

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

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

PRESENT

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

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

ALSO PRESENT

Jo Ann Desper, Roxborough Development Corporation
Steven Peitzman, East Falls Historical Society
Juanda Myles, Citizen Planner
John Packard
Pamela Packard
Cindy Hamilton, Heritage Consulting
Edward Jopolonski
Patrick Leahy
Celeste Hardester, Central Roxborough Civic Association
Kristin Holmes, PMN
Bob Theil, NewCourtland
J.M. Duffin
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Joshua Cohen, Office of Councilman Curtis Jones
David S. Traub, Save Our Sites
David Johnson, University of Pennsylvania
Keith Coleman
Michael Phillips, Obermayer
Suzanne Hagner, Wissahickon Interested Citizens Association
Dawn Maknys, Nativity BVM
Chip Roller, WICA
Nadine Stevenson
Richard DeMarco
Leonard Bracale
James Harry Calamia, Roxborough Development Corporation
Patty Pat Kozlowski
Venise Whitaker
John Carpenter

William O'Brien, MNYK Law
Roger Hamilton
Lisa Hamilton
Kachy Nwobi, CHPlanning

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Cooperman called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Messrs. Cohen, Lavery, Mooney, and Schaaf joined her.

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES

Ms. Cooperman noted that property owners had requested continuances for three nominations: 208-10 Rex Avenue, 6950 Germantown Avenue, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary Historic District. She explained that the Committee would review the continuance requests in two batches, as she needed to recuse from the first review, owing to her association with the nominator of 208-10 Rex Avenue.

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, 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. Ms. DiPasquale presented a continuance request to the Committee. No one represented the owner or nominator.

Ms. DiPasquale explained that the property owner requested a continuance to a future Committee on Historic Designation meeting to allow for additional discussions with the community about the sale and reuse of the property. Ms. DiPasquale explained that the request from the property owner was included in the Committee's packets.

Mr. Mooney 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 208-10 Rex Avenue to a future meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

ADDRESS: 6950 GERMANTOWN AVE

Name of Resource: Leibert House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Germantown Home Inc

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 6950 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 6950 Germantown Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination describes the Leibert House as a commodious Federal-style “Mansion House” with later Gothic Revival stylistic embellishments. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the building reflects the environment in an era characterized by the Federal style, representing the original period of construction between 1800 and 1808 and the Gothic Revival style, representing the Victorian improvements that took place and some point between 1840 and 1880. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that, though certain detailing was lost during the property’s mid-nineteenth-century Gothic renovation, the Leibert House retains many features that allow it to continue to embody distinguishing characteristics of the Federal style. It also states that despite the loss of the porch, the building continues to embody a blend of distinguishing features associated with both the Federal and Gothic Revival eras. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the building is significant owing to its association with the Leibert family, specifically William Leibert, a bookbinder who represents Germantown’s rich German-language printing and bookselling history. It should be noted that the front porch was removed recently, before the Historical Commission’s jurisdiction went into effect.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented a request to continue the review of the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.

Ms. DiPasquale explained that request to continue the review of the nomination to the December 2018 Committee on Historic Designation meeting came in late in the afternoon of the day before.

Ms. Cooperman asked if the nominator or a representative of the property owner was present. Jim Duffin represented the nominator. Bob Theil represented the property owner. Mr. Cohen asked the why the property owner requested a continuance. Mr. Theil responded that they would like more time to review the nomination and perhaps meet with the Historical Commission’s staff.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue and remand the nomination for 6950 Germantown Avenue to the December 2018 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Proposed Action: Designation

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Lutheran Theological Seminary Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, I, and J. As the nomination recognizes the archaeological potential of the site, the staff recommends amending the period of significance to 1750-1972.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the Lutheran Theological Seminary Historic District located east of the 7300 block Germantown Avenue in the Mt. Airy neighborhood and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, I, and J. The nomination argues that the proposed district, which is composed of 22 buildings constructed between 1750 and 1972, is significant under Criterion A for the Seminary's history and evolution in Philadelphia as representative of, and associated with, the larger historical development of suburban institutional campuses in the city. Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that six of these buildings were designed by architect Frank Furness or his firm Furness & Evans and these buildings represent work of an eminent Philadelphia architect whose work greatly influenced the architectural history of the city. Under Criterion I, the nomination argues that the site where the Seminary currently stands was historically occupied by the Mount Airy Estate and is therefore significant for its archaeological potential. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the Seminary represents the historical heritage of religious and theological education and training in the United Lutheran Church.

It should be noted that since the owner was notified of the proposed historic district in April 2018, at least seven of the buildings owned by the Lutheran Theological Seminary are currently up for sale or have recently been sold to new owners.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented a request to continue the review of the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Attorney Michael Phillips represented the Lutheran Theological Seminary, the largest property owner in the proposed historic district. Jim Duffin, representing the nominator, commented that the nominator does not oppose the continuance request.

Mr. Philips explained that the Seminary is largely supportive of the nomination, but requests a continuance to work out issues regarding the archaeological significance and other issues identified in the nomination. He explained that they are trying to identify zones of archaeological potential as opposed to the entire property, and also would like to address some contributing versus non-contributing buildings on the Seminary's property. Mr. Duffin noted that they are in discussions with the Seminary.

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

Mr. Mooney noted that he does not necessarily oppose continuing the review until the October Committee meeting, but would like to inform everyone that the notion of restricting the area of archaeological potential makes no sense. Mr. Phillips responded that there are two sources of archaeological potential attributed to the property—the first, the foundations of the Mount Airy estate, and second, as a site that is significant for its association with the Battle of Germantown, the latter of which the Seminary disputes. He noted that the Seminary has a relationship with

the American Battlefield Trust Society, and has had long discussions about where there could be any artifacts or remnants, and they do not believe there are any. The foundations of the Mount Airy estate, he noted, would be limited to one corner of the Seminary's larger property. Mr. Mooney responded that they do not understand how archaeology works, or what the historical significance of this entire property is. He argued that Seminary basically has an intact eighteenth-century plantation, activities from which could have left archaeological traces anywhere on the ground. Areas associated with structures are just structures, he noted. He opined that it is very unlikely that the Seminary will be able to make a strong case to limit the potential of remains from the Battle of Germantown, as those activities could have occurred all over the site, owing to the fact that it was such a chaotic battle. William Allen was one of the largest slave importers to Pennsylvania, and kept slaves on the property. There could be evidence of his association with enslaved Africans on virtually any part of the property, as well as potentially a slave cemetery. Mr. Mooney stated that there are many more issues at play than just where William Allen's house was located. Mr. Phillips responded that many of those issues were not addressed in the nomination. Mr. Mooney replied that he is aware of that, but these are facts that need to be addressed and which he would bring up at any review of the nomination. Mr. Mooney explained that the nomination also notes that there could be remains of the decorative gardens that were part of the property, which is also a potentially significant archaeological resource. Mr. Phillips responded that the Seminary is supportive of 98 percent of the nomination and is committed to historic preservation. He explained that they want it to be clear as to what the archaeological significance is to the property as a whole. He noted that the Seminary can speak to the disturbance that has already occurred on the site and the effort and care that has been taken to ensure that, if there were to be any archaeological artifacts found, they would be properly cared for. He noted that no artifacts have yet been found, but the foundation of the home and gardens is something that the Seminary is supportive of protecting. Mr. Mooney stated that the foundations of the home are wonderful, but are of little archaeological significance. Mr. Mooney stated that he would not be supportive of any limiting of archaeological potential without first having the entire area subject to a professional archaeological survey. He opined that those are the only individuals who would be qualified to make a statement about limiting archaeological potential.

