

**THE MINUTES OF THE 675<sup>TH</sup> STATED MEETING OF THE  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2018  
ROOM 18-029, 1515 ARCH STREET  
BOB THOMAS, CHAIR**

**PRESENT**

Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair  
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D.  
Kelly Edwards, MUP  
Michael Fink, Department of Licenses & Inspections  
Steven Hartner, Department of Public Property  
Melissa Long, Division of Housing and Community Development  
John Mattioni, Esq.  
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C  
H. Ahada Stanford, Ph.D., Commerce Department  
Betty Turner, MA  
Kimberly Washington, Esq.

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D., Executive Director  
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III  
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner I  
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner I

**ALSO PRESENT**

David Breiner  
Leslie Benoliel  
Michael Phillips, Esq., Obermayer  
Nicholas Baker  
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia  
Alex Rong, AR Engineers  
Alex Balloon  
Stuart Rosenberg, SGRA  
Rich Giordano, Upper Roxborough Civic Association  
Adam Montalbano, Moto Design Shop  
Henry Bailey  
John Carpenter, Central Roxborough Civic Association  
Julia Heberle, Central Roxborough Civic Association  
Donna Rilling, SUNY Stony Brook  
J.M. Duffin  
Oscar Beisert  
Dana Fedeli  
Peter Knudsen, LTSP  
Cheryll Morris Davis  
Tom and Jill Durovsik

Bill O'Brien, MNYKLaw  
Ira Kauderwood, University of Pennsylvania  
Josh Lippert, Department of Licenses & Inspections  
Noah Yoder  
Julia Marchetti, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia  
Ray Rola, RFR Arch  
Shimi Zakin, Atrium Design Group  
Rhea Gargullo, Sargenti  
Anthony Gerardi, Sargenti  
Carl Primavera, Esq., Klehr Harrison  
Hal Davidow, Wm. Penn Charter School  
Anthony M. Santaniello, Philadelphia Streets Department  
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia  
Chris Doyle, Daily Pennsylvanian  
Steven Peitzman, East Falls Historical Society  
David Moloznik  
Nick Lobuglio, Penn  
Nancy Pontone, Tudor East Falls  
David S. Traub, Save Our Sites

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Thomas called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Commissioners Cooperman, Edwards, Fink, Hartner, Long, Mattioni, McCoubrey, Stanford, Turner and Washington joined him.

#### **MINUTES OF THE 674<sup>TH</sup> STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**ACTION:** Ms. Turner moved to approve the minutes of the 674<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 23 October 2018. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, 9 OCTOBER 2018**

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to approve the minutes of a Special Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 9 October 2018. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **CONTINUANCE REQUESTS**

### **ADDRESS: 4525 SPRUCE ST**

Name of Resource: Hill Residence

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: James Cook

Nominator: Corey Loftus

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue and remand the nomination for 4525 Spruce Street to the 12 December 2018 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the former Francis J. Hill residence at 4525 Spruce Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation A and B. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the former Francis J. Hill residence, constructed in 1905, is significant for its association with the life and work of the Barnes Foundation founder Albert Barnes, who purchased the property in 1929 and remodeled it to serve as the publication and administrative office of the educational institution based in Merion. Under Criterion B, the nomination argues that the building is significant for its association with an important tax exemption lawsuit between Albert Barnes and the City of Philadelphia, where a ruling by the City was reversed by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in 1934 – an event considered to be significant because Barnes considered the tax exemption of the property a legitimization of the Foundation’s educational mission.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Thomas presented the request to continue the review of the nomination for 4525 Spruce Street to the December 2018 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation. Attorney David Moloznik, representing the property owner, stated that he is requesting a continuance owing to the complexity of the matter and legalities and risks involved. He stated that James Cook, the property owner, has maintained the property admirably for decades.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to continue and remand the nomination for 4525 Spruce Street to the 12 December 2018 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **CAST IRON SUBWAY ENTRANCES THEMATIC DISTRICT**

Proposed Action: Designation

Nominator: Nicholas Baker

Number of properties: 52

Property Owner: City of Philadelphia, SEPTA, PATCO

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue and remand the nomination for the Cast Iron Subway Entrances Thematic District to the 12 December 2018 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the cast iron subway entrances located along the Market Street Subway/Elevated, Broad Street Subway, Ridge Avenue/8<sup>th</sup> Street

Subway, Subway-Surface Lines, and PATCO Speedline as part of the Cast Iron Subway Entrances Thematic District and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, H, and J. The nomination argues that the proposed district, which is comprised of 52 cast iron subway entrances erected between 1928 and 1955, is significant under Criterion A, because it reflects the development of modern mass transit in Philadelphia. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the varying aesthetic and architectural designs of each entrance reflect the spirit of prevailing styles during the time of construction. Under Criterion H, the nomination argues that each cast iron subway entrance stands as a defining visual characteristic within the neighborhood streetscape and city. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that, collectively, the entrances represent the city's commitment to sustaining growth through significant investment in public transportation infrastructure at a time of an optimistic belief in public service and the importance of the public realm.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Thomas presented the request to continue the review of the nomination for the Cast Iron Subway Entrances Thematic District to the December 2018 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

