The nomination is factually wrong in its discussion of the buildings, their materials, their construction phasing, their history and their significance; the nomination provides an inadequate historical context for evaluation of the buildings; significance and importance are not proven; the complex is architecturally insignificant and even less significant in its present deteriorated form; the buildings are inappropriate for designation because they are largely without windows, with oversized floor heights, with exterior and interiors ravaged by moisture; designation flies in the face of seven decades of planning policy by the City. The buildings do not meet the test for significance or importance. The Commission is being asked to designate this complex on the grounds that it has a cast stone sign and a couple of gables of older buildings.

Mr. Martin explained that Mr. Baumert would have provided helpful evidence, but in the interest of adhering to the Committee's purview, Mr. Baumert will save his testimony for the Commission meeting.

Mr. Beisert claimed that the proposed designation has unanimous support from the Callowhill Neighbors Association, because it voted to support the nomination at its recent meeting. He stated that the Association will provide a letter of support. He conceded that the nomination may have some factual, typographical, and material errors, but he was not granted nor did he request access to the site. The nomination does not claim that Esslinger's was the most significant brewery in Philadelphia. Rather, the nomination claims that it is a site that shows the evolution of breweries in Philadelphia, in that it started out with a very small-scale brewer who passed it down to his son, and over time the complex grew larger. With the passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, it had to cease operations and produce alternative products. Once the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was repealed, new owners made significant investments in new infrastructure to make it a modern brewery. Many breweries closed due to prohibition, and not many reopened. Esslinger's did reopen. Hutchinson Street historically had houses on it, with the earlier brewery buildings. The photograph in the nomination from the 1940s shows the former Dallett Chandlery roof. Page 64 compares the building at the corner and how it evolved over time. The nomination states that likely within the walls of the corner building, some fragments from the earlier building remain. Mr. Cohen asked for clarification regarding visible remains on the exterior of the Chandlery. Mr. Beisert stated that there is nothing visible of the earlier building from the exterior, but that small components of the earlier building may exist within the modern building. Mr. Schaaf asked about the photograph on page 64 that shows a ghost of what was apparently the peaked roof of the Chandlery. Mr. Beisert confirmed that the roof is gone and completely flattened, but that the outline of the L-shaped structure is visible. Mr. Schaaf responded that a shape is there, but it is formed by the intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Callowhill Street, and Ridge Avenue. There is nothing left of the Chandlery whatsoever from the exterior. Mr. Beisert responded that he is correct that there is nothing visible from the exterior. Mr. Schaaf concluded that, although the Chandlery history is interesting, there is no manifestation of it on the exterior of the existing building.

Ms. Cooperman opened the floor to public comment. Patrick Grossi, representing the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, commented that the Alliance supports the nomination of the property. The Alliance recently featured Esslinger's as a "Place to Save" in *Extant* magazine. The magazine recognized it as being reflective of the neighborhood's former industrial context, as much as that context may have been removed over the last several

decades. It was also recognized as a remnant of Philadelphia's rich brewing heritage. Compared to the other breweries of the time period, it is more modest, even utilitarian. Advertising or lack thereof is not a sole criterion for determining significance. There does not need to be a Darwinian approach in preservation as to what is or is not significant. The Callowhill neighborhood still feels industrial, despite some loss of context, and these buildings could become part of the evolution of the neighborhood. David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, commented that this area of the city was abandoned and demolished, but now the area is coming back, helped in part by the upcoming renovation of the Reading Viaduct. He opined that the area will be repopulated in the years to come, and the property does satisfy Criterion J. He commented that the main façade of the corner building would make a great contribution to the streetscape if it were restored. He suggested that it looks like one of Robert Venturi's buildings, and should be called Pre-Venturi. He concluded that Save Our Sites supports the designation.

Mr. Martin stated that this meeting has been scheduled for six to eight weeks, so if the Callowhill Neighbors Association took a position on the designation, its representatives could have attended this meeting or provided a letter. He asserted that Mr. Beisert's claims regarding its support should carry no weight.

Ms. Cooperman commented that she is struck by the fact that the development of this brewery actually closely parallels the development of Ortlieb's. It started small, grew incrementally over time, and managed to survive prohibition by producing something else, and then emerge as one of the few breweries that survived. It is an important narrative that is a little different from the "rock star" breweries. Mr. Cohen commented that the Dallett Chandlery is not visible externally anymore, so even though it is intriguing research, externally it is not present so it should be removed from discussion by the Committee. The parts of the complex that are most articulate are the corner building and the face of building number 1. There is a neighborhood, and this anchors it in history. He commented that he appreciates the nominator's efforts to say that some buildings are more important than others. He questioned the use of certain terminology, including "hopper awning." Ms. Cooperman stated that it is a conflation of two kinds of window sash. Awning sash hinge at the top, whereas hopper sash hinge at the bottom, so it cannot be both. Mr. Cohen commented that there are parts of the nomination that clearly need fixing, but asked if the ultimate argument is worthy of the Committee's consideration and affirmation. He stated that he desires to see some of the corrections made, and some of Mr. Thomas's additional information incorporated into the nomination. He concluded that the property is historical and articulate and worth saving.

Mr. Schaaf asked if the Committee could recommend that the nomination be remanded and rewritten so that it removes the Dallett history and focuses on the most important aspects of what would be designated. Ms. Cooperman responded that the Committee's motion could include a recommendation to the Commission that the Dallett history be part of the record of the nomination, but that it should not be considered an aspect of the historic designation. Mr. Cohen added that it could be moved to an appendix. Mr. Mooney disagreed. He stated that although there may not be any visible trace on the surface of the buildings related to Dallett history, there could be subsurface traces. The nomination does not take into account any of the archaeological resources that may be preserved on the site. This was a thriving neighborhood. Deep underground traces of the residents that lived in this neighborhood could well be preserved within this site, including artifacts associated with members of the Dallett family that lived on this site for generations. He stated that removing the Dallett history is not appropriate in this case, because there could be aspects of Dallett history preserved below the ground on this property. Mr. Cohen suggested adding Criterion I to support Mr. Mooney's comments. Ms. Cooperman agreed, and noted that this location is adjacent to Pegs Run. Mr. Mooney agreed,



and explained that Willow Street is Pegs Run, one of the important early streams in Philadelphia. He explained that the interior alleyway of Hutchinson Street, which remains open between the buildings, can preserve tremendous amounts of information because it was not built upon.

Mr. Cohen commented that the argument for Criterion A is suffering from inflation. The argument would be that brewing history is an important part of the heritage of the city, state, or nation, but that should be reserved for things that have a larger scale of significance. He opined that Criterion J is the most pertinent, Criterion A should be removed, and Criterion I should be added. Mr. Mooney asserted that Criterion I is not the only Criterion that can pertain to archaeological resources. He suggested that Criterion J can apply if there are archaeological deposits that exemplify that cultural heritage of the community. Ms. Cooperman commented that there is no evidence at this time regarding subsurface remains that may satisfy another Criterion, but the Committee could infer that it is likely. Mr. Mooney commented that he is not advocating for the retention of Criterion A, but is advocating for the addition of Criterion I, and for noting that Criterion J could apply to archaeological resources.

Ms. Klein commented that this complex is a series of buildings that show the growth of a specific industry and how it changed. Each building has some sort of significance because of its history. It is a complex and the buildings relate to each other historically, and it is important to save it. There are areas that are probably less significant, but they still contribute. She concluded that it is worth designating under Criterion J, and clarified that she is only emphasizing its significance as it relates to Criterion J; not stating that it only satisfies that Criterion.

