

**THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**TUESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2018  
ROOM 18-031, 1515 ARCH STREET  
JOHN MATTIONI, ACTING CHAIR**

**PRESENT**

John Mattioni, Esq., Acting Chair  
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D.  
Terrence Dillon, Department of Licenses & Inspections  
Kelly Edwards, MUP  
Steven Hartner, Department of Public Property  
Melissa Long, Division of Housing & Community Development  
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C  
John Mondlak, Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
H. Ahada Stanford, Ph.D., Commerce Department

Jonathan E. Farnham, Executive Director  
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner I

**ALSO PRESENT**

Daniel P. McElhatton, Esq.  
Jerald Goodman, Esq.  
Oscar Beisert  
Sue Patterson, Penn Knox Neighborhood Association  
J.M. Duffin  
Tina LeCoff, Penn Knox Neighborhood Association  
J.F. McCarthy, BHM  
Brandi Levine, Penn Knox Neighborhood Association  
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia  
Heather Leigh Sheridan, Penn Knox Neighborhood Association  
Pamela Bracey, SoLo Germantown  
Joe Marziello, Boys and Girls Club  
Lisabeth Marziello, Boys and Girls Club  
Ariel Goldring, Boys and Girls Club  
Emma Brown, Boys and Girls Club  
Fran Hunter, Boys and Girls Club  
Bryant Snyder, HSA  
Allison Weiss, SoLo  
Starr Herr-Cardillo, Hidden City  
Jake Blumgart, Plan Philly  
Alexander Russell, WCGN

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Mattioni called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Commissioners Cooperman, Dillon, Edwards, Hartner, Long, McCoubrey, Mondlak, and Stanford joined him.

**ADDRESS: 23 W PENN ST**

Name of Resource: Germantown Boys' Club

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Germantown Boys' Club

Nominator: Oscar Beisert, Penn Knox Neighborhood Association

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 23 W. Penn Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Oscar Beisert submitted the nomination on 8 July 2016 on behalf of the Penn-Knox Neighborhood Association. The staff reviewed the nomination and deemed it correct and complete on 1 December 2016. The staff's determination that the nomination was correct and complete indicated that sufficient information had been provided for the nomination to be reviewed, but not that the staff necessarily agreed with the assertions proffered in the nomination. The property owner was notified in writing on 16 December 2016 that the Committee on Historic Designation would review the nomination on 15 February 2017 and the Historical Commission on 10 March 2017. At the request of the property owner, the reviews were continued to the 19 April 2017 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation and the 12 May 2017 meeting of the Historical Commission.

The nomination argues that Germantown Boys' Club is significant under Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J. The nomination contends that the building is significant under Criteria A and J for its association with the Boys' Parlors Association, which became the Germantown Boys' Club, and which provided a community center to serve the growing working-class community of Germantown. The nomination further argues that the building is significant under Criterion D, as an example of the Colonial Revival style as articulated in institutional buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lastly, the nomination claims that the building satisfies Criterion E, owing to its designer, architect Mantle Fielding Jr.

The Committee on Historic Designation met to review the nomination on 19 April 2017. At that meeting, the staff recommended to the Committee on Historic Designation that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 23 W. Penn Street satisfies any of the Criteria for Designation. The Committee on Historic Designation took considerable testimony from the property owner and its consultants, nominator, and public. Disagreeing with the staff recommendation, the Committee on Historic Designation eventually voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 23 W. Penn Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, H, and J.

The Historical Commission reviewed the nomination and accepted extensive testimony at its meeting on 12 May 2017. At the conclusion of the review on 12 May 2017, the Historical Commission tabled the matter to a special meeting, which was scheduled for 24 July 2017, but eventually cancelled at the request of the nominator, to provide an opportunity for the nominator and property owner to meet and discuss their differences. On 11 August 2017, the Historical Commission extended the period to review the nomination set at the May 2017 meeting by 30 days. On 8 September 2017, the Historical Commission continued the matter for another 30 days at the joint request of the property owner and nominator. On 13 October 2017, the Historical Commission continued the matter yet again at the joint request of the property owner and nominator, until such time as one or both parties request that the Historical Commission reconsider the matter. The nominator and property owner discussed the matter for several months, and, on 30 March 2018, the nominator, the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association, requested that the Historical Commission restart the review.