Anthony Santaniello stated that the nomination has been pending for nearly a decade, adding that he hopes there are no further delays. He observed that, if the representatives from the Department of Public Property have any concerns, they may contact him.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to continue and remand the nomination for the Cast Iron Subway Entrances Historic District to the 12 December 2018 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **ADDRESS: 228-36 S 52ND ST**

Name of Resource: Locust Theatre

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Bushfire Theatre of Performing Arts

Nominator: Noah Yoder

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 228-36 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 228-36 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Locust Theatre, constructed in 1914, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that the Locust Theatre is emblematic of the construction of small, neighborhood theaters in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, as movies became affordable entertainment. The Theatre is also associated with successful baker William Freihofer, and the Bushfire Theatre of Performing Arts. Having entertained audiences for over a century, the Theatre exemplifies the development of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street strip as a major cultural and commercial corridor of West Philadelphia. Under

C, D, and E, the nomination contends that the Theatre still retains much of its original terra cotta, Beaux-Arts classical detail, and typifies the high architectural standard to which neighborhood movie theaters were held. The Theatre is clad in terra cotta ornament by the Conkling-Armstrong Terra Cotta Company, and is the work of noted Philadelphia architectural firm Stuckert & Sloan, and later the Hoffman-Henon Company.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Noah Yoder represented the nomination. No one represented the property owner.

Mr. Thomas asked if the Commission had any questions or if there was any public comment, of which there was none. The Commissioners discussed the property and the nomination and concluded that the historic theater merits designation.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 228-36 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Hartner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 23 OCTOBER 2018**

Dan McCoubrey, Chair

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Thomas introduced the Consent Agenda, which included applications for 2221 Pine Street, 300-04 Richmond Street, and 2216 Walnut Street. He asked if anyone on the Historical Commission or in the audience had comments on the projects. There were none.

**ACTION:** Mr. McCoubrey moved to adopt the recommendations of the Architectural Committee for the applications for 2221 Pine Street, 300-04 Richmond Street, and 2216 Walnut Street. Mr. Fink seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **AGENDA**

##### **ADDRESS: 2032-38 CHANCELLOR ST**

Proposal: Remove interior structure and roof; construct rooftop addition; replace doors

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Tom and Jill Durosvik

Applicant: Shimi Zakin, Atrium Design Group

History: 1885

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

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

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the floor-to-floor heights are reduced from 12 to 11 feet at the second and third floors, and from 11 to 10 feet at the fourth floor, resulting in an overall reduction of three feet; the doors are wood but may be contemporary in style; and rooftop plantings and mechanical equipment, except for the elevator overrun, are not visible from the public right-of-way.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to make extensive alterations and a rooftop addition to this former carriage house building in the Rittenhouse Fittler Historic District. The application proposes to remove all interior floorplates, excavate for a superbasement, and construct a new interior structure within the existing walls. The structural drawings for the support of the existing walls have not been provided. On the first floor Chancellor Street elevation, the application proposes to install a new modern metal and glass garage door in one of the two existing carriage door openings, and to install a set of metal gates in the second opening. The primary entrance to the house would be recessed behind those gates. The Historical Commission has previously required the installation of wood carriage-style doors in historic carriage door openings.

The application proposes to create a two-story open courtyard at the second-floor level. It will occupy about one-third of the floorplate at the east, where the roof and third floor will be eliminated. An approximately 33-foot long by 18-foot deep by 11-foot tall metal and glass addition is proposed for the roof. The addition will be surrounded by a metal railing and rooftop plantings. The applicant asserts that the addition will not be visible from Chancellor Street, but will be partially visible from St. James Street. Along St. James Street, the application proposes to restore several window and door openings.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Chantry presented the application to the Historical Commission. Architect Shimi Zakin and attorney Carl Primavera represented the application.

Ms. Chantry explained that the application has been revised since the review by the Architectural Committee, to reflect an overall reduction in height of 18 inches.

Mr. Zakin corrected that the courtyard covers one-quarter of the total footprint of the existing structure. Mr. Thomas asked for confirmation that the courtyard is internal. Mr. Zakin confirmed this.