Mr. Lavery concurred with Mr. Schaaf's suggestion that the nomination be remanded for editing. He explained that it is a complex property, and there is information in the nomination that is not pertinent. He commented that the nomination should be clearer and these concerns should be addressed now. He stated that the way it stands currently, with the addition of Criterion I, he will not vote in favor of the designation, because the nomination could be much cleaner and stronger. Mr. Cohen asked if remanding would open a window of vulnerability to demolition. Ms. Cooperman responded that it potentially could, because new notice would need to be sent to the property owner. Others noted that there is no basis for jurisdiction if the nomination is flawed. Mr. Schaaf noted that the nomination form lists the Dallett Chandlery as one of the historic names of the resource, and the period of significance would need to be corrected if the history related to the Dallett Chandlery is removed from consideration. Ms. Cooperman responded that the addition of Criterion I allows for the period of significance to extend further back in time. Mr. Cohen opined that it is clearer to have the period of significance begin with the origin of the brewery buildings, even if archaeological remains might take it back further. Ms. Cooperman responded that the Committee's recommendation can be worded any number of ways, but a remand of the nomination can get messy in terms of jurisdiction and sending new notice to the property owner.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted 5 to 1 to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 401-29 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation I and J, but not Criterion A, while noting that the text of the nomination may not be accurate with respect to the remains on the exterior of the Dallett Chandlery building. Mr. Lavery dissented.

**ADDRESS: 909-31 NOBLE ST**

Name of Resource: Armour & Company Stock Depot

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: NCL Realty LP

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 909-31 Noble Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J, but not A and C. Although the staff appreciates the nominator's attempt to limit future regulation of some sections of this property, the staff contends that the Historical Commission does not have the authority to bind itself for future reviews in this manner under the current preservation ordinance and Rules & Regulations. The staff suggests that the nominator indicate the relative significances of the various sections of the complex, which will allow the Historical Commission to tailor its reviews to those sections in the future.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property 909-31 Noble Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the former meatpacking plant of Armour & Company, constructed in 1906, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that Armour & Company, based in Chicago, was one of the most significant meatpacking firms in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, and that the building represents the history of the meatpacking and cold storage industries. The nomination contends that the building was constructed as part of a larger national movement to develop purpose-built stock depots in cities across the country. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the building embodies distinctive characteristics of the Italian Renaissance Revival style. Under Criterion C, the nomination asserts that the building is a local representative of a distinctive type and style used by Armour & Company in their stock depots across the United States.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Attorney William Martin and Harry Pollack of NCL Realty represented the property. Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society represented the nomination.

Prior to the discussion of this property, Mr. Cohen noted that the Committee failed to include any recommendation in its prior motion related to amending the section of the nomination that specified policy recommendations for future Commission reviews of work to the property. Ms. Cooperman responded that the motion was already made and voted on, so the Committee cannot go back, but the members of the Committee who are also members of the Commission can remember this, and add it to the Commission motion, when and if it is appropriate.

Mr. Martin stated that, as in the last review, the property owner is asking that the Committee not recommend that the property be historically designated. Mr. Pollack stated that he is one of the partners of NCL Realty LP, the owner of the property, who has owned the property since 2000. It is currently used for the storage of obsolete equipment that has been collected over the past 50-60 years, which is stored in a small portion of the building. Mr. Martin asked why Mr. Pollack does not use the entire building. Mr. Pollack responded that the building is dilapidated. It is not equipped to use for anything other than storage of dilapidated equipment in a small portion because the structure is not very sound. Mr. Martin asked what work has been done to the building in the last 18 years of ownership. Mr. Martin responded that the roof was badly leaking when the property was first purchased, so a new roof was installed. The building was cited by the Department of Licenses and Inspections because it was not in good condition, and so the

owners used cinderblocks on several sides of the building. That is the work that has been done since it was purchased.

Mr. Martin introduced George Thomas of CivicVisions, and Fred Baumert of Keast & Hood Engineering, who were hired to provide expert testimony. Mr. Thomas began his presentation. He stated that a visual observation of the exterior of the building should make the observer question what is going on with this building. This leads to the larger issue which is that some building types in some industries, by definition of their operations, create the seeds of demolition of the buildings themselves. Examples include buildings constructed for food preparation, breweries, and smokehouses. These buildings are constructed without moisture barriers, and so they absorb moisture created by the industrial processes that they are built to house, which creates structural problems and makes these types of buildings inappropriate for designation.

Mr. Thomas showed a work order which required the owner to replace the rear wall because it collapsed. He noted that the nomination omitted this information. The work was done as inexpensively as possible, and not in a manner that a structural engineer would recommend, because the masonry was not brought down to the ground, but rather was started on a decorative belt course which was never intended to carry weight. The large mass of cinderblocks is because of the poor condition noted five years ago. The belt course is now cracking and failing because of the added weight of the cinderblock. He reiterated that an observer of the façade should question what is going on with the building.

Mr. Thomas showed several interior photographs to illustrate the condition of the building. He described the building as being in dire condition. He explained that the building is a mix of wood and cement in brick, which are all materials that can have problems when loaded up with humidity. The result is that there are sections of the building where one cannot walk or enter.

Mr. Thomas addressed the Criteria for Designation. He stated that the nomination is in error in its lack of understanding of context, and the building does not have significant character, interest, or value, and is not associated with the life of a person significant in the past. Mr. Armour's life and work was in Chicago, and the architect, Robert C. Clark, is less than a minor architect. The building has no architectural significance, the style is not distinctive, and it does not exemplify the cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of its demolished community. He showed an aerial photograph to illustrate the level of demolition that has occurred in this area, and noted that his argument here is the same as it was for the review of 401-29 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, which is located one block from the subject property. He stated that the Planning Commission continues to certify areas around the property as blighted.

Mr. Thomas stated that, while Mr. Armour ran a big operation, he was not the most significant man to the meat industry. That honor would go to Gustavus Franklin Swift and Andrew Chase, who invented the idea of the refrigerated railcar. Swift first had a distribution center at 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Girard Avenue, and Cudahy had a distribution center across the street. It was a cluster of meat businesses. The nomination claims that the subject building is important to the Armour industry; however, in most City Directories, the building is not even mentioned. What mattered for these businesses were the central offices. The nomination claims that the meat packing industry shaped the community. However, the 1910 census records show that there were only two meat-related occupations listed for the entire census tract.

Mr. Thomas noted that the nomination describes the architectural style as "Italian Renaissance Revival" "showing influence of McKim Mead & White" and "showing influence of the Chicago School" and "a Rational Style in contrast to the classicism of the remainder of the façade." He

concluded that all of these different names mean that it is in fact a building of very little style. He showed examples of Philadelphia factory buildings from 1900-10, and explained that factories at this time were changing dramatically, moving away from Victorian punched windows to big banks of windows to bring as much light as possible into the building. The frame is now made the item of essence, with the window banks infilling the frame entirely. Ballinger does this in Philadelphia at the same moment that these buildings are being built.

Mr. Thomas stated that architect Robert C. Clark was not significant. He noted that Clark was not a member of the American Institute of Architects, nor was he a member of the Chicago Architectural Club, or any architectural organizations. Rather, Clark was a builder who began as a carpenter. He had none of the training or schooling of an architect, which explains the difficulties of this building and how it was designed. Mr. Thomas described the building as “a catastrophe as a structure.” He stated that some Philadelphia architects designed factories with architectural character and quality. He showed examples of Potts Iron Company by Frank Miles Day & Bro., Max Levy Autograph by Carl Berger, and Haywood Chair Factory by Willis Hale.