Ms. Cooperman suggested that the property owner might consider contracting with a qualified professional archaeologist to do such an assessment. Mr. Phillips responded that the Seminary would be willing to do so. He questioned whether the Seminary should retain an archaeologist before the nomination proceeds, noting that he is not sure that it could happen before October. Ms. Cooperman noted that an archaeological survey might be a means of arriving at some kind of certainty.

Ms. Cooperman asked if there was anyone else who would like to comment on the continuance request. Nadine Stevenson explained that she is the owner of 7322 Boyer Street, another property within the proposed historic district. She questioned the purpose and procedure of the continuance request. Ms. Cooperman explained that there is a request to continue consideration of the review of the nomination, noting that the Committee on Historic Designation provides a non-binding recommendation to the Historical Commission as to whether a nomination makes the argument for one or more Criteria for Designation. She explained that, owing to the continuance request, the Committee has not yet fulfilled its part of the process, and the nomination would need to be continued and remanded back to them by the Historical Commission. Ms. Stevenson asked when those reviews would happen. Ms. Cooperman responded that the current request is to continue the Committee's review until October, which would then delay the Historical Commission's final determination to its 9 November 2018 meeting. She noted that another continuance request may be made, further delaying the review.

Ms. Stevenson asked about the process for designation. Ms. Cooperman responded that most of the matters reviewed by the full Historical Commission first go through one of two advisory committee processes. For substantial alterations to a historically-designated property, an application goes through the Architectural Committee process. This committee, the Committee on Historic Designation, reviews the technical merits of nominations proposing to designate properties, districts, etc. She noted that the Historical Commission's staff first reviews nominations that are submitted, and then forwards them to the Committee on Historic Designation, which makes a non-binding recommendation to the full Commission based on whether the Committee members agree or disagree with the nomination that the property or district has merit, and what criteria under the historic preservation ordinance that property or district meets. She noted that typically, but not always, the Commission will then review the nomination and the Committee's recommendation at its next monthly public meeting. Ms. Stevenson noted that there have been discussions about the possibility of a cemetery and other archaeological remains in the district, and questioned whether there was a way to determine whether or not that was true prior to the Committee and Commission deciding whether to designate the area as a historical landmark. Ms. Cooperman responded that the Committee had just offered recommendations for the Seminary to take to provide additional clarity, although the Committee cannot compel a property owner to do so. She noted that the Committee is simply providing an opinion to the full Historical Commission based on the information presented to them and through public comment, which is what the Commission will also do. Ms. Stevenson asked whether public comment will be accepted at subsequent meetings. Ms. Cooperman responded affirmatively, explaining that public comment is accepted at all meetings of the Historical Commission and its advisory committees.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue and remand the nomination for the Lutheran Theological Seminary Historic District to the October 2018 or subsequent meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

ADDRESS: 3005 W SCHOOL HOUSE LANE

Name of Resource: Lycoming

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Overseers of the Public School; Penn Charter School Inc.

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 3005 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation D and E, but notes that there is an internal inconsistency between the nomination form and introduction, and the body of the text, which uses Criterion C instead of Criterion D. The staff also notes that the significance of the property as defined in the nomination is predicated on the structures that stood on the site at the time the nomination was written. If the structures are demolished, the significance as defined in the nomination will be lost and the nomination will be moot.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3005 W. School House Lane and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that "Lycoming," the former residence of William Jay Turner, constructed in 1907, satisfies Criteria for Designation D and E. Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that the house and its contemporaneous auxiliary structures are significant as a suburban design by architect Wilson Eyre, Jr. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the buildings embody distinguishing characteristics of the Arts & Crafts style.

The nomination was submitted to the Historical Commission on June 29, 2018. The owner of the property applied to the Department of Licenses & Inspections for a demolition permit on the same day, June 29, 2018. The Historical Commission notified the owner in writing that it would consider the nomination on July 17, 2018, initiating its jurisdiction over any subsequent permit applications for the property. The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance requires the Department of Licenses & Inspections to forward to the Historical Commission all building permit applications for review that are submitted on and after the day the written notice is mailed to the property owner. Therefore, the Historical Commission does not have authority to review the demolition permit, which was submitted to the Department of Licenses & Inspections on June 29, more than two weeks before the written notice was mailed. The demolition permit was issued and, as of August 27, demolition had commenced. The staff will photograph the property prior to the Committee on Historic Designation meeting to document what, if any, structures remain at the site at the time of the meeting.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale explained that the demolition of the building had been completed, and there was no longer any portion of the building standing. The demolition occurred legally with a valid demolition permit. Nominator Jim Duffin requested that the Committee review the nomination on its merits for the record and posterity. Ms. Cooperman asked if a representative of the property owner was present.

Ms. Cooperman opened the floor to public comment. Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance bemoaned the loss of the building, and suggested that this was a good time to make reference to the necessity of a demolition delay in Philadelphia, with the understanding that that conversation lies outside of the purview of the Committee. He suggested that, if enacted in Philadelphia, the Committee might still be discussing the merits of the building for designation. He explained that demolition delay is a policy that exists in numerous other American cities, including Pittsburgh, Chicago, Boston, and Baltimore. He noted that is not a panacea but does impose a time delay on demolition of buildings considered worthy of nomination to the local register. He noted that this is a Wilson Eyre building, as the nomination makes clear. He commented that he understands that the Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation is actively considering demolition delay, and hopes that comes to fruition. He asked for a brief moment of silence for the loss of a significant building designed by one of Philadelphia's most prominent late nineteenth-century architects.

Steven Peitzman, board member of the East Falls Historical Society, explained that he is here as a near neighbor. He noted that, over the years, William Penn Charter School has had a nearly perfect record in demolishing all three significant houses that it has acquired. Mr. Cohen commented that the demolition of this building is a major loss of a building by a significant architect. He agreed that a demolition delay or review would be beneficial to the city. He noted that this building was widely acknowledged as a historic building, it was the subject of numerous publications as a model suburban dwelling of its time. He opined that the nomination was beautifully written, and that the nominators found pieces of research he had not seen before, despite having researched Eyre. Ms. Cooperman agreed.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3005 W. School House Lane satisfied Criteria for Designation D and E, but owing to the demolition of the resource, recommended that Historical Commission decline to designate the property.