Mr. Zakin addressed the Architectural Committee's recommendation regarding reduction of the overall height. He explained that it is far more complicated than it appears. He explained that, when the drawings indicate 12-foot ceilings, they are referring to floor-to-floor height, and are not accounting for the new structure and installation of necessary mechanical equipment. He explained that these items will occupy between 24 and 30 inches of cavity. Mr. Thomas asked for specific dimensions of the ceiling heights. Mr. Zakin started to respond with an answer related to the three-foot reduction request. Mr. Thomas asked for a number. Mr. Zakin started to explain that the ceiling is currently 11 feet high with a wood structure. Mr. Thomas stated that he was trying to understand, and noted that Mr. Zakin is making a good point as he attempts to explain the mechanical and structural systems, which take up more space than a typical joist. He asked again what the remaining ceiling height will be. Mr. Zakin responded that he will be lucky to get a nine-foot ceiling height on the second and third floors. He cautioned that the header of the arched windows will then pose a problem, and that there may be encroachment into the area of the window, which is a significant concern. He stated that they will accept a reduction of 18 inches in overall height if they must, but that they prefer to stay with the original application, as those floor heights will make everything easier to install, and it will respect what was there originally in terms of elevation height. Mr. Thomas commented that what Mr. Zakin is cautioning against is that they may get to a point where the ceiling would be below the arches of the windows. Mr. Primavera confirmed that this is their concern. Mr. Thomas suggested that the Commission could determine that the height must be reduced but that it should be no lower than the existing window height. Mr. McCoubrey commented that, if this is such an important

determinant, it should be called out in the drawings. Mr. Zakin approached the projection screen and demonstrated how a reduction in height can result in the ceilings hitting the top of the window arches. He explained that it will be weird, and the rooftop addition has already been designed to not be visible from anywhere on Chancellor Street, so a reduction in the floor heights will make no difference in visibility of the rooftop addition from nearly all vantage points. He agreed that there is one point of visibility from the service alley of St. James Street, which will be the same visibility as exists for the current non-historic pilot house. Despite this, he stated that they are willing to reduce the rooftop addition height by one foot. Mr. McCoubrey commented that the rooftop addition will be seen obliquely as one looks down St. James Street. Mr. Zakin confirmed that it will have the same visibility as the current non-historic pilot house, from the service alley of St. James Street. He reiterated that, with the reduction of one foot in height, it will be as noticeable as before from St. James Street. He stated that they will comply with the recommendations of the Architectural Committee regarding door material and plantings. Mr. Thomas agreed that St. James Street is a service alley. Mr. Primavera commented that the Committee's recommendations were helpful, and the neighbors are pleased that the building will be rehabilitated. Mr. Thomas observed that there are many tall buildings nearby, so another foot in height of the rooftop addition would not affect the skyline. He questioned why the Commission would care about the interior floor heights. Mr. McCoubrey responded that the Commission cares only in that it pushes the rooftop addition higher. Mr. Thomas responded that the sightline studies show that the addition will not be visible from Chancellor Street. Mr. McCoubrey opined that a height reduction can come without impacting the window arches. He commended the architect for managing to reduce the overall height by 18 inches. Mr. Zakin reiterated that they would prefer to receive approval for the original application, with no reduction in height. Mr. Thomas suggested that the Commission could approve the project, but state that the roof deck level should be no higher than the existing wall on Chancellor Street. Mr. McCoubrey stated that the Committee was concerned because there were parapets proposed that extended above the original walls. Mr. Zakin commented that it is important to realize that the cornice height on Chancellor Street is about 18 inches higher than that along St. James Street. Mr. McCoubrey responded that it is acceptable as long as there is no visible parapet extension. Mr. Thomas commented that putting this kind of condition into the motion would allow for the staff to approve the project, even if the interior floor heights may differ by a couple of inches. Ms. Cooperman agreed.

Mr. Thomas asked for public comment, of which there was none.

**ACTION:** Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, which shows an overall height reduction of approximately 18 inches, provided the new exterior doors are wood and sympathetic to the carriage house style of the building, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9. Ms. Long seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADDRESS: 8819 RIDGE AVE**

Proposal: Demolish building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Barwel Development LLC

Applicant: William O'Brien, Manayunk Law Office

History: 1859; Absalom Loyle House

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Ridge Avenue Historic District, Contributing, 10/12/2018

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

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the Philadelphia code.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes the complete demolition of the detached, three-story house, shed, and garage at 8819 Ridge Avenue. The building was protected by the Ridge Avenue demolition moratorium and then designated as historic as part of the Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic Historic District on 12 October 2018. The inventory of the historic district indicates that this property is classified as contributing to the district. The Ridge Avenue demolition moratorium was introduced into City Council on 28 September 2017, it became effective on 5 December 2017 when it was favorably recommended out of committee, it was passed by City Council on 14 December 2017, and it was signed into law by the Mayor on 20 December 2017.