Mr. Thomas described several structural issues found in this building. He described trees growing out of brickwork, infilled windows, and jacking of lintels. Mr. Lavery commented that Clark should not be blamed for the trees. Mr. Baumert responded that Clark can indirectly be blamed, because the walls are saturated. Mr. Thomas explained that barrier wall construction is where the steel frame is tightly encased in brick, which can fireproof it, but also becomes a means in which moisture comes through the wall and is introduced into the steel, which is colder in winter and causes condensation, rusting, and oxidation jacking. He stated that it is a standard problem that is endemic in the nature of buildings of this period, and the Committee should question whether these buildings can actually survive.

Mr. Thomas continued his discussion regarding the compromised structure of the building. He showed a photograph of wood piers at the basement, which are structurally failing so they are sistered with another piece. They are sitting in water. He questioned the logic of using wood on the bottom floor and steel on the second floor. He showed a photograph of a steel girder and column below a brick refrigeration room on the floor above, which is causing the steel to expand and blow apart in the center. The center has now failed so much that it has been shored up on both sides with wood to carry the floor because the structure itself is no longer adequate to carry the loads of just the floor above. He showed a photograph of a third floor room collapsing from loss of structural support below, and stated that nothing about this building is right as built. Mr. Cohen observed that Mr. Thomas is speaking a great deal about condition, which is not the purview of the Committee. Mr. Thomas responded that it is, because the Committee must understand what it is recommending. It is not fair to a property owner to push the owner forward in a building that is collapsing. Mr. Cohen responded that the Committee is not pushing anything; rather, it is judging historic significance. Mr. Thomas responded that the Committee is recommending historic significance, and it needs to know that the architect was incompetent. Mr. Cohen responded that the nomination does not include Criterion E, for significance associated with an architect. Mr. Thomas responded that he understands, but the nomination tries to argue that the architecture is significant, and Mr. Thomas would like the Committee to know that the building is grotesque and there are enormous difficulties associated with the building. Mr. Cohen responded that the Committee acknowledges difficulty, but the argument should be whether or not the building is historically significant.

Mr. Thomas summarized that the building has no capacity to contribute to the City; the meat industry is not understood in the nomination; the key players in the meat industry are not acknowledged in the nomination; Clark did not design a building of quality or significance; the

architectural character adds nothing to the understanding of the history of the region; and the building is inferior to what all of the good Philadelphia architects were designing at the time.

Mr. Beisert commented that Mr. Thomas focused on the loss of context, but this is not a historic district nomination, so discussion about context is irrelevant. He noted that there is density near this building, and not everything was demolished. He asserted that the City Planning Commission's 2035 district plan for this area featured a theme of industrial building reuse, with the recommendation that new construction maintain and recognize the area's industrial character. He claimed that the plan featured a photograph of this building. He suggested that the Committee look to other parts of the City and other cities in general that have reused meat packing buildings and other industrial buildings. Ms. Cooperman commented that the question of whether or not this building can be adaptively reused is not part of the Committee's purview. Mr. Beisert added that the nomination does not try to make the argument for Criterion E, so discussion about the architect's lack of significance is irrelevant.

Ms. Cooperman opened the floor to public comment. Joseph Menkevich commented that he believes that only the exterior of the building is proposed for historic designation, so Mr. Thomas did not need to go into such detail about the interior. He opined that the building would make a great brewery. Ms. Cooperman confirmed that only the exterior of the building is proposed for designation. David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, commented that this building features a handsome façade. He commented that while Clark was not a member of the American Institute of Architects, Mr. Traub is, if that offers him any authority to appraise the building. He commented that Criterion J is appropriate because it is for significance to the community, rather than the city or nation. He commented that retaining the façade would make a tremendous contribution to the streetscape. Patrick Grossi, representing the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, commented that the Alliance supports the nomination for reasons similar to the prior designation matter. He commented that the Alliance has met with the Callowhill Neighborhood Association in the past, although he does not speak for the Association. He commented that the Alliance included this building, in addition to Esslinger's and others, as possible candidates for designation in a presentation to the Association. He explained that the Alliance tried to focus on buildings that were not recognized in the Callowhill Industrial National Register Historic District, which is modest in size and as such the boundaries do not extend to include this building. He commented that the Association was very enthusiastic for just about every building that the Alliance shared with them, because these buildings are essentially industrial ornament in the Callowhill neighborhood. He described Callowhill as unique in that it is an opportunity to live in a neighborhood where one can kind of live amidst the past, but can also recognize that there is incredible potential for what that neighborhood might become.

Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Beisert if the other Armour building examples in the nomination were also designed by Clark. Mr. Beisert responded that he does not remember, but some may have been. Mr. Cohen commented that for buildings that were built for this specific purpose, they are rather ambitious in terms of their public faces. He described it as almost a civic public presence, and reflective of the Callowhill neighborhood. He cautioned against judging on handsomeness, but described it as a building that presents a very composed public face.

Mr. Cohen stated that the nomination claims significance under Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J. He referred to Criterion A as "inflated" and removed it from consideration. He asked the difference between Criteria C and D, and noted that the staff recommended Criterion D but not Criterion C. Ms. Chantry explained that Criterion D is that the building itself embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, whereas Criterion C reflects the environment of an era characterized by a particular architectural style. Mr. Cohen commented

that the most compelling case for designation is under Criterion J. Ms. Cooperman agreed, and commented that she was unsure of the argument for Criteria C and D, although she considers it to be a handsome building. She asked if it is necessary to put a name on the style for it to exist. Mr. Cohen commented that there was some confusion about style in the nomination, but ultimately the Committee is not just discussing the nomination, but also the merits of the building itself. He reiterated that the strongest case is under Criterion J. Ms. Cooperman suggested that Criterion D is more applicable when compared to Criterion C. Mr. Cohen agreed.

Mr. Schaaf commented on the location of the building. He noted that Reading Terminal was constructed several years before this building, within blocks of it. He suggested that it was a strategically important location for Armour to choose to locate a major building in this location, immediately adjacent to the Reading Viaduct. He noted that the brick color of Armour is similar to that of Reading Terminal, and suggested that there is a tension between the two buildings. Ms. Cooperman cautioned that it might be a coincidence. Mr. Cohen noted that the presence of train tracks was not a coincidence, and that the other meat packing locations at 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Girard Avenue were also located right by railroad infrastructure.

Mr. Mooney commented that this property is similar to Esslinger's in its potential to yield information important in prehistory or history. This building replaced an earlier nineteenth-century neighborhood and remnants of that neighborhood are likely preserved beneath this particular building. He advocated for the inclusion of Criterion I.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation unanimously voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 909-31 Noble Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, I and J, but not Criteria A and C.

Mr. Laverty excused himself from the meeting.