ADDRESS: 2424 E ALLEGHENY AVE

Name of Resource: Our Lady Help of Christians Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Nominator: Celeste Morello

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the church building at 2424 E. Allegheny Avenue satisfies Criterion for Designation A. The staff further recommends that the arguments in the nomination pertaining to the significance of architect Albert Wolfring Leh, which are cited as evidence of the satisfaction of Criterion for Designation E, may better satisfy Criterion for Designation J.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate Our Lady Help of Christians Church at 2424 E. Allegheny Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. While the larger parcel includes several buildings and an expansive cemetery, the nomination proposes exclusively to designate the church building itself. The nomination argues that the property is significant under Criteria for Designation A and E. The nomination contends that the building represents the American Catholic Church's social history as it pertains to the "German problem," in which German-Americans declined to assimilate and adopt the English language. The nomination notes that this lack of assimilation resulted in the creation of several German Catholic churches, including Nativity BVM and later Our Lady Help of Christians Church. The nomination further argues that the choice to commission architect Albert Wolfring Leh, an American of German descent, and not archdiocesan architect Edwin F. Durang was significant.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Attorney Michael Phillips represented the property owner. Celeste Morello represented the nomination.

Mr. Phillips stated that the Archdiocese of Philadelphia has no opposition to the nomination.

Ms. Morello commented that she nominated the stunning building, because it deserves to be preserved. She added that she is unaware of another building resembling Our Lady Help of Christians, calling the design an anomaly in Philadelphia, and asked whether any of the Committee's art historians could correct her. The building was constructed over the course of a dozen years, she continued, during a national controversy with the American Catholic Church. She contended that the laity sacrificed a lot by donating money to subsidize the funding of the church. The nomination, she explained, included Archbishop Patrick Ryan and his role in appropriating the land for the church after the original congregation from Nativity B.V.M. was displaced and a need for a German national church arose. She commented that Our Lady Help of Christians was given to the German Catholics, which is located about a block and a half from Nativity B.V.M. and is part of a cluster of Roman Catholic churches in Port Richmond along Allegheny Avenue. She argued that the church is a neighborhood landmark.

Ms. Cooperman opened the floor to public comment. Venise Whitaker voiced her support for the nomination, adding that too many churches throughout the city have already been lost. She claimed that the congregation remains active and contended that designation would serve as a "blue ribbon" for the community and congregation.

David Traub of Save Our Sites expressed support for the nomination, reiterating that it stands as part of a cluster of Catholic churches centered on Campbell Square, which is open space important to the Port Richmond community. Mr. Traub added that the criteria cited in the

nomination are relevant and suggested that Criterion H could also have been included. He stated that the church stands as a familiar landmark in the Port Richmond neighborhood and on Allegheny Avenue. Each of the three churches, he continued, represents a particular ethnic group. He argued that all three should be designated.

Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia offered his support of the nomination and commended Ms. Morello for her excellent nomination to designate the property and protect the knowledge of the church's history as it pertains to German immigration. He further thanked the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for recognizing the importance of the church and not opposing designation.

Patty Pat Kozlowski, executive director of Port Richmond on Patrol and Civic, stated that she worked with Ms. Morello on the nomination. She expressed her appreciation for the previous comments, adding that she serves as the Italian-Polish mediator between the German and Irish parishes. She corrected Ms. Whitaker's comment that the church serves an active parish, noting that a fence surrounds the building, indicating that it not currently in use by the parish. She called the church Philadelphia's Big Ben. When driving home, she continued, she looks for Our Lady Help of Christians' clock tower on "Cathedral Row," a local reference to that particular section of Allegheny Avenue. To not designate the property would be a disservice, she continued, to our ancestors who donated to the construction of the church and to their descendants who will look for the time of day on Allegheny Avenue.

Juanda Myles stated that she did not attend the meeting with the intention of advocating for any specific building, but she commented that she supports the designation of this and all churches of this stature within the City of Philadelphia. She made note of the building's craftsmanship and design and called for the general repurposing of church buildings. She remarked that the Center for Architecture and Design currently has an exhibit featuring the repurposing of historic churches.

Mr. Cohen commended Ms. Morello on the nomination and on unearthing the German Catholic story. He recommended a few amendments and asked Ms. Morello to work with the staff to search online newspaper databases for more information on the church between the 1880s and 1890s. Ms. Morello asked for clarification on whether Mr. Cohen is referencing the archdiocese and any development that may have occurred with the "German issue." Mr. Cohen responded that he is speaking of the specific building that has an 1898 stone on it, adding that atlases show a building in that same location in the 1880s. Newspaper research, he continued, could straighten out the story. He also questioned when Leh's name appears in historical documents. Ms. Morello replied that little documentation on Leh's connection exists and explained that the information she found on the German issue only exists in the 1976 history of the archdiocese in Philadelphia. She stated that she found reference to the Catholic church in the U.S., but the source did not mention Our Lady Help of Christians. She also noted that the 2007 bicentennial history of the archdiocese lacks information and only offers one paragraph on the church. She contended that the building was historically overlooked, though she noted that there are hundreds of churches in the archdiocese. She argued that when clerics are given the opportunity to write about these churches, they tend to give all credit to fellow clergymen rather than the architects and those who donated money. Ms. Morello then acknowledged Ms. DiPasquale's assistance in identifying the architect, Albert Leh. She commented that his name did not appear in any of the archdiocese's records.

Mr. Cohen asked Ms. Morello about the source that identified the architect. Mr. Laverty responded that Leh's architectural collection resides at the Athenaeum. He explained that Leh

was based in South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and designed a number of German churches from Coopersburg to Quakertown to Scranton. He also designed residences and industrial buildings, Mr. Lavery added. He then explained that Leh's connection to Philadelphia is tenuous and that there are only two or three Leh-designed buildings in the city, though the Athenaeum holds three detailed drawings of Our Lady Help of Christians signed by Leh and dated 1898. Mr. Lavery noted that a monograph of Leh's work was written about five years ago by a Bethlehem resident. Leh, he continued, blossomed in the Allentown/Bethlehem area about the time the steel industry took off, resulting in increased spending in that community. Just like in Port Richmond, he added, those communities were spending lots of that money on Churches. Mr. Lavery stated that Leh was not a Wilson Eyre or other recognizable name, but he contended that Leh was prolific and that his involvement with Our Lady Help of Christians happens to be one of the times he surfaces in Philadelphia. He asserted that it was the German connection and the fact that Leh had primarily German clients in the Pennsylvania Dutch area that the congregation turned to Leh when it came time to build Our Lady Help of Christians. Ms. Morello commented that Durang was the primary architect to the archdiocese, having designed Nativity B.V.M. only a block from the nominated church. The congregation, she added, wanted to be steadfast with its Germanness.

Mr. Cohen stated that it would be interesting to track down whether Leh's involvement starts with the 1898 building, again noting that a building existed on the site in the 1880s. He suggested that a more pressing question is whether this building conveys German character. Ms. Morello replied that she included two other similar Leh-designed buildings in the nomination. Mr. Cohen responded that the buildings look almost identical to each other, though not to Our Lady Help of Christians. This building, he continued, has a central tower. He then asked Ms. Morello to explore the design and attempt to explain the building's Germanness as expressed architecturally, though he asked that it not be done by presenting other Leh-designed buildings. Ms. Morello remarked that the church reminds her of a church on a Viking River Cruises commercial where the cruise boat passes a church like Our Lady Help of Christians somewhere in Eastern Europe.