On 6 April 2018, HC Site Construction, Inc., a contractor, submitted an application for a complete demolition permit (#865318) for 8819 Ridge Avenue to the Department of Licenses & Inspections, which was forwarded to Philadelphia Historical Commission because the property was subject to Section 14-1009 of the Philadelphia Code, the Ridge Avenue Demolition Moratorium. On 10 April 2018, the staff of the Historical Commission determined that the demolition permit application was incomplete, pursuant to Section 6.8 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations, because it did not address the criteria for approval and therefore declined to process it. The staff returned the application to the applicant with a list of its deficiencies. The staff explained that the application must demonstrate that the property has been cited as imminently dangerous and that demolition is the *only* means of abating the dangerous condition; that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted; or that the demolition is necessary in the public interest. The application failed to justify the proposed demolition with any one of the three possible bases for approval.

On 31 July 2018, attorney William O'Brien submitted a building permit application for 8819 Ridge Avenue (#893122) to the Historical Commission. As of 9 July 2018, the property owner had been notified that the property had been nominated for historic designation as part of the Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic Historic District and that all building permit applications for the property were therefore subject to the Historical Commission's review as of that date. The Ridge Avenue Demolition Moratorium lapsed on the same date that the Historical Commission sent the notification. This application was likewise deemed incomplete, pursuant to Section 6.8 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations, and could not be processed. The application form stipulated "Partial demolition of existing three-story home to make safe," but nothing in the application identified the part(s) of the building to be removed or whether or how the remaining part(s) would be treated following the removal. The permit application included a building permit application form, violation notice, cover letter, certificate of liability insurance, certificate of tax clearance, and a zoning permit application form, but no photographs, site plan,

or architectural drawings documenting the property and building in question or the work to be performed.

The current application includes a permit application form, photographs, a site plan, the violation notice, engineers' reports, and other materials. The most recent engineer's report, dated 11 September 2018, states that "this building [should] be demolished due to the possible dangerous condition." Dated 8 June 2018, the violation notice indicates that the Department of Licenses & Inspections has determined that the building is imminently dangerous. However, a letter from the Department of Licenses & Inspections to the property owner, dated 9 July 2018, states that the Department had declined to issue a demolition permit because "neither of the engineers reports submitted provides adequate detail demonstrating that the demolition of this building is necessary to abate an imminently dangerous condition."

The City's historic preservation ordinance, Section 14-1005(6)(d), restricts the Historical Commission from approving demolition permit applications unless certain conditions are met.

No building permit shall be issued for the demolition of a historic building ... located within a historic district that contributes, in the Historical Commission's opinion, to the character of the district, unless the Historical Commission finds that issuance of the building permit is necessary in the public interest, or unless the Historical Commission finds that the building ... cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted. In order to show that building ... cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted, the owner must demonstrate that the sale of the property is impracticable, that commercial rental cannot provide a reasonable rate of return, and that other potential uses of the property are foreclosed.

The photographs and engineer's reports demonstrate that the building is in very poor condition, but nothing in the application indicates that demolition is the *only* means of abating the imminently dangerous condition; that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted; or that the demolition is necessary in the public interest. The Historical Commission cannot approve demolition applications based solely on the condition unless the Department of Licenses & Inspections determines that demolition is the only means of abating a dangerous condition. Without such a determination, the applicant must prove that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted; or that the demolition is necessary in the public interest before the Historical Commission can approve the demolition. As an aside, the Historical Commission could have excluded this property from the historic district based on condition when it designated it on 12 October 2018, but no one appeared at that meeting representing this property to make such an argument. The property is now designated and the bar for a demolition approval is high.

**DISCUSSION:** Messrs. Thomas and Mattioni recused, owing to their involvement in a non-profit led by the attorney representing the property owner. Ms. Turner assumed the role of chair. Mr. Farnham presented the application to the Historical Commission. Attorney William O'Brien, developer Charles Whitlock, and engineer Alex Rong represented the property owner.

Mr. Farnham informed the Historical Commission that Mr. O'Brien had contacted several Commissioners outside the auspices of a public meeting by email and, in one case, by telephone. He reminded the applicant and the audience that all communication between applicants as well as others and the Commissioners must take place through the Historical Commission's offices so that the staff can document the communication and so that all parties involved are aware of the communication. He cautioned that applicants should never contact

Commissioners directly. Mr. Farnham also noted that he had distributed four additional items related to the review to the Commissioners at the start of the meeting: a letter from Mr. O'Brien, which had been emailed to some Commissioners yesterday, a letter from Mr. O'Brien to the near neighbors of the property in question, an email from a near neighbor to the Historical Commission regarding his desire to see the property redeveloped, and a zoning permit for the demolition of the building in question and the subdivision of the property into two parcels.