**ADDRESS: 801-15 N 4TH ST AND 319 BROWN ST**

Name of Resource: St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church, Parish House, and School

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: St. Agnes-St. John Nepomucene Parish/Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Nominator: Northern Liberties Neighbors Association/The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff contends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the properties satisfy Criteria for Designation A and J and do not merit designation and listing on the Philadelphia Register. Regarding Criterion A, the fact that the institution expanded its campus over time does not in and of itself indicate any historical significance. If it did, every institution that bought or built a second building would automatically qualify for designation, an untenable assertion. Regarding Criterion J, the nomination presents no evidence that these properties "exemplify" the cultural, political, social, or historical heritage of the Slovak community. The nomination presents a brief, incomplete history of the congregation, but makes no attempt to explain how this group of buildings exemplifies the heritage of the Slovak community. Unlike the case recently made for the linkage between St. Laurentius Church, the Polish-American community in Philadelphia, and its identity and heritage, no such case is made in this instance.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate as historic St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church, rectory, and school at 801-15 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 319 Brown Street and list them on the

Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. In 1980, owing to declining membership, St. Agnes and St. John Nepomucene, a Slovak parish in South Philadelphia, merged and the church is now called St. Agnes-St. John Nepomucene. The nomination claims that the properties at 801-15 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 319 Brown Street satisfy Criteria for Designation A and J. The nomination identifies a period of significance running from 1910, when the church construction began, to 1982. The choice of the endpoint in 1982 is not explained in the nomination.

The church building stands at the northeast corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Brown Streets. The church building is described as a “basement church.” Although not clear in the nomination, the congregation began to construct a large church in 1910, but in fact only completed the foundations and basement level (stone-faced section) before abandoning the plan, presumably for financial reasons, and then temporarily constructed a wood superstructure over the central nave section. The nomination proposes the designation of the temporary church, which still stands today. The nomination incorrectly refers to the church as evidencing the Greek Revival and Egyptian Revival styles; the incomplete building has no real architectural style, but the temporary superstructure may perhaps evidence some aspects of the strain of the Classical Revival style found throughout Central Europe.

The rectory stands to the east of the church, at the northwest corner of N. Orianna and Brown Streets. The rectory building was constructed about 1890 as a rowhouse with first-floor commercial space and converted for use as a rectory about 1918.

The school building stands to the east of the church and north of the rectory, facing N. Orianna Street. The school was constructed in 1926. It is three stories in height and housed school facilities on the lower floors and a convent on the upper floor. The school closed in 1969.

The nomination claims that the properties satisfy Criterion J (exemplifies the cultural, political, social, or historical heritage of the community) because they include the oldest remaining purpose-built church for the Slovak community in Philadelphia and the only school built by that community. The nomination claims that the properties satisfy Criterion A (has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past) because this institutional complex grew over time and therefore represents “a thread of the larger development of Philadelphia.”

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Attorney Michael Philips represented the property owner. Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

Mr. Farnham stated the staff contends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the properties satisfy Criteria for Designation A and J and do not merit designation and listing on the Philadelphia Register. Regarding Criterion A, he asserted that the fact that the institution expanded its campus over time does not in and of itself indicate any historical significance. If it did, every institution that bought or built a second building would automatically qualify for designation, an untenable assertion. Regarding Criterion J, he stated that the nomination presents no evidence that these properties “exemplify” the cultural, political, social, or historical heritage of the Slovak community, as required by the Criterion. The nomination presents a brief, incomplete history of the congregation, but makes no attempt to explain how this group of buildings exemplifies the heritage of the Slovak community. Unlike the case recently made for the linkage between St. Laurentius Church, the Polish-American community in Philadelphia, and its identity and heritage, no such case is made in this instance.

Mr. Philips stated that he represents the church parish, St. Agnes. He stated that he agrees with the staff recommendation that these properties do not merit listing on the Philadelphia Register. He asserted that these properties do not satisfy Criterion A. They do not have significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or nation; and, they are not associated with the life of a person significant in the past. He noted that the nomination provides a limited, cursory argument for the satisfaction of Criterion A. He also asserted that these properties do not satisfy Criterion J. They do not exemplify the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community. Mr. Philips noted that, when the Committee reviewed the nomination for St. Laurentius Church, the room was packed with Polish-American people who explained how the church was important to their heritage. He acknowledged that the Archdiocese never contested whether St. Laurentius exemplified the Polish-American community. He observed that there is no such crowd here today. It was evident how important the church was to their Polish-American heritage. He noted that the Polish-American community in Philadelphia makes up about 3.5% of the total population of the city. No one is making the argument that this church exemplifies the Slovak-American heritage. Mr. Philips stated that he is not aware of anyone from the Slovak-American community or this parish being involved in the current nomination in any way. He stated that there is no one here today to state that this church complex is significant to his or her heritage. He contended that the fact that one segment of the Slovak-American community erected this church in 1910 does not, in and of itself, demonstrate that this complex exemplifies that community's heritage. He noted that the school closed in 1969 and only had an enrollment of 70 students at the time. He reported that the Slovak-American community makes up 0.15% of the city's population. He remarked that there are important sites in the Czech and Slovak histories in the city; for example, Vaclav Havel, the president of the Czech Republic, delivered an important speech at Independence Hall on 4 July 1994, which is commemorated with a historic marker. He stated that no such important event occurred at this site. He asserted that this nomination was submitted by a neighborhood association that is seeking to gain some leverage over the future redevelopment of the site; it has nothing to do with historic preservation.

Mr. Beisert stated that he assumed that the review of the nomination would be continued and had advised the representative of the neighborhood association that he did not have to attend the meeting. He acknowledged that there are very few Slovaks connected with this church left in the city, but asserted that that does not mean that this church does not represent the heritage of the Slovak-American community. He noted that there are very few Quakers left in the city, but there are numerous Quaker buildings on the Philadelphia Register. He asserted that the argument offered by Mr. Philips is "a little bit flawed." Mr. Beisert contended that churches and school were always the centers of their communities for Catholics. He stated that the school was built because the Slovak children were not accepted at a nearby school. He remarked that this site developed from just a church to a complex. Mr. Beisert acknowledged that the church building on its own would not present as strong a case for designation as the group of three buildings does. The site has more significance because the Slovak-American community used all three buildings. The parish occupied an entire city block. Mr. Beisert addressed the fact that the congregation never completed the church building, leaving it as a basement with a temporary superstructure. He suggested that, perhaps, the congregation was not able to find the funds to complete the building. Or, perhaps, the congregants may have decided that they liked the temporary church in the basement. He stated that there are many possible reasons why they never completed the construction of the church. The fact that the church is incomplete does not mean that it is insignificant.



Mr. Philips responded to Mr. Beisert's statement, noting that every church is established by a community, but not every church is historically significant and worthy of preservation. The simple fact that a church was established by a "community" does not make it automatically eligible for designation. By Mr. Beisert's rationale, every single church building would be eligible for historic designation because every single church building represents a community of one sort or another. Mr. Philips observed that the question before the Committee is: Does this church "exemplify" the Slovak-American community in Philadelphia? He responded to his own question, answering that the nomination does not demonstrate that the site does exemplify that community. Slovak Americans attended numerous churches in Philadelphia. Mr. Philips noted that Holy Ghost Church on 24<sup>th</sup> Street north of Passyunk Avenue was founded in 1891 as a Catholic church for Czech and Slovak people. The current church building on that site, which was constructed in the early 1920s, is not designated as historic, but it better exemplifies the community in question. It is a complete building, not merely a basement.

Mr. Mooney suggested that the historic African Zoar Methodist Episcopal Church occupied the site in question. Ms. Cooperman corrected him, noting that the important African-American church was one block west on Brown Street.