Mr. Cohen commented that there are minor issues in the nomination. He offered an example by stating that the architecture is not quite as flamboyant as the name suggests and noted that the design is fairly geometric. He again asked Ms. Morello to work with the staff to research the church's 1880s history and determine whether the earlier building is Leh's design. He then made a series of minor editing suggestions.

Ms. Cooperman stated that the prominence of a central tower on the street front occurs across the city among all denominations in the 1890s. She added that the design is fairly abstracted for the Gothic style. Mr. Cohen interjected that the design is not quite as three-dimensionally flamboyant. In terms of the Criteria for Designation, he continued, Criteria H and J are worthy of inclusion. He suggested adding Criterion H to the nomination, since, as suggested previously, the church creates a Big Ben phenomenon. He further elaborated that Our Lady Help of Christians, along with the two neighboring churches, creates a neighborhood landmark. He also contended that Criterion J is highly relevant and proposed that it be added to the nomination.

Ms. Cooperman questioned whether, in the Committee's opinion, Leh's significance satisfies Criterion E. Mr. Cohen replied that in listening to Mr. Lavery's comments on Leh's work, he feels that, especially in German regions of Pennsylvania, this is an architect that casts a significant branding for German congregations. Mr. Lavery added that Leh's significance does not satisfy the criteria at the local level, but it does for the Commonwealth. He added that, reflected in the Athenaeum's collection, there are no business records or correspondence. He

explained that only drawings survive and that the Athenaeum has documentation for approximately 600 buildings in a collection that includes about 5,000 drawings. Mr. Lavery called Leh one of the biggest architects the Committee does not know. Mr. Lavery then provided information on Leh's background.

Mr. Cohen advocated for including Criterion for Designation E.

Ms. Morello asked the Committee to clarify the Criteria for Designation the property satisfies. She asked whether, in addition to Criteria A and E, the Committee will add H and J. The Committee responded that those criteria were proposed.

Mr. Farnham reminded the Committee members of the church at 4th and Brown Streets, St. Agnes, which appeared before the Committee several months before and consisted of just a basement with a wooden superstructure. The priest, who started that congregation, he continued, was from the Lehigh Valley, was connected to Leh, and had been involved in two churches Leh had designed. One church was located in Bethlehem, he elaborated, and the other in Jim Thorpe. Mr. Farnham stated that the staff has done some related research and can share that information with Ms. Morello. He further commented that if one extrapolates up from the basement, St. Agnes would have looked like a slightly smaller version of Our Lady Help of Christians Church. He concluded that the staff now knows who designed St. Agnes and it was not Leh.

Mr. Traub observed that the church building has two spires, though the one in the back is not easily visible from Allegheny Avenue. He asserted that four spires break the skyline on Allegheny Avenue. He added that German churches are characterized by hallenkirche, which incorporates one large interior space and lacks columns along the side aisles.

Mr. Mooney asked where the expansive cemetery that was referenced in the overview is located. Ms. Keller stated that that was an error in the description.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2424 E Allegheny Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, H, and J.

RIDGE AVENUE ROXBOROUGH THEMATIC HISTORIC DISTRICT

Proposed Action: Designation

Nominator: Philadelphia Historical Commission

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate a thematic historic district, which consists of 188 historic buildings along Ridge Avenue between the Wissahickon Creek and Northwestern Avenue, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the historic district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J. The period of significance spans from 1681, when William Penn began conveying land to the original purchasers, to 1908, the dawn of the automobile age, when the completion of the Walnut Lane Bridge opened the southeastern section of Roxborough to new forms of residential development. The historic district inventory includes those buildings that best represent the development and varied architectural styles constructed through 1908.

The staff of the Historical Commission authored this nomination on behalf of a consortium of community groups and the district Councilperson. The community representatives were concerned by the number of demolitions of older buildings along Ridge Avenue. To provide the Historical Commission with sufficient time to survey the area's older buildings and prepare the historic district nomination, the Councilman implemented a one-year demolition moratorium for properties along Ridge Avenue. During that time, the Historical Commission's staff researched the area and developed the nomination with inventory, which identifies 188 historic buildings. The nomination is intended to address the community's specific concern, the unchecked demolition of buildings along Ridge Avenue. The nomination is not intended to encompass all aspects of Roxborough's history. It does not identify and protect structures, objects, interiors, landscape, or archaeological resources, nor does it preclude the later identification and protection of those resources. It is not intended to encompass all aspects of Roxborough's history, but only to address a specific problem, the demolition of buildings along the commercial corridor. This nomination is a step toward protecting historic resources in Roxborough, but not necessarily the only or last step.

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

Ms. Cooperman explained that the Committee is charged with providing a technical review of the nomination based on its members' respective areas of expertise. She asked that concerns related to economic hardship or building condition are brought before the Historical Commission, rather than the Committee. She explained that the Committee will make a recommendation to the Commission as to whether or not the historic district satisfies the Criteria that are proposed in the nomination.

Ms. Cooperman asked for public comment. Keith Coleman, owner of 6150 Ridge Avenue, voiced opposition to the designation of his property. He explained that he previously rented several buildings on Ridge Avenue before purchasing 6150 Ridge Avenue. He stated that during that time, the Roxborough Development Corporation (RDC) has bought and sold several properties, one of which is next door to his property, which the RDC remodeled on the exterior and for which two condominium units were added. He stated that a five-story apartment complex is being constructed next door to 6180 Ridge Avenue. He stated that he has no intention to demolish his property, and he does understand some of the argument in reference to some of the buildings which have been demolished on Ridge Avenue. He stated that he disagrees with being included with this group of proposed historic properties. He stated that his property was nominated without his knowledge, and he has only now learned about the Criteria for Designation. He claimed that those arguments were not presented to him personally. He stated that he found out about this proposal at a public meeting held at the Roxborough Memorial Hospital in July, where the Commission's staff presented information regarding the proposed historic district. He opined that his property has no historic value other than being old, and there is nothing of historic value remaining on the exterior. He asked to be excluded from the inventory of proposed historic properties. He acknowledged that he can understand some individuals' concerns regarding the demolition of historic buildings along Ridge Avenue, but again asserted that his building does not have any of the historic characteristics of those other historic buildings. He again asked to be excluded from the inventory of proposed historic properties. Ms. Chantry commented that a letter from Mr. Coleman was included with the Committee's nomination materials.