Mr. O'Brien stated that the letter he distributed to some Commissioners yesterday commented on the minutes documenting the Architectural Committee's review. Mr. O'Brien pointed out that the Historical Commission's transition rule at Section 6.9.a.10 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations authorizes the Commission to take into consideration development plans in place prior to the Commission's notice to the property owner that it will consider designating the property. Mr. O'Brien noted that the Historical Commission assumed some jurisdiction over the property on 5 December 2017, when the City Council's Rules Committee favorably moved the demolition moratorium legislation out of the Committee, the Historical Commission did not send the notice announcing its consideration of the district nomination until 9 July 2018. Mr. O'Brien explained that his letter includes a timeline documenting the plans for redeveloping the property. The timeline identifies all of the development activity. He stated that it documents significant development activity prior to the notice date, 9 July 2018, but also prior to 5 December 2017. He noted that the Survey District, Planning Commission, and Department of Licenses & Inspections had all approved the relocation of lot lines, which depended on the demolition, prior to that date. He stated that his client, the developer, relied on the issuance of the zoning permit to purchase the property. Mr. O'Brien introduced Mr. Whitlock. Mr. O'Brien asked Mr. Whitlock to state whether the timeline included with the letter was accurate. Mr. Whitlock stated that it was accurate.

Mr. O'Brien then introduced Mr. Rong, the engineer. He explained that Mr. Rong undertook a structural analysis of the building and issued a report. Mr. O'Brien observed that another engineer, Robert Rosen, also issued a report. He noted that Mr. Rosen had concluded that demolition was necessary to abate the dangerous condition and that the building should be immediately demolished, owing to its instability. He also noted that total demolition is the best solution for the house. Mr. O'Brien stated that Mr. Rong also concluded that the building is in imminent danger of collapse and should be demolished.

Mr. O'Brien acknowledged that he sent a letter to the near neighbors asking for their support. He noted that one neighbor responded. He stated that the house is an eyesore and a nuisance.

Mr. McCoubrey stated that the Architectural Committee found the structural reports to be very thin. The reports did not identify areas where failure might be imminent. The reports included several inconsistencies including wrongly referring to the building as a wood-frame house and a brick house; it is a stone house. Ms. Cooperman stated that the flawed reports do not inspire confidence. Mr. McCoubrey stated that one of the reports refers to early stages of failure, not imminent collapse. In general, the Architectural Committee concluded that it had seen buildings in far worse condition that were subsequently successfully rehabilitated. Mr. McCoubrey noted that the building is set back from the sidewalk and fenced and therefore does not pose an immediate danger to the public.

Mr. Farnham explained that the so-called transition rule authorizes the Historical Commission, Architectural Committee, and staff to take into consideration development plans in place at the time of notice announcing the consideration of a nomination when reviewing building permit

applications. Mr. Farnham added that he was surprised by Mr. O'Brien's letter, which contested his interpretation of the transition rule. Mr. Farnham stated that he agreed with Mr. O'Brien that, in order for the Historical Commission to take development plans into consideration, those plans needed to be in place at the time the notice announcing the consideration of a nomination is mailed to the property owner. He stated that, in this case, that date would be 9 July 2018, not the earlier dates associated with the demolition moratorium. Mr. Farnham concluded that the Historical Commission should not conclude from Mr. O'Brien's letter that he and Mr. O'Brien disagree about the correct interpretation of the transition rule. Ms. Cooperman noted that the Historical Commission "may" consider development plans; it does not stipulate that the Commission "must" consider them. Mr. Farnham agreed. He also noted that the Historical Commission is bound by the demolition provision in the ordinance. The transition rule cannot supersede that provision, which limits the Historical Commission to approving demolitions in two cases, when the building cannot be feasibly adaptively reviewed or when the demolition is necessary in the public interest. Mr. Farnham stated that it is generally agreed that abating an imminently dangerous condition is necessary in the public interest. Mr. Farnham concluded that the Historical Commission should consider the transition rule and the abatement of the dangerous condition when making its decision.

Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance observed that the house in question dates to 1859 and that the historic district of which it is a part was just designated last month. He noted that the property is contributing to the district. He remarked that the Architectural Committee had opined that this building probably could be repaired.

Rich Giordano, the president of the Upper Roxborough Civic Association, noted that this site falls within his organization's boundaries. He stated that the Historical Commission's staff did a great deal of work very quickly to prepare the district nomination, for which his organization is very grateful; it would be a shame to approve this application and eat away at the newly created district. He noted, however, that members of his organization who live near this site are very concerned about it. It is an eyesore and attractive to squatters. The near neighbors are adamantly opposed to continued deterioration at this site. The house should be stabilized and restored.

Mr. O'Brien emphasized again that the building has been cited as imminently dangerous. It is a threat to the public. Mr. O'Brien stated that he is frustrated because the demolition moratorium provided a better path to demolition than the current designation. He read from the demolition moratorium code at Section 14-1009(2):

No total demolition of any building or other structure among the designated properties in the Ridge Avenue area shall be permitted, unless either:

- (a) such demolition is necessary to abate an imminently dangerous condition as determined by the Department of Licenses and Inspections; or
- (b) a permit for such demolition is obtained in accordance with the provisions of §14-1005 ("Regulation"), applying those provisions as if the designated properties in the Ridge Avenue area constituted, collectively, a designated historic district.