David Traub of Save Our Sites stated that "this is not one church. This is one of a cluster of Eastern European churches in the Northern Liberties neighborhood." The group of churches gives that neighborhood "flavor." These churches give this neighborhood "character, color, and flavor." It was noted that only one church is proposed for designation in this nomination. Mr. Traub asserted that this church should have been nominated under Criterion D, "embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style," because this church creates its own style. The incomplete church, he claimed, is "utterly unique and handsome in every respect." Of the incomplete church, he noted the one-story wings and two-story central section and proclaimed that "I don't know of anything in this city quite like it. The thought of it being demolished is utterly dismaying, if that were to take place." He stated that he has photographed this church for a book and it should be designated.

Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance confessed that he had not read the nomination, but suggested that the site should be designated. He acknowledged that the neighborhood has changed significantly, which explains why there may not have been a wide showing of support from the Slovak community for designation. He stated that the designation should be considered, even if the Slovak community is not supporting its designation. Mr. Farnham responded that the staff's recommendation that the Commission reject this nomination is not predicated on the fact that no one from the Slovak community is here today to support the designation, but is instead based on the fact that the nomination itself does not demonstrate that this church exemplifies the Slovak community. He contended that the nomination offers no proof that this site exemplifies the heritage of the community.

Ms. Klein stated that the church building is a "unique" structure. She stated that it represents an "unusual" way of addressing a lack of funds to construct the church. She suggested that this church should have been nominated under Criterion F. She suggested that it contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation. She stated that the incomplete church building shows that the congregation responded to its failure with innovation.

Mr. Schaaf asked if a plan or drawing for the complete church has survived. He asked if we know what this building was intended to look like. He noted that we can see the foundation, but do not know how the remainder of the structure would have appeared if completed to the

original plan. Mr. Beisert stated that the only drawing he found was of the temporary interior. He noted that it located at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and is incorrectly labeled. Mr. Schaaf observed that one can conclude from the foundation that this church was initially intended to be a very grand building. Mr. Schaaf noted that the 1916 Sanborn map describes the existing building as a “temporary roof over a foundation.” He asked if the Commission was being asked to designate a “temporary roof over a foundation.” Mr. Farnham responded affirmatively, stating that the Commission is being asked to designate the foundation for a church that was never completed. Only the foundation was completed. Mr. Schaaf replied that that is “troubling.” Ms. Cooperman agreed. Ms. Cooperman disagreed with Ms. Klein, asserting that a temporary roof cannot be an innovation. Mr. Cohen explained that the roof was considered temporary until the church found the money to continue with the construction. Mr. Beisert explained that he deliberately did not nominate it for architectural reasons because it is clearly just a foundation with a temporary roof. He stated that the congregation found a way to make the building look “presentable” once it realized it was not going to be able to implement the initial plan. He noted that he does not know when the congregation abandoned its original plan for the church. He added that he has found photographs of other basement or incomplete churches which are not as nice as this one.

Mr. Cohen stated that, in his opinion, the nomination does not make a case for the satisfaction of Criterion A; it is “clearly an overreach.” He stated that he is undecided whether the nomination makes a case for Criterion J; he observed that it depends on the meaning of the term “exemplify.” He asked whether the basement of what was likely going to be a Gothic church can “exemplify” the heritage of the community. He suggested that a case could not be made that the basement “exemplifies” the community if “exemplify” means “distinctive” or “expressive of the community.” However, he noted, “exemplify” may many things. He noted that, in this case, the Slovak community did not have the money to complete the church, but did create something that is “funkadelic.” Mr. Cohen commented that, after the congregation ran out of money, they tried to build a Classical structure on a Gothic base, but broke all of the rules of Classical architecture. Despite breaking the rules, they seemed to create something “distinctive.” He stated that this is one of many small ethnic churches in a neighborhood full of ethnic churches. He concluded that this incomplete building is, in fact, an asset to the community. Mr. Cohen stated that the staff asserts that the nomination does not make the connection between the incomplete church building and the heritage of the Slovak community. He noted that the Slovaks did not live in one area, but were spread out in the city. He claimed that this church “nicely expresses that mixture of different ethnicities” in Northern Liberties. He stated that he finds that the incomplete building with its Gothic foundation and vaguely Classical temporary roof expresses the Slovak community “in a very distinctive way.” He stated that he believes that the Classicism was intended to represent the Catholic faith more so than the Slovak ethnicity. He concluded that, owing to the “triumphant” cross on the building, this is clearly a Catholic church.

Mr. Philips stated that the reason the congregation failed to complete this church is obvious. He observed that the Slovak community split in two at the time the church was under construction. The split occurred between urban and rural immigrants. Many at the time transitioned to a Slovak church at 9<sup>th</sup> and Wharton Streets. Mr. Philips stated that the church in South Philadelphia was demolished in the 1980s. He stated that St. Agnes did not exemplify the Slovak community; there were several Slovak churches in Philadelphia. He added that, if there was one location that exemplified the community, it was the Slovak Hall at 5<sup>th</sup> and Fairmount Streets. There was another Slovak church nearby, on 5<sup>th</sup> Street north of Fairmount. The nomination does not demonstrate that St. Agnes exemplified the Slovak community. He stated that the congregation and school numbers in the nomination indicate that this was not the key

religious facility in the community. He asserted that the nomination provides no historical context within which to evaluate the importance of this institution. The nomination merely asserts that any religious building associated with the community, even one that was never completed, is inherently significant. He asked the Committee to reject the nomination. Mr. Cohen countered that he sees the incomplete building “as a really powerful affirmation of their presence on the streetscape.” He stated that the temporary superstructure has double pilasters like St. Philip Neri in Queen Village and is therefore more Catholic than Slovak. Mr. Philips responded that he cannot understand how this church has architectural significance, as Mr. Cohen claims, when it consists of a temporary wooden structure on a stone basement. He reiterated that the church was never completed.

Mr. Traub asked to speak again. Ms. Cooperman replied that the Committee had already heard from him. She stated that the Committee members are now discussing the matter; the public has had its opportunity. Mr. Traub began to speak anyway. He claimed that the temporary wood superstructure on the stone foundation creates a perfect composition. He asserted that no one should ever be permitted to add anything to the two one-story “wings” of the unfinished church because it would destroy the perfect composition. The unfinished building must stay exactly as it is. Ms. Cooperman warned Mr. Traub that he had not been granted the floor and was out of order. Mr. Traub refused to stop speaking despite Ms. Cooperman’s requests for order. Mr. Traub continued despite repeated warnings. He asserted that the foundation with the temporary wood superstructure is “really fascinating architecture. This is a unique piece of architecture. It is part of what I would say is the spice that makes this city unique and should be designated.”

Mr. Cohen stated that there are some “funky” aspects of the nomination. The nomination claims that this building is Egyptian Revival in architectural style. That is absolutely wrong and should be corrected. Other corrections should be made.