Celeste Hardester, representing the Central Roxborough Civic Association, commented that there is much enthusiasm in Roxborough for the creation of the historic district. She read a

statement supporting the historic district, prepared by Kay Sykora, founding Director of the New Manayunk Corporation, now known as the Manayunk Development Corporation and currently a Roxborough Resident, who was unable to be in attendance at the meeting:

As a Roxborough Resident, I support consideration of the creation of a historic district for Ridge Avenue. Roxborough has all the unique qualities to build on for residents and businesses. The 19th century represents the time that our country grew the most. It was a time of significant immigration and the history of industrial growth in our country. Manayunk represents the earliest industrial growth and Roxborough is actually the other half of that history. Ridge Road is the history of movement in and out of the City. Roxborough shows the movement of housing up the hills, and is where first the mill owners lived. Over time, the general population expanded up the hill and Ridge Avenue became the center as opposed to Main St. The Manayunk Historic District was created as a tool for fostering the redevelopment of Manayunk. Roxborough has many of the qualities that made Manayunk successful and should build on them. We believe the designation of the Roxborough Historic District will bring new interest to the area and increase both residential and business opportunities. As a participant in the creation of the Manayunk Historic District, I would like to lay out the evolution of Manayunk, based on its designation as a Historic District. It was a partnership between the City Commerce Department, the Manayunk Business Association, the Manayunk Neighborhood Council, and the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Immediately and then over the years, this tool helped shape and protect the identity of Manayunk as it evolved. What did it do? Now instead of old buildings with no perceived value because they were simply old and dilapidated, the buildings were identified as historic, with value in that identity. Many of the buildings would have come down, without this tool. Instead virtually all were renovated and over the years some were renovated a number of times. Each time exposing more of their unique identity. We all have often seen developers come in, do their work, and sell; their interest and involvement is often short term...the current financial incentives encourage that thinking. Yes, it is cheaper to tear down and build new. But after the first 10 years, the abatement ceases, and the building that remains may have little curb appeal. But, with historic designation, the identity of a community is preserved, the character of the building generates enhanced interest, and over time value increases, both business and residential. Think about Chestnut Hill, Media, Phoenixville and West Chester as communities that have preserved the identity of their downtown districts, to the benefit of both their business communities and their extended residential community. Compare this also to the Roxborough Bank Building, which is historically designated. It is now in the midst of an amazing renovation for an innovative use. Think about what it would have been without the protection. Or the Manayunk Bridge, historically designated and preserved as a bike and pedestrian trail. None of this would be without protections. SEPTA actually had plans to tear down the bridge at one point and now it draws interest to the community, with the benefits that go with that.

Ms. Hardester distributed copies of Ms. Sykora's statement to the Committee members and those in the audience. She explained that the handout also includes before-and-after photographs from Main Street Manayunk to provide perspective.

William O'Brien, an attorney representing the owner of 8819 Ridge Avenue, commented that the property came to the attention of the staff long before the nomination was made public on July 9. He commented that he is surprised that the nomination has little to no information about this specific property, and asked what it is about the property that makes it a contributing structure in the historic district. Mr. Farnham responded that the staff would be happy to meet with Mr. O'Brien and his client about why the staff included the property within the inventory. Mr. O'Brien

commented that this is the only property out of the 188 in the inventory that is in imminent danger of collapse. He commented that the staff knew about this well before the publication of the nomination. He commented that it begs the question as to why the nomination does not go to the extra effort to say why this building is contributing to the historic district. Ms. Chantry read from the historic district inventory. She stated that the staff identified 8819 Ridge Avenue as the Absalom Loyle House, built circa 1859. The land was conveyed in 1859 to Absalom Loyle, who was identified in census records and city directory listings as a plasterer. Loyle constructed a house after purchasing the land and resided at 8819 Ridge Avenue until his death in 1910. She referenced the historic photograph included in the inventory, which shows a typical two-and-one-half story dwelling with shorter attic windows, which is a contributing building typology identified throughout the historic district inventory. Mr. O'Brien responded that it is an old house, but he is wondering what makes it contributing to a historic district. Mr. Cohen responded that the nomination itself does not cite each individual property within the inventory, but rather speaks generally about the phases of development, of which this falls within one of the earliest phases, being the 1850s, of which it is characteristic of the houses that are part of the early evolution of the area. He stated that 8819 Ridge Avenue is very much indicative of the early development of the area. He explained that the overall argument is made in the nomination, and some details on each property are included in the inventory. Ms. Cooperman stated that the overall envelope is what makes the building contributing to the historic district. Mr. O'Brien asked if the property would have diminished value if the envelope is falling. Ms. Cooperman responded that matters of structural condition are not within the Committee's purview, as she had mentioned at the start of the review. Mr. O'Brien requested that 8819 Ridge Avenue not be included in the historic district. He stated that the nomination does not indicate how the specific property satisfies any of the Criteria for Designation. The Committee and staff members disagreed.

Richard DeMarco, an attorney representing the owner of 6633 and 6635 Ridge Avenue, distributed a packet of five exhibits, including Historical Commission correspondence, photographs of the property and rear of the property, recent subdivision permits, recent subdivision plan, and curriculum vitae for Heritage Consulting Group. He commented that he and his client agree with the Commission staff, and are not going to contest the designation of the building along Ridge Avenue. He observed that the property is extremely deep, running back approximately 320 feet, and has recently been subdivided. He commented that his client's only concern regarding the designation is that it will only include the historic building, and that there will be no attempt to acquire designation of the remainder of the lot, or include any type of archaeological significance. He reiterated that his client does not object to the designation of the historic building. He clarified that his client is an equitable owner of the property. He stated that the historic building will be preserved, but the lot that will be created at the rear will have a different address and will not be historic. He introduced Cindy Hamilton, of Heritage Consulting Group, and explained that she has been their advisor in her capacity as a historic preservation expert. Ms. Hamilton stated that she is happy to answer any questions with respect to the historic parcel.

James Calamia, Executive Director of the Roxborough Development Corporation, commented that the RDC is the business improvement district that is responsible for managing Ridge Avenue. He stated that roughly 100 of the 188 properties that are proposed for inclusion in the historic district fall within the RDC's catchment area. He applauded the work of the Commission staff in its preparation of the nomination. He commented that a more holistic plan needs to be put forth as the Commission considers the nomination, for how it would be implemented. He commented that the destruction of a lot of the historic resources along Ridge Avenue stems from an outdated tax abatement program. He commented that it has created competition

between new construction and historic preservation on an unequal playing field. He commented that while the thematic historic district solves the issue of assembling a variety of properties along Ridge Avenue that are connected by a theme, it does not address any new construction that can be completely out of character and out of scale with what currently exists. He commented that there are no controls for what new construction can look like. He commented that he is in attendance on behalf of the RDC to encourage and call on the City to work with the RDC, and work with other stakeholders, to think through what a historic district would look like moving forward, should the Commission decide to move forward with the nomination.

Paul Steinke, executive director of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, voiced support for the proposed historic district. He commended Councilman Jones for his leadership on this issue, and noted that it is not common to see this type of support from City Council. He also commended the Commission staff on the authoring of the nomination.

Juanda Myles commented that she hopes this designation results in some uniformity in design that distinguishes Ridge Avenue from Main Street Manayunk and Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill. She commented that Ridge Avenue needs to go through revitalization like Lancaster Avenue.

David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, commented that his organization supports the designation. He commented that it will set a precedent for designating other avenues and streets in the city.