He stated that the building was deemed imminently dangerous on 8 June 2018 and, under the demolition moratorium, should have approved for demolition. He claimed that the necessary elements to approve demolition were in place at that time. He claimed that the demolition application continued to be reviewed for five weeks. He stated that, on 10 July 2018, the property owner received two letters dated 9 July 2018. One, from the Department of Licenses &

Inspections, stated that the demolition application was being abandoned. The other, from the Historical Commission, notified the owner of the consideration of the proposed historic district. Implying a conspiracy between the City agencies, he stated that he was sure that the timing of the two letters was “simply a coincidence.” He again asserted that the demolition application should have been approved on 8 June 2018 because the building was cited as being imminently dangerous. He stated that the letter from the Department indicated that the Historical Commission’s approval was required on the permit application. He asserted that the approval was not required because the demolition moratorium code required either an imminently dangerous finding or a Historical Commission approval. He claimed that the City agencies made a mistake. He also claimed that Mr. Rong’s engineer’s report was found to be lacking in two regards. It did not account for the fact that the house was set back from the street and it did not provide a plan for salvage. He claimed that mistakes were made and the Historical Commission should not be reviewing this application. The demolition permit should have been issued a long time ago.

Mr. Farnham stated that he disagrees with Mr. O’Brien’s interpretation of the demolition moratorium code. Mr. O’Brien asserted that the Department of Licenses & Inspections cited the property as imminently dangerous on 8 June 2018, thereby satisfying the condition in the code and allowing the permit application to be approved. However, Mr. O’Brien is ignoring the second half of that provision. The demolition permit application could not be approved unless “such demolition is necessary to abate an imminently dangerous condition as determined by the Department of Licenses and Inspections.” Mr. O’Brien is ignoring the fact that the code only allows for the demolition when the Department has determined that the demolition is necessary to abate the imminently dangerous condition. Mr. O’Brien is claiming that the permit application should have been approved simply because there is an imminently dangerous condition and because his engineer concludes that demolition is the appropriate way to abate the dangerous condition. However, the Department of Licenses & Inspections issued a letter to the property owner, dated 9 July 2018, stating that the Department had declined to issue a demolition permit because “neither of the engineers reports submitted provides adequate detail demonstrating that the demolition of this building is necessary to abate an imminently dangerous condition.” The Department explicitly concluded that the building did not satisfy the conditions required for the issuance of a demolition permit. The permit should not have been issued.

**FAILED MOTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to deny the application. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which failed by a vote of 5 to 3. Commissioners Cooperman, Edwards, and McCoubrey voted in favor. Commissioners Fink, Hartner, Long, Washington, and Stanford dissented. Commissioner Turner abstained.

Mr. Fink asked his follower Commissioners who vote for the motion why they concluded that the transition rule did not apply in this case. Ms. Cooperman responded that, for her, the significant phrase in the rule is that the Historical Commission “may consider” plans, but is not required to consider plans. Mr. Fink stated that he considers the current situation to be precisely the situation that was contemplated when the transition rule was drafted. He observed that the property owner purchased the property in good faith to redevelop it, but, after he had committed considerable resources to the project, discovered that the rules regarding the property had changed. The rule was written for exactly this situation. Ms. Cooperman stated that she understands Mr. Fink’s position, but questioned why the Historical Commission would designate a property one month and approve its demolition the next; that would be an unfortunate turn of events.

**ACTION:** Mr. Fink moved to approve the application as necessary in the public interest to abate the imminently dangerous condition, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the Philadelphia code. Ms. Washington seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 5 to 3. Commissioners Fink, Hartner, Long, Washington, and Stanford voted in favor. Commissioners McCoubrey, Cooperman, and Edwards dissented. Commissioner Turner abstained.

Mr. O'Brien asked that the record reflect that nine Commissioners are present. Mr. Reuter acknowledged that five Commissioners voted in favor, three against, one abstained, and two recused. He observed that a majority of Commissioners participating, five of nine, voted in favor of the motion and it therefore carries. Ms. Cooperman commented that she would have preferred to have taken the transition rule into account last month when the Historical Commission considered and then designated the historic district. Mr. Farnham agreed and noted that he was prepared at last month's meeting to suggest that the Historical Commission remove this property from the proposed historic district before designation owing to its condition and circumstances, but no one representing the property appeared at the meeting and made such a request. He concluded that it would have been better to decline to designate it than to designate it one month and approve its demolition the next.