Ms. Cooperman stated that she has some fundamental problems with the nomination. She stated that it provides no context within which one can determine whether or not this incomplete building “exemplifies” the community. She stated that she is unable to determine whether this building is significant from the nomination. She acknowledged that it is associated with a community, but every institutional building is associated with a community. She stated that no attempt was made to define the community. Mr. Cohen stated that the temporary, incomplete building tells us how the people who built it understood themselves. He stated that he interprets the building to mean that the Slovaks identified themselves more as Catholics than as Slovaks. He concluded that the temporary, incomplete building “exemplifies the self-presentation choice of that community.” Ms. Klein asked Mr. Cohen if that means that he has determined that the building satisfies Criterion C. Mr. Cohen responded negatively, stating that he believes that it satisfies Criterion J, not C. Mr. Cohen stated that this building represents “an ad hoc attempt to deal with a situation.” Mr. Schaaf stated that he is not convinced. He asked the Committee members to look at the long elevations, not just the front façade. He asserted that the incomplete, temporary building is “shed-like.” Ms. Klein stated that the shed is really a mansard. Mr. Schaaf disagreed. Ms. Klein pointed to the church-like interior in the temporary building. The other Committee members reminded her that the interior is not within their purview. Ms. Klein stated that she finds Criterion F to be the most relevant. Ms. Cooperman disagreed. She stated that “just because you make something up [the temporary superstructure] does not mean that it is an innovation.” Mr. Cohen responded that the temporary superstructure on the foundation “was a good save.”

Mr. Cohen stated that he would make a motion to recommend that the church satisfies Criterion J. Mr. Schaaf asked if the nomination proposed the designation of the church or the whole

complex with the school and rectory. Ms. Cooperman and Mr. Cohen stated that they are considering the entire complex. It was noted that the Committee had not discussed the school and rectory. Ms. Cooperman stated that she is still not convinced that the church exemplifies the Slovak community as the nomination claims.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted 4 to 1 to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 801-15 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 319 Brown Street satisfies Criteria for Designation J. Ms. Cooperman dissented.

**ADDRESS: 2854 AND 2870 WILLITS RD**

Name of Resource: Holme-Crispin Park and Thomas Holme-Crispin family burial ground

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: City of Philadelphia

Nominator: Joseph Menkevich

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2854 and 2870 Willits Road satisfies Criteria for Designation A, B, G, H, I, and J. All references to “posthumous co-nominators” and other such frivolities should be removed from the nomination, which will become an official government document if adopted.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2854 and 2870 Willits Road as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the Holme-Crispin Park and Thomas Holme-Crispin family burial ground satisfy Criteria for Designation A, B, G, H, I, and J. The nomination argues that the site is associated with Thomas Holme, Surveyor General to William Penn, who mapped the City of Philadelphia, and as such, is associated with an event central to the founding of the Commonwealth. The nomination further contends that the distinctive public square has contained a burial ground for over 300 years, where, in 1864, the Trustees of the Lower Dublin Academy erected an obelisk monument for Thomas Holme’s gravesite in the Crispin family burial ground, which is worthy of historic designation as an early public monument. Lastly, the nomination argues that the site may be likely to yield information important in pre-history or history, owing to the park’s location within a significant watershed, known to have supported Native American activity and travel routes, and as the site of early colonial dwellings and outbuildings, since demolished, associated with laborers and farmers.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. No one represented the City of Philadelphia’s Department of Public Property as the property owner. Joseph Menkevich represented the nomination.

Mr. Menkevich stated that the nomination should have been completed years ago by someone else who could have exercised brevity. He explained that he included information about black history when he learned that it was part of the history of this area and needed to be told. He noted that this site borders Greenbelt Knoll, which was a mid-1950s planned integrated suburban development in the city. He commented that the Thomas Holme burial site is well-maintained and the burial ground is surrounded by a fence.

Ms. Cooperman opened the floor to public comment. David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, agreed with Mr. Menkevich that the site should have been designated years ago. He suggested that Thomas Holme is the father of us all, because he drew the plan for Philadelphia. He

concluded that he supports the nomination. Mr. Menkevich commented that many sections of Pennypack Park have historic assets, and he loves archaeological history.

Mr. Schaaf asked about designating both the park and the burial ground, and asked if just the burial ground should be designated. Ms. Chantry responded that the nomination claims that there is archaeological significance associated with the park. Mr. Menkevich explained that he cannot separate the burial ground from the park, and there are graves outside of the fenced area. Mr. Cohen agreed that that is an argument for designating both the park and burial ground. Ms. Klein provided a newspaper clipping and program of the dedication of the historic marker for Thomas Holme from 1995. She noted that the article states that the burial site was restored.

Mr. Mooney commended Mr. Menkevich on the nomination. He stated that, from an archaeological standpoint, the significance is not only the burial ground itself, but the high potential for Native American artifacts owing to the stream that runs through the park. Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Menkevich to include figure numbers in any future nominations, and if the figures do not have a place within the narrative as something that is being referenced, then they belong in an appendix. He explained that it is not a mistake, but rather a better way to do it, and referred to the research as “impressive.” Mr. Menkevich thanked Mr. Cohen for his suggestions. Ms. Klein asked if Greenbelt Knoll is historically designated. Mr. Farnham confirmed that it is one of the Commission’s local historic districts.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation unanimously voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2854 and 2870 Willits Road satisfies Criteria for Designation A, B, G, H, I and J.

**ADDRESS: 1430 N BROAD ST**

Name of Resource: Charles E. Ellis House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Palace Mission, Inc.

Nominator: Staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov), 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1430 N Broad Streets satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1430 N. Broad Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J. The nomination argues that the mansion and its carriage house, constructed in 1890-91 for streetcar magnate and philanthropist Charles E. Ellis, is significant under Criterion J as an exemplification of the history of North Broad Street as an avenue for the exuberant homes of Philadelphia’s *nouveau riche* of the Gilded Age. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the property is significant as an excellent example of Richardsonian Romanesque design, popular among the *nouveau riche* of this era.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. No one represented the property owner. Ms. DiPasquale explained that the staff had not heard directly from the property owner, but had been contacted by Bob Thomas, chair of the Historical Commission, to whom the property owner had reached out.

Ms. Cooperman opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

Mr. Cohen opined that the nomination was extraordinarily well-done, with an exemplary architectural description. Mr. Cohen asked who had written the nomination. Ms. DiPasquale responded that she had written the nomination on behalf of the staff of the Historical Commission. Mr. Cohen stated that the nomination is incredibly well-written and makes an excellent argument for the significance of the property.

Ms. Cooperman asked if the staff had considered including significance for the property's association with the Peace Mission. Ms. DiPasquale responded that she had considered it initially, but had decided to keep the statement of significance more succinct. Ms. Cooperman agreed, noting that the nomination must only make a case for significance under one Criterion. Mr. Cohen suggested that Criterion E as the work of architect William Decker would be appropriate, as he is an architect of interest. Mr. Cohen explained that Decker designed the Betz Building at Broad and Chestnut Street (One South Broad Street), a photograph of which is included in the nomination. He noted that the Betz Building was in competition with an Addison Hutton-designed building called Girard Life to see which could be the tallest. He opined that Decker designed numerous significant buildings. Ms. Cooperman noted that she has been struggling with the appropriate place for the line between master architect and lesser architects, particularly in a city like Philadelphia which produced so many good designers. Mr. Cohen replied that he could make the argument that Decker is someone who is above the line. Ms. Cooperman explained that she was speaking more generally, and not about Decker specifically. Mr. Cohen noted that there is a tendency to cast architects as various "rates," but that that is not necessarily true. He explained that Decker had a thriving career and was working for a class of newly-wealthy people who want to blow off all of the strictures of traditional wealth and design. Mr. Cohen noted that Decker achieved the commission for the Betz Building, which was in a triumphal location, and the remarkable Manhattan Building at 4<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets, which had giant faces on it. Mr. Cohen concluded that Decker was an architectural persona of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ms. Cooperman responded that she agrees with the inclusion of Criterion E. Speaking more generally, Ms. Cooperman noted that there are many architects who might not have been recognized as "masters" because they were not great style innovators, but nonetheless they might be significant. Mr. Cohen noted that there is also a difference between local and national significance.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted unanimously to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1430 N. Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E and J.