The Historical Commission met to review the nomination on 8 June 2018. At the start of the meeting, the Historical Commission and attorneys representing the property owner and nominator agreed that, owing to the extensive testimony regarding the club building, nomination, and owner and community interests provided at the 12 May 2017 meeting, no new testimony was needed. The Historical Commission asked the attorneys representing the property owner and nominator to summarize the state of the negotiations regarding a designation and the future of the property. They reported that no agreement had been reached. The attorneys reiterated their arguments for and against designation. The Historical Commission then took additional testimony from the public, both for and against designation. At the end of the discussion, the nominator requested that the Historical Commission continue the matter for 90 days, to the 14 September 2018 meeting, to allow the property owner and community to continue their negotiations.

At the 14 September 2018 meeting of the Historical Commission, the nominator requested that the Historical Commission continue the matter yet again, owing to the unavailability of the author of the nomination and the neighborhood organization's attorney. The property owner agreed to the continuance request, provided the Historical Commission heard the matter at a special meeting held prior to the Historical Commission's regular monthly meeting, scheduled for 12 October 2018. The Historical Commission subsequently scheduled the special meeting for 9 October 2018.

**DISCUSSION:** Attorney Jerald Goodman represented the property owner. Attorney Daniel McElhatton, Penn Knox Neighborhood Association chairwoman Sue Patterson, and Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

Mr. Goodman stated that an agreement was reached between the nominators and the property owner. He provided a copy of the agreement to the Historical Commission. He noted that this agreement was negotiated over the past year. He explained that the agreement provides for withdrawal of the nomination, and, in exchange, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Philadelphia (BGCP) has agreed to not demolish the building, and to maintain and adaptively reuse it. He explained that BGCP has agreed to provide notice and consult with the nominators and Penn Knox Neighborhood Association as reuse plans move forward. He stated that BGCP has submitted a letter withdrawing the demolition permit application, and each of the nominators has submitted a letter withdrawing the nomination. He explained that all of this is premised on the agreement signed just prior to the meeting.

Mr. McElhatton concurred that both nominators have signed letters, dated 8 October 2018, withdrawing the nomination before the Commission. He stated that, in addition, the Chief Executive Officer of BGCP has signed a letter, dated 8 October 2018, addressed to the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I), requesting and authorizing L&I to withdraw the demolition application for 23 W Penn Street. He asked that the Commission permit the withdrawal of the nomination and then deliver to L&I the request for the withdrawal of the demolition permit. Mr. Beisert concurred. He commented that it is an important compromise for all parties, and he stated that he is happy that this preservation agreement was reached.

Mr. Mattioni commented that he is very pleased that an agreement was reached that everyone can live with. He explained that it was the Historical Commission's hope that an agreement such as this could be reached. He commented that hopefully some of the hard feelings will disappear,

and both sides can work together to make this a success. He noted that BGCP is a fine institution.

Mr. Dillon clarified that the application is a zoning permit, rather than an application, as it has been referred to. He stated that he will take the request back to the Director of Permit Services. He stated that he does not see any concerns that L&I would have regarding the owner's request for the withdrawal. Mr. McElhatton asked that council be made aware, if there were to be any concerns, so that any necessary steps can be taken. Mr. Dillon agreed. Mr. Goodman commented that an amended letter with corrected terminology can be provided if need be.

Mr. Hartner asked if the agreement included provisions which would prevent the resubmission of a nomination for this property. Mr. McElhatton responded that there are provisions in the agreement that Penn Knox Neighborhood Association and Mr. Beisert will not re-nominate the property, and to the extent that someone outside of the purview of the agreement re-nominates, it would not be supported by Penn Knox Neighborhood Association or Mr. Beisert. He acknowledged that they cannot stop someone from doing so independently, but Penn Knox Neighborhood Association would not support it. Ms. Cooperman commented that perhaps there would come a time where a designation might be appropriate. Mr. McCoubrey asked about the level of protection for the building afforded by the agreement. Mr. Goodman responded that the agreement details that BGCP will preserve the exterior of the building and try to maintain the current appearance as much as possible. He stated that all exterior changes will be done in consultation with the nominators and all applications submitted to L&I for any work will be provided to the nominators in advance. He stated that the goal is to work together and consult and ensure there is consensus moving forward. Mr. Mattioni responded that nothing is perfect, but it is good that the BGCP and the nominators have come to an agreement and the building will be saved.

**ACTION:** Mr. Mondlak moved to accept the withdrawal of the nomination for 23 W. Penn Street. Ms. Stanford seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:25 a.m., Ms. Cooperman moved to adjourn. Mr. Hartner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.