**ADDRESS: 2221 PINE ST**

Proposal: Construct pilot house and roof deck

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Katherine Milkman, Cullen Blake

Applicant: Kenny Grono, Buckminster Green LLC

History: 1850

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

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

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the cantilever is removed, the glass railing and 72-inch side walls are eliminated, and the deck is enclosed by a simple 42-inch picket railing, and the pilot house height is lowered to no more than 8 feet and sloped toward the front of the house, pursuant to Standards 9, 10, and the Roofs Guidelines.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to construct a pilot house and roof deck at 2221 Pine Street. The deck will be constructed at the rear of the property on the existing three-story addition. The application proposes to cantilever the deck 18 inches beyond the rear façade, which faces Panama Street. The underside of the cantilever will appear as a cornice with painted moldings and rim joist similar to those on homes that front Panama Street. The stucco of the rear facade will be extended to the underside of the deck. A 42-inch high glass railing will be installed along the rear of the deck, while the sides of the deck will be enclosed by 72-inch fiber cement-clad walls. A new pilot house will be constructed for roof access and clad in painted fiber cement.

**ACTION:** See Consent Agenda.

**ADDRESS: 119 AND 121 S 18TH ST**

Proposal: Modify storefronts

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Lewin Associates and Winig Properties

Applicant: Rhea Gargullo, Sargenti Architects

History: 1835

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

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

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to convert two existing retail spaces into one in order to accommodate a new food establishment. The previously altered storefronts will be replaced with a new aluminum storefront that will be installed into the existing masonry openings. The brick at both facades is to remain, as is the existing stone at the windows and doors, and at the base of number 121. The downspout will be replaced in kind but the cast iron boot will remain. The existing cellar windows and cast iron bars at number 121 are to remain.

A new metal cornice is proposed for just below the windows at the second story. The proposal calls for the existing brick facades to be power washed and then painted white up to the height of the new cornice. A metal trellis with a planter on top is proposed to span the storefront at number 119. Ten inch acrylic letter signage is proposed for the face of the trellis and one foot eleven inch illuminated channel letters are proposed on the brick façade just above the trellis. A new, brightly colored metal awning is proposed to span the window at number 121. Two LED lights are proposed for above the metal awning.

Several aspects the proposal fail to satisfy the Secretary of the Interior's Standards including the painting of the brick, the use of metal for the awning rather than fabric, and the installation of a metal cornice at the second story. The new storefront system should have more of a vertical orientation rather than a horizontal one, as proposed, and the transom windows at number 121 should be retained.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Schmitt presented the application to the Architectural Committee. Architects Rhea Gargullo and Anthony Gerardi represented the application.

Mr. Thomas asked if there was anyone present representing the application, and asked them to introduce themselves. Anthony Gerardi, senior project architect, and Rhea Gargullo, project manager, both of Sargenti Architects, introduced themselves. Mr. Gerardi explained that when they went before the Architectural Committee a few weeks ago, they had a drastically different design which included the painting of the brick and more decorative features on the face of the building. He said that they had taken the recommendations of the Architectural Committee, and decided not to proceed with the painting of the facades or the installation of a new cornice at the second floor they had been proposing, and they strictly concentrated on the storefront and anything that was reversible within the existing masonry openings. Mr. Gerardi stated that, per the Architectural Committee's recommendation, they were planning on only washing and cleaning the brick façade and replacing the downspout, but they were still asking for an approval of the trellis, which is a part of their client's branding; he added that it was something that would be reversible. He noted that they had changed the awning from a metal awning, which was their client's standard, to a canvas awning. Mr. Gerardi told the members of the Historical

Commission that the scale of the lettering of the signage could be worked out with the staff. Mr. Gerardi asked his colleague, Ms. Gargullo, if the signage letters were backlit, to which she responded that they had been in the original proposal; however, per the recommendation of the Architectural Committee, the backlighting had been removed from the scope. Mr. Gerardi reiterated that they had converted the awning material from metal to canvas, and that they had revised the storefront from a horizontal design which was their client's prototype, to a more traditional vertical storefront. He reiterated that the proposed trellis work would be within the confines of the masonry openings and would structurally support itself, but it would be reversible in the long run.

Mr. Thomas asked for confirmation as to which drawing within the packet was the revised elevation, and Mr. Gerardi confirmed which drawing it was. Mr. Thomas said that he realized that it could be due to software limitations with the rendering, but asked Mr. Gerardi to confirm that the dormer windows were to remain as existing. Mr. Gerardi and Ms. Gargullo answered that they were to remain unchanged.

Mr. Gerardi pointed out that there was a patch of existing stucco right where the Zoe's Kitchen sign was proposed to be installed. He said that they could attempt to remove it, but he was not sure what would come of the area after they tried because he could not vouch for what was there currently. Mr. Thomas replied that the Historical Commission would work alongside them during the construction process because they could find other things that might need attention.