**ADDRESS: 1805-07 E YORK ST**

Name of Resource: Western Saving Fund Society of Philadelphia

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Dimitrios and Melissa Tsiobikas

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov), 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1805-07 E York Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, E, and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1805-07 E York Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Western Saving Fund Society building, constructed in 1916, is significant under Criteria for Designation C, D, E, and J. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues that the building is a

fine example of the Neo-Renaissance or Italian Renaissance palazzo style that became popular for bank buildings in the early twentieth century. Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that the building is significant as the work of the prominent firm of Furness, Evans & Co. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the property is significant for its role as the first branch office of the Western Saving Fund Society.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. No one represented the property owner. Oscar Beisert represented the nominator, the Keeping Society.

Ms. Cooperman opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

Mr. Schaaf commented that under Criteria C and D, fourth paragraph, third sentence, the nomination reads “Baltimore Savings Bank,” when it should read “Provident Savings Bank in Baltimore.” Other than that, he opined that the nomination is clean, and the building is clearly worthy of designation. He noted that the building exhibits enormous civic pride and is an astoundingly beautiful and compelling building, which is reminiscent of Strickland’s Stock Exchange building, and is incredibly fine in its details.

Ms. Stein asked if the nomination included the cast iron fence and gate. Mr. Cohen noted that the fence is on the property and was called out specifically in the architectural description, so it is part of the nominated property.

Mr. Cohen questioned the inclusion of Criterion E. Ms. Cooperman agreed, noting that the nomination rests largely on the significance of Frank Furness, who had been dead for several years when this building was designed. Mr. Cohen noted that, if the nomination comments on the distinctive hand of an architect, it should be commenting on the significance of Charles Willing and Joseph Sims, rather than Furness. Mr. Beisert responded that they worked for the firm of Furness & Evans. Mr. Cohen responded that the connection is weak. Ms. Cooperman agreed, noting that the design is not representative of the work for which the firm of Furness & Evans is known. Ms. Cooperman opined that the significance of the design of the building stands on its own without reference to Furness & Evans.

Mr. Cohen noted that he appreciates that the nomination includes examples in New York and Baltimore that show the increasing monumentality of bank buildings, but also a “spareness” of that monumentality. Ms. Cooperman agreed, noting that that is obviously where the PSFS banks end up in the next decade.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1805-07 E York Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J.

**ADDRESS: 2101 WASHINGTON AVE**

Name of Resource: Howell & Brothers Wallpaper Hangings Manufactory

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 2101 Washington Real Estate

Nominator: Dennis Carlisle

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2101 Washington Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. The staff recommends that the period of significance end in 2005, when Frankford Chocolate Company relocated and sold the property. It also recommends that some of the later, makeshift additions be classified as non-contributing to the overall significance of the complex.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2101 Washington 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 2101 Washington Avenue is significant under Criterion A in the area of development and culture as the site Howell & Brothers Wallpaper Hangings Manufactory, which was first constructed on this property in 1865. As one of the most successful wallpaper manufacturers during the second half of the nineteenth century, the company transformed the methods for manufacturing wallpaper in the United States while simultaneously influencing American interior design. Howell & Brothers Wallpaper was the first American wallpaper manufacturer to utilize machine-made wallpapers, and at one point the largest wallpaper factory in the country. The nomination asserts that 2101 Washington Avenue satisfies Criterion J, owing to its influence on the growth of Washington Avenue as an industrial corridor and its representation of Philadelphia as a domestic and international manufacturing center, first as the Howell & Brothers Wallpaper Hangings Manufactory, and followed by the John Wanamaker Department Store Furniture Warehouse and the Frankford Chocolate Company.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Mehley presented the nomination. The nominator was not present. One of the property owners, Jake Ketchum, was present at the meeting.

Before Ms. Mehley read the staff summary for 2101 Washington Avenue, Mr. Farnham made an announcement. Mr. Farnham stated that the nominator who prepared and submitted the nomination contacted him late afternoon on 13 February, the day before the meeting, asking to withdraw the nomination. Mr. Farnham remarked that he has been in ongoing discussions during the last couple months with the Law Department about withdrawals of nominations. He noted that it is the Law Department's position was that once the Historical Commission had issued its written notice to the property owner announcing the consideration of the nomination, the nominator no longer has the authority or the capacity to withdraw the nomination and it is then the prerogative of the Historical Commission to decide to move forth and consider a designation.

Mr. Farnham stated that the Law Department had provided guidance regarding how to proceed with the review of the nomination for 2101 Washington Avenue at the at today's meeting. The Law Department advised the Committee to proceed with the review of the nomination as it would with any nomination, consider it on its merits, determine whether or not the property has historical and architectural significance, and make a recommendation to the Commission. He explained that the nominator is free to make his case for withdrawal of the nomination at the Commission meeting and to advocate for the Commission to decline to designate. Mr. Farnham noted that it was the Law Department's view that once the written notice announcing the consideration of the nomination has been mailed to the property owner, initiating the



Commission's jurisdiction over the nominated property, it is the Commission's prerogative to decide whether or not to proceed with the review.

Ms. Cooperman stated that the Committee should proceed as usual. Mr. Schaaf asked if the Committee needed to resolve to proceed by adopting a motion. Ms. Cooperman restated that the Committee should proceed as usual; no motion is necessary. Mr. Farnham advised the Committee to proceed as usual and noted that the nominator will have the opportunity to make his argument for withdrawal or refusal to designate when the Historical Commission reviews the nomination. Mr. Farnham also noted that the nominator contacted him and told him that he was unable to attend the Committee meeting. Mr. Farnham explained that the nominator would not be participating in today's meeting, but was aware of the advice from the Law Department that was shared with Committee members.

Ms. Mehley read an overview of the nomination as well as the staff recommendation.

Ms. Cooperman inquired if it was recently nominated to the National Register. She recalled reading about the property and providing feedback on the National Register nomination. Other members and Ms. Mehley confirmed her assertion.

Ms. Cooperman invited the owner to introduce himself. Mr. Ketchum introduced himself and stated that he represents the ownership. He stated that they are not prepared to discuss the nomination. He therefore requested a continuance. Mr. Ketchum stated that he was under the impression that the review of the nomination would be moved to a March meeting. Ms. Cooperman noted that the Committee could proceed with the review today and then the review by the full Commission could be postponed at the March meeting. She noted that the Committee would be making a recommendation to the Commission. Mr. Ketchum restated that he was not prepared for the Committee's review and would like the Committee to decline to review the nomination on its merits and instead recommend that the Commission remand it back to the Committee at a later meeting.

Mr. Farnham advised that the Committee could choose to recommend to the Commission that it continue the matter without reviewing the nomination on its merits today, as the Committee has done that in the past. He also noted that, since the property owner had been provided with the requisite notice of today's review, the Committee could also move ahead with the review today. Ms. Cooperman thanked Mr. Farnham for the clarification.

Mr. Cohen asked if recommending a continuance would place the building at risk. Ms. Cooperman stated that the Committee could recommend to postpone the review without any jeopardy to the property because it will remain under the Commission's jurisdiction.