Leonard Bracale, owner of several properties on Ridge Avenue, voiced his opposition to the proposed historic district. He commented that it was his understanding that, from the public meeting held in July with Councilman Jones, the RDC helped to pick a lot of the properties that are historic. He commented that it has come to his attention that the properties of a lot of the executive board members are not included as historic along Ridge Avenue. He asserted that the RDC's properties are not marked as historic. He stated that it is a double standard. Mr. Bracale stated that he owns 6141 Ridge Avenue. He stated that it is impossible that his building is historic, and referred to it as a joke. He commented that 483 Krams Avenue, which is not on Ridge Avenue, is owned by a RDC board member, and is not included in the inventory. He explained that he has been on Ridge Avenue for 20 years and does not wish to develop his own properties. He stated that the RDC board members elect each other on and off the board, and that no one else has a vote. He asserted that the RDC cherry-picked the historic properties. He claimed that the RDC wants the property values of those properties to decrease so that it can buy the properties. He opined that the whole thing needs to be blown up and restarted. He admitted that some development can be out of control, but argued that the Ridge Avenue property owners are being penalized because of development along Manayunk Avenue. He suggested that the development should have been along Ridge Avenue and Henry Avenue from the start. He commented that if the historic district does get approved, something needs to be done so that the RDC does not purchase any additional properties. He again asserted that it is clear that the RDC helped the Commission pick the historic properties because the board members' properties are not on the list. He referenced the historic bank building at Ridge Avenue and Green Lane, which is not in the inventory, and which he stated is owned by a board member. He referenced an additional building, which he has seen in every old photograph. Ms. Cooperman commented that the Committee is a technical review board that considers the merits of the nomination. She explained that no one on the Committee participated in the process which Mr. Bracale asserted. Mr. Bracale asked if the RDC helped. He stated that Councilman Jones said that it did, and now the Committee is denying that it helped. Mr. Farnham clarified that the Historical Commission's staff made all of the decisions about what

would be included in the proposed historic district and what would not be included. He explained that the staff made its decisions in a vacuum, specifically to avoid problems like those that Mr. Bracale is alleging. He explained that, while a couple of community groups did suggest properties for the staff to research and consider, the RDC did not. Mr. Bracale questioned whether or not Mr. Farnham remembered Councilman Jones's comment at the public meeting in July regarding his walk with Mr. Calamia on Ridge Avenue where they looked at historic buildings. He questioned whether or not Mr. Farnham remembered Mr. Bracale asking questions at that meeting as to whether or not the RDC helped to choose some of the historic properties, and Jo Ann Desper, president of the RDC board of directors, had responded that the RDC had the right to do so. He asked how he would know if any properties owned by friends of the board members were included in the inventory. He referenced Mr. Coleman's property, and referred to it as a joke. He commented that his property at 6141 Ridge Avenue was not one property, and stated that he has an old map. He again asserted that no properties owned by the RDC are included as historic.

Mr. Farnham attempted to address Mr. Bracale's allegations. Mr. Farnham stated that he was in charge of the process for selecting the properties for inclusion in the proposed historic district, and no one outside of his staff, who are all trained historic preservationists, was involved in deciding which properties to include in the inventory. Mr. Bracale again asked if Mr. Farnham remembered Councilman Jones's comments from the public meeting in July. Mr. Farnham responded that he was at the meeting, and remembers Councilman Jones speaking, and if Mr. Bracale's allegations were implied, it was incorrect. He reiterated that all decisions were made in-house by his staff, with no input from the outside. That includes no input from the Councilman's office, no input from the community organizations, and no input from the RDC. He restated that the decisions were made in a vacuum to protect the integrity of the process. Mr. Bracale asked how 6126 Ridge Avenue is not included as historic. He again asked why 483 Krams Avenue was not included in the list of Ridge Avenue properties. Mr. Farnham responded that he does not have information on hand on all of the hundreds of properties on and anywhere near Ridge Avenue, but reassured Mr. Bracale that all decisions were made very carefully, based on the Criteria set forth in the statement of significance, and based on the period of significance that is proposed, which ends at 1908. He agreed that there are properties that have historical significance on Ridge Avenue that are not included in this district, but those were not included because either they did not meet the criteria or the dates that define the district. As an example, he referenced the historic bank building at Ridge Avenue and Green Lane, which Mr. Bracale referenced moments before as being 6126 Ridge Avenue but which is actually 6128-32 Ridge Avenue. Mr. Farnham explained that the bank post-dates the period of significance, but is already historically designated and therefore protected, having been listed individually on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 2016. He agreed that the bank building is truly historical and an important building, but it clearly post-dates the end of the period of significance, having been constructed in 1924, 16 years after the end of the period of significance for the proposed historic district. Mr. Bracale responded that the bank building is commonsense. He commented that he does not want another bureaucratic nightmare, should he wish to paint his existing green stucco. He stated that he did not know a lot about the Historical Commission initially, but has been asking people, and is now hearing what a nightmare it is to have your property designated historic. He commented that his building should be worth \$1 million. He again stated that the board members of the RDC elect each other on and off of the board. He commented that the current president has been president of the board three times. He again asserted that the RDC helped the Commission choose the properties for the historic district. He stated that the historic district needs to be reevaluated and made smaller. He commented that he recently drove through Fishtown and it is beautiful because there are new commercial buildings. He asked what happens if the RDC wants to do something

in the future, but now there might not be the money to do it because of the Commission's specifications. He stated that he has many police to contend with: the trash police, Parking Authority, and now the Historic Society police. He commented that the process for the historic district creation is wrong, and the proposed district is too big. He commented that he had many sleepless nights when he first purchased a property on Ridge Avenue because he did not know if he would be able to rent the property. He referenced David Barnes, son of the owner of 559 Righter Street, as an example of going through a nightmare related to historic designation. He concluded that the Committee should consider his future generations and the money they could receive from his properties.

Jo Ann Desper, president of the Roxborough Development Corporation board of directors, clarified and corrected several claims made by Mr. Bracale. She stated that the RDC did not participate in the selection of the historic properties, and that Mr. Bracale's claims otherwise are false. She stated that she did not tell Mr. Bracale that the RDC was involved in the selection process. She stated that she owns 7953 Ridge Avenue, which has been historically designated since 1962. She commented that she has had no difficulty working with the Historical Commission in improving her property over the last six years. She noted that her property is also included as part of the proposed historic district. She stated that the RDC owns the property at 6156 Ridge Avenue, which is included in the inventory, so Mr. Bracale's claim that no properties are included which are owned by the RDC or members of its board is false. She concluded that she simply wanted to clarify those comments made earlier.

Charles "Chip" Roller, representing the Wissahickon Interested Citizens Association (WICA), commented that this entire initiative was started by WICA, not the RDC. He explained that WICA recognized the need for the program, and so it initiated the process several years ago. He stated that Councilman Jones was supportive of it, and other civic groups soon joined in. He reiterated that the RDC is not responsible for this, but rather WICA is.

Joshua Cohen, chief of staff for the Office of Councilman Curtis Jones Jr., commented that Councilman Jones fully and enthusiastically endorses the nomination. He commented that his office worked with the Commission staff over the last year, including with the preceding demolition moratorium. He stated that his office will continue to work with the staff and stakeholders, should the Commission choose to designate the historic district.

John Carpenter, long-term Roxborough resident, thanked Councilman Jones, Commission staff, and all involved civic organizations for putting the nomination forward and making it possible to preserve some of the more interesting parts of Roxborough. He commented that Ridge Avenue is a very interesting road, and that interest is in large part due to the older and historic buildings that line it. He commented that he appreciates the effort to preserve the historic buildings in the face of development pressure, and that the development pressure, when directed correctly, can help to restore the historic buildings and bring them back into good condition.

Pamela Packard, owner of 7105 Ridge Avenue, asked what is it about her building that makes it eligible to be nominated. She stated that she received the letter notifying her of the proposed designation, postmarked July 9, on July 18. July 18 was the date of the public meeting at Roxborough Memorial Hospital, so she and her husband John Packard were unable to attend. She commented that she was in the process of selling the property to a builder for the purposes of developing it. She referenced earlier comments made about excluding from designation the land at the rear of the parcel, and referred to it as a good idea, because it is an important part of her and her husband's retirement. She stated that they are not wealthy and counted on selling the property some day. She stated that she has no idea how historic designation will affect her

property's value. She asked for the information about her property to be read aloud. Ms. Chantry responded that 7105 Ridge Avenue was constructed between 1851 and 1860. The owner at that time was Abraham Rittenhouse, a plasterer. He had purchased the land in 1851 from Jacob Sheldrake. Rittenhouse sold the property to Hugh Hallowell in 1860. It is likely that the buildings at 7101 and 7105 Ridge Avenue, which stand on land owned by Rittenhouse, were constructed at or about the same time, placing the construction date after 1851 but before he sold it in 1860. She observed that the building is a contributing building typology identified throughout the historic district inventory, standing two-and-one-half stories high with gable roof and shorter attic windows, which have been infilled on this particular building.

Ms. Cooperman asked if there were any additional members of the public who wished to speak. No one from the public responded affirmatively. Seeing no additional public comment requests, Ms. Cooperman directed the Committee to begin its discussion of the nomination.

Mr. Cohen commented that there is an incredible amount of work in the inventory. He explained that the nomination lays out the arguments much more than the inventory, as the inventory contains only specific comments about each property. He commented that the development happening before the Civil War features character-defining qualities that create a sense of place on Ridge Avenue. Addressing Ms. Packard, he explained that her house and many others nearby were all developed at once, and were typically three bays wide with double chimneys and large projecting cornices, and often hugged the street line closely. He referred to those elements as being some of the character-defining aspects of development of that time period on Ridge Avenue. He commented that the nomination lays out the economic and social conditions at different points in time, and what the characteristic forms of development were for those time periods. He explained that that is really where the arguments are, much more so than the inventory. He commented that the nomination is almost a publishable history of the area that has not existed before. He suggested that it is a dramatic new reading of a landscape that is a tool that can help the community preserve the identity of the place against possible development which can be unsympathetic. He suggested that perhaps there should be a little more integration between the inventory and the justification included in the nomination, so that property owners can better understand how their own property fits into the narrative. He suggested that the nomination could be organized by periods of time rather than architectural styles so that the fabric of the place and what is distinctive about it is highlighted. He expressed excitement for being able to create historic districts of this scale. Ms. Cooperman agreed.

Mr. Cohen asked about public notice. Mr. Farnham responded that every property owner that would be impacted by the proposed historic designation was notified at least 60 days in advance of this meeting and was provided access to all of the documents associated with the nomination at that time. Ms. Packard called out from the audience. She held up her notice letter, dated July 9, and asserted that the letter contained language that said that "whatever you are doing, stop doing it." Mr. Farnham disagreed with her interpretation of the notice letter. He explained that the letter stated that as of the date of that letter, any building permit application would be subject to the review of the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Any building permit application that was submitted to the Department of Licenses and Inspections prior to that date or any building permit that was active was not under the Commission's jurisdiction to review and approve. He explained that any work that was ongoing, that was legal at the time, could continue. He clarified that the meeting held at Roxborough Memorial Hospital in July was not convened by the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Rather, the Commission staff was invited as guests. He explained that this meeting currently taking place is the first official meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission to consider the merits of the proposed historic district. He explained that there will be one more meeting, scheduled for October 12, which was outlined in the notice letter from July 9.

Mr. Schaaf agreed with Mr. Cohen's comments. He remarked that this is a collection of vernacular buildings, built over a period of nearly 250 years. He stated that their scale, materiality, and the way the buildings address the street is consistent. He acknowledged that historically significant buildings on Ridge Avenue have been picked off for many years. He commented that his understanding of Ridge Avenue was leveraged ten times by the nomination, which linked places, times, and family names together. He stated that it is a landmark in the history of the Commission to produce a document that is this profound.

Ms. Cooperman opined that one of the subtexts to a lot of the public comment is that one tends to think of vernacular buildings as somehow less important than high-style buildings, when in fact they are just as much part of the fabric of the character of the city. She explained that these buildings cannot always be classified in stylistic terms because the concerns of the builders was not to emulate high-style details and to apply them to the buildings; rather, these buildings are unified instead by form, materials, scale, patterns of spacing, and relationship to the street. These buildings then form powerful patterns of character of place. She commented that the nomination achieves the goal of doing just that, by recognizing and itemizing through the inventory, and helping to take into the future the character of this special place.

Mr. Lavery commented that Manayunk has traditionally received all of the credit in terms of the Industrial Revolution, and Roxborough got a small footnote in that it was where the mill owners moved to get away from the noise and smell of Manayunk. He stated that this nomination gives Ridge Avenue its due in its own right. He commented that some of the themes identified in this nomination will be applicable when examining other radial turnpikes that went in and out of Philadelphia. He commented that there is a surprising collection of remarkable buildings when looking at this from a geographical and chronological perspective. He applauded the Commission staff and the community support for the designation.

Mr. Cohen asked about the date of 1908 as the end of the period of significance. He asked if it was judged that resources from the automotive era do not really add to the character of the place. Mr. Farnham responded that the end date of 1908 was chosen more for practical reasons, in terms of the limited amount of time that the staff had to work on the research, and the limited resources available to apply to the inventory specifically. He noted that the proposed nomination could be amended in the future to extend the end date to after World War II or even to the 1970s. He agreed that there are buildings of historic value that postdate the proposed district. Mr. Lavery commented that the opening of the Walnut Lane Bridge and how that changed traffic patterns as well as building development patterns is also a reason for the end date of 1908.

Mr. Cohen suggested that 6222 and 6224 Ridge Avenue, which are called out in the nomination as excellent examples of the Queen Anne style, are not necessarily good examples of the style in general. He noted though that most of the buildings are not pure examples of a style anyway. Ms. Cooperman agreed, and commented that this is why style can be such a problem when looking at these types of buildings. Mr. Cohen agreed, and concluded that the nomination is a remarkable piece of work.