Mr. Cohen asked if the Committee will hear the nomination again. Ms. Cooperman responded that the Committee could recommend that the Commission continue the matter and remand it back to the Committee for the next meeting. Mr. Cohen stated that it may give the owner more time to formulate a position and give the nominator an opportunity to be present. Mr. Farnham concurred. He added that it would give the Commission the opportunity to hear from the nominator about his desire to withdraw the nomination.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue the review of the nomination for 2101 Washington Avenue and remand it to the Committee on Historic Designation for its 18 April 2018 meeting.

**ADDRESS: 1106-14 SPRING GARDEN ST**

Name of Resource: Woodward-Wanger Co.

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Greenway Plaza LLC

Nominator: Callowhill Neighborhood Association

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. The nomination argues that the Woodward-Wanger Co. building (also known as the The Lawsonia Building), constructed in 1929 as a warehouse and office building, is significant under Criterion D as a distinctive example of the Colonial Revival Style as applied to a commercial and industrial building. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street reflects the environment of commercial and light industrial building design as influenced by Colonial Revival style during this period in Philadelphia. It should be noted that the building is a shell; the rear section of this building was recently demolished and the openings created by the demolition were boarded, but not permanently sealed.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Mehley presented the nomination. Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

Ms. Cooperman inquired if the property owner was present at the meeting. The owner was not in attendance. Ms. Mehley confirmed that the property owner had not contacted the Historical Commission's staff in advance of the Committee on Historic Designation meeting.

Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society introduced himself as the nominator in partnership with the Callowhill Neighborhood Association. He stated that he welcomed questions about the nomination.

Mr. Cohen pointed out the extensive grammatical, spelling, and formatting errors in the nomination. Mr. Schaaf agreed. Mr. Beisert defended the submitted draft and noted the main reason for these flaws was the speed with which the nomination was written, owing to a demolition threat. Mr. Cohen stated that he did not intend to be overly critical, but that he wished to see the nomination revised to address the numerous errors.

Mr. Cohen commented on the representative examples of Colonial Revival style warehouse and factory type buildings included in the nomination. He suggested that some of the examples hurt the argument for significance rather than help it. Mr. Cohen also suggested that these examples should include their construction dates and original uses as part of the captions of their photographs.

Mr. Cohen noted the merits of the arguments for the satisfaction of Criteria C and D, which relate to architectural style. Ms. Cooperman agreed.

Mr. Schaaf commented on the information included about the popularity of the Colonial Revival style. The nomination states the influence of the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876 and the Columbian Exposition 1893 as being the catalyst for its popularity. Mr. Schaaf pointed out that 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street was built three years after the 1926 Sesqui-Centennial

International Exposition in Philadelphia. Mr. Schaaf stated that he imagined the enthusiasm for Colonial Revival could also be attributed to the 1926 exposition as it was a more recent event.

Ms. Klein raised questions about the safety and stability of the existing structure, which is little more than a front façade and partial roof. She asked if the Department of Licenses & Inspections had determined that it was safe. She also questioned the condition of the roof and wondering about what would be designated. She was curious how much of the roof remained over the existing part of the structure. Ms. Mehley stated that the staff was not aware of the precise condition of the building currently. Ms. Mehley also stated that the staff was not currently aware of the Department of Licenses & Inspections' assessments of the building, but could investigate.

Mr. Schaaf inquired if the photographs shown on page 6 of the nomination were indicative of the present condition. Oscar Beisert stated that the top photograph on page 6 was an interior photograph while the lower the roof appeared to be intact showed the condition of the south elevation. Mr. Schaaf and Ms. Cooperman noted that the roof appeared to be intact in the lower photograph. Ms. Klein pointed out that the nomination referred to the building as being in poor condition. Mr. Cohen and Ms. Cooperman both noted that a building's physical condition is not a barrier to designation. It was noted that this building is only a partial shell.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

**ADDRESS: 625 S DELHI ST**

Name of Resource: William and Letitia Still House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: F & J Homes LLC

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, [megan.schmitt@phila.gov](mailto:megan.schmitt@phila.gov), 215-686-7660

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 625 S. Delhi Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 625 S. Delhi 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 states that the building, named the "William and Letitia Still House & Underground Railroad Way Station" by the nominator, "represents the life and work of the important African American abolitionist, businessman, leader on the Underground Railroad, historian, writer, and civil rights activist William Still." Still's 1872 book, *Underground Rail Road*, is identified as "the only first-person account of African American activities on the Underground Railroad." The nomination also argues that the building served as an important stop for enslaved people as they passed through Philadelphia as they sought freedom.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination. Oscar Beisert and J.M. Duffin of the Keeping Society of Philadelphia represented the nomination.

Ms. Cooperman asked if there was any comment from the public. Mr. Beisert said that he had a question, and asked if the staff could please correct two formatting issues that were in the

nomination since they were provided with a Word document. Ms. Schmitt apologized for having overlooked the errors and said she would correct them.

Ms. Cooperman asked Mr. Duffin if he was there as part of the public comment or as co-nominator, and he confirmed that he was there because he had worked on the nomination. Ms. Cooperman then asked if there was any public comment, of which there was none.

Mr. Cohen acknowledged the impressive letters of support for the nomination that the Historical Commission had received and asked Mr. Duffin if he had requested them, to which he replied that he had. He said that he was shocked at the response, explaining that most of the letters had been penned with a week and a half of his request. He went on to say that it reinforced the importance of William Still in American history. Mr. Cohen said that the letters from some of the senior-most people in the field were very compelling. Mr. Beisert added that Kate Lawson, the author of a book about Harriet Tubman, reviewed the nomination immediately, which attested to the significance of the site.

Mr. Schaaf asked why the nomination did not extend to Criterion B, "is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation." He suggested that the property's role as a stop on the Underground Railroad for many years during the Civil War could be considered an important event. Mr. Cohen asked whether something that happened over a long period of time could be considered an event, to which Mr. Schaaf responded that the Centennial, which went on for a long period of time, was considered an event. Ms. Cooperman added that if you call an event a pattern of events, then it could be considered. Mr. Duffin said that William Still's activity during this time period was in reaction to the Fugitive Slave Act, which was causing strong backlash in the North, because Southern states were forcing the federal government to intervene on state laws in the North that were protecting fugitive slaves. Ms. Cooperman said that they were talking about a five-year long event, and Mr. Schaaf added that Reconstruction is considered an event.

Mr. Cohen pointed out that he thought there was one minor error that describes the building as being located between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets. Mr. Duffin clarified that the quote from William Still may have been referring to a different one of his dwellings, since he lived in a few places. Mr. Beisert added that after 1855 he moved to a different building close by. Mr. Cohen suggested that the reference be clarified.

Mr. Mooney said that he wanted to see Criterion I added to the nomination, owing to the immense significance of William Still and the site's connection to the Underground Railroad. Mr. Cohen asked if there was an open yard in the back, and Mr. Mooney confirmed that there was. Mr. Cohen then asked if the house was 12 feet wide, and Mr. Duffin replied that he believed so. Mr. Cohen pointed out that the front façade was no longer intact but that the side of the building was. He asked Mr. Duffin if he had seen the back of the building, and he responded that he had only seen it partially. Mr. Schaaf stated that the back façade was in its original state.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 625 S. Delhi Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, B, I, and J.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

## **CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION**

§14-1004. Designation.

(1) Criteria for Designation.

A building, complex of buildings, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for preservation if it:

- (a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation;
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park, or other distinctive area that should be preserved according to a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.