Roger Hamilton, owner of 5231 Ridge Avenue, stated that he arrived a few minutes earlier and wanted to know why the Committee was having a private conversation. He asked when the public was going to have an opportunity to speak. Mr. Cohen apologized, but explained that all members of the public who wished to speak had done so prior to Mr. Hamilton's arrival. Mr. Hamilton asked the Committee who they are. He explained that his property was in his family for 75 years. He commented that there are longstanding groups in the area that date back a couple

hundred years. He again asked the Committee who they are, and if they are familiar with the saying, “the cow already left and you closed the barn door.” He stated that that is what the Committee did. Ms. Cooperman answered Mr. Hamilton’s initial question. She explained that the body before him is the Committee on Historic Designation, which is a group of architectural historians and archaeologists who provide expert advice to the full Philadelphia Historical Commission about whether nominations meet the technical requirements for designation. Mr. Cohen explained that the Committee is tasked with determining if the place is historically significant and making a recommendation on that. Mr. Hamilton asked if any of the Committee members know why Pretzel Park in Manayunk is so-named. When no one on the Committee responded, he asserted that the Committee members do not know the area. He exclaimed that he has never seen any of the Committee members, and that they do not speak to anyone in the area, but rather they judge. Mr. Schaaf commented that he used to work at Main Street and Rector Street. Mr. Hamilton asserted that the Committee is going to put a tag on his house that it is deemed historical, and maybe he does not want to be historical. Mr. Bracale called out from the audience and proclaimed that the Committee has no empathy.

Mr. Farnham provided background information about the Philadelphia Historical Commission to Mr. Hamilton. He explained that the Historical Commission is a city agency, much like the Department of Licenses & Inspections, or Parks & Recreation, and was created and empowered by the Philadelphia Code. The Historical Commission has the legal authority to identify and designate properties it considers historic, and then to regulate those properties by reviewing building permit applications that are submitted to the Department of Licenses & Inspections. The Commission has existed since 1955, operates under city law, and is chartered like any other city agency. It has the authority to designate properties and then regulate properties through the review of building permit applications.

Mr. Farnham provided background information regarding the proposed historic district to Mr. Hamilton. He explained that the process was initiated by Councilman Jones, and the Commission staff met with representatives of the community, including representatives from different community organizations. Those representatives told the staff why they believe their area is important and historic. Mr. Farnham reiterated that the entire process has been driven by the community. He noted that sometimes the Commission unilaterally goes into a community and decides to designate properties, but in this case the request came from the Councilman and from eight separate community organizations that represent areas up and down Ridge Avenue. He explained that once the staff understood what it was that the community wanted to protect, the decisions about what would and would not be included in the district were made by the staff, who are trained in historic preservation. The process was not tainted by interactions with individual property owners; rather, the decisions were made by professionals working for the City, separate from any sort of community politics. He reiterated that the initial process was instigated by community members and undertaken in response to a request by the community and Councilman Jones. Mr. Farnham thanked Councilman Jones for his support in this endeavor and commented that the Commission looks forward to working with him on future endeavors. He reiterated that this review is an official City action. The Historical Commission is not a private body. The Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission act with the authority of the City of Philadelphia.

Mr. Hamilton stated that he has not had representation in his area since the 1980s. He stated that no one has lived there, worked there, grew up there, raised children there, or went to school there. Mr. Cohen asked if Mr. Hamilton is referring to City Council. Mr. Hamilton responded that the elected representatives for the area have not had any connection to the area since 1985. He stated that the area was rezoned so that other voters can vote in. He again stated that there has

not been representation from the area where the representation came from the area, or went to school in the area. Mr. Cohen asked again if Mr. Hamilton is referring to the political makeup of the area. Mr. Hamilton responded that he is “talking about the overall thing of it.” He commented that he understands the desire to preserve the look of the area, and he agrees with that, but it is too far gone now. He accused Committee members of letting franchises in, of knocking down beautiful homes, and for rewarding those people with ten-year free taxes. Mr. Cohen disagreed, and responded that several of Mr. Hamilton’s neighbors would like to do something about preserving the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Hamilton responded that he does agree with that, but asked what is in it for him. He again asserted that the Committee gives ten-year free taxes out to someone who demolishes a building. Mr. Cohen asked why Mr. Hamilton was referring to the Committee as “you guys.” Mr. Hamilton responded that the Committee members represent the City and the Historical Society. Mr. Cohen corrected him, and explained that the preservation of the character of the neighborhood is what is in it for him. Mr. Hamilton responded that improving the schools would improve the area. He explained that one used to have to be from the area to go to the schools, but that has changed. The elected officials are not from the area. The students at the schools are not from the area. Mr. Cohen explained that the Committee and Commission have no control over schools or the ten-year tax abatement. Mr. Hamilton responded “the cow has already left though. You guys already ruined the look.” He noted that there was a historic playhouse on Ridge Avenue, and asserted that the Committee members destroyed it, and then gave free taxes. Mr. Cohen corrected Mr. Hamilton. He stated that the Committee is a group of volunteers, not on the City payroll, who try to help the City by discussing whether documents are sufficient to make the case that buildings are historically significant. He stated that that charge is all that the Committee has control over. Mr. Hamilton asked about who actually decides whether or not the historic district gets approved. Mr. Laverty responded that the Committee is only advisory. The Committee will make a recommendation either for or against any of the nominations that comes before it. It is then up to the Historical Commission to make a final decision, and the Commission is not obligated to follow the recommendation of the Committee. He explained that the proposed historic district is scheduled for review by the Commission at its monthly public meeting on October 12. Mr. Farnham noted that every property owner in the proposed district received written notification about these public meetings. Mr. Laverty explained that the Commission meeting is open to the public, and the public will have an opportunity to speak to the Commission about the proposed district at that time. Mr. Hamilton responded that many residents have to work at that time and cannot come to Center City. He suggested that the Commission meeting be held in Roxborough at 7:00 in the evening. Mr. Farnham noted that there was an evening, information-only meeting held in the community in July.

Mr. Farnham commented that Mr. Hamilton is correct that there could be more and better incentives for historic preservation. He commented that there should be benefits for having a historically designated property. He explained that the Mayor’s Task Force on Historic Preservation is working in parallel with the Commission. He explained that the Task Force has been meeting for about one year, and will make recommendations to the Mayor at the end of this year, suggesting to the Mayor that he implement a series of reforms to historic preservation, and some of those will be related to ways of helping owners of historic properties. He agreed that the tax abatement can promote demolition over preservation, and the Task Force is looking for ways to level the playing field. He clarified that the Task Force, not the Historical Commission, is looking at these issues. He stated that he is hoping that great things will come out of the Task Force’s report in a few months and that its recommendations will be quickly implemented, which will provide real tangible benefits to owning a property that is designated as historic. Mr. Bracale called out from the audience, noting that there is a representation from Councilman Jones’s office in attendance. He asked if those recommendations can be put before

him. Mr. Farnham responded that the Task Force will brief all City Council members on its suggestions for improving the preservation systems in the city. He noted that Councilman Mark Squilla is a member of the Task Force, and as such he will work with his fellow Council members to consider implementing the best recommendations that come out of the Task Force. James Duffin commented that the Task Force is holding a public meeting on September 20 in the evening. He suggested that community members attend, as it is an opportunity to have concerns addressed and learn more about the process.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J.

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 11:50 a.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.