Mr. Thomas asked if there were any other comments. Ms. Cooperman remarked that she thought the transom in the window at 121 was historic. Mr. McCoubrey agreed that it was not just the transom but the window frame itself was all original storefront. Ms. Cooperman said that it was a historic storefront window, including the transom and the frame, and that she did not think that removing it would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Ms. Schmitt said that she believed that the revised plans proposed to retain the transom, and Mr. Gerardi responded that they were proposing to replace it with an aluminum transom. However, if the members of the Historical Commission wanted them to leave the existing wooden windows in place, it could be worked out. He explained that the reason they had mentioned that they were going to block that part out was because it was behind the awning, but they had agreed to leave the masonry opening the existing size. Mr. McCoubrey responded that at least the wood frame transom windows that existed were original, as well as the jambs and the sills. He commented that he thought the entire window assemblage was all of a piece, and Ms. Cooperman added that she thought that the center vertical mullion and the glass would be the only part of the storefront that would not be historic.

Mr. McCoubrey commented that he thought the revised storefront proportions at 119 were consistent with the staff's and Architectural Committee's suggestions. He said that the elimination of the cornice, the white paint, and the metal awning also reflected the suggestions. Mr. McCoubrey noted that there was considerable comment and question about the use of a trellis rather than an awning at 119, as well as the scale of the Zoe's Kitchen sign, remarking that rather than a cantilevered trellis with plant material on it, an awning would be more consistent with the standards and approach that the Historical Commission typically took.

Ms. Gargullo requested to revisit a previous comment, and asked if they were to leave the existing transom windows, would they be able to paint the frames to match the new scheme, to which Mr. McCoubrey responded yes. Mr. Thomas clarified that they were discussing retaining the window at 121, and told the applicants that they might need to upgrade the glass if they

wanted it to be insulated. Ms. Cooperman added that the applicants would not need to retain the center mullion, and that it could just be a single pane, and Mr. Thomas agreed. Mr. Thomas explained that the transom windows had probably originally been used for ventilation, and were a part of the building's history, and, in terms of their program, the windows worked well. Mr. Gerardi said he did not think they had an objection to retaining the existing storefront, and that their only concern was installing insulated glass. Mr. Thomas said that the staff could work with them on the details of this scope.

Mr. Thomas said that, as far as the trellis was concerned, there had already been an alteration and there were a lot of other things going on on this street. He noted that, if this had been a street with all original storefronts and there was suddenly going to be a change, it would be different. However, he did not think that what they were proposing overwhelmed the building in any way. Mr. Thomas added that by cleaning both of the facades and bringing them together, the building would get more street presence, which he was sure the clients wanted for their business. Mr. Thomas commented that he thought the alterations were being done in a way that was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and he thought it was attractive.

Mr. McCoubrey stated that he thought the entire storefront had been modified, noting that there was currently an aluminum system in place, and so as long as their modifications stayed within the altered opening, and as long as the applicant worked with the staff on the scale of the lettering of the signage, it was acceptable. Mr. Gerardi commented that they were well within the allowable size for the signage in terms of overall square inches, and Mr. McCoubrey commented that the letters still looked big. Mr. Gerardi confirmed that they could work with the staff on the signage details.

David Traub introduced himself as speaking on behalf of Save Our Sites, and remarked that he was so pleased that these two buildings on 18th Street were being restored. He said that he had not had a chance to see the details of the restoration. However, generally speaking, he was pleased. Mr. Traub commented that these two buildings were part of a remarkable cluster of small-scale retail buildings between Chestnut and Walnut Streets, representing the past in this neighborhood that was increasingly becoming rebuilt with high-rise buildings and large-scale retail facilities. He said that he called these two blocks between Chestnut and Walnut Streets representative of the fine texture of urban life that has been lost in Philadelphia. Mr. Traub stated that, unfortunately, on the next block between Walnut and Sansom Streets on the west side, four similar buildings at Rindelaub's Row were demolished some years ago, and the buildings currently under review still stood and should stand forever to represent a way of life in Philadelphia that was increasingly being lost. Mr. Traub said that he applauded the efforts of the owners to restore them. However, one thing that struck him was that the red lettering above the storefront at 119 could be a little more restrained and tasteful in keeping with some of the other signage along the row. He said that, overall, the project was a remarkable innovation. Mr. Thomas thanked Mr. Traub for his words and asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were none.

**ACTION:** Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the application as revised, provided the wood transom of 121 S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street remains, with the staff to review details including the scale of the signage letters. Ms. Long seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADDRESS: 300-04 RICHMOND ST**

Proposal: Replace windows; construct ADA ramp; install mechanical equipment

Review Requested: Final Review

Owner: Kensington M.E. Church

Applicant: Raymond Rola, Raymond F. Rola Architect

History: 1853; Kensington "Old Brick" ME Church

Individual Designation: 2/28/1967, 6/27/1967

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to convert the church at 300-04 Richmond Street into multiple residential units with a chapel retained for religious services. The Architectural Committee reviewed an earlier version of this application in August 2018. The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, owing to incompleteness, and the application was withdrawn before the Historical Commission meeting in September. A revised application was submitted for the September 2018 meeting of the Architectural Committee meeting, but withdrawn before the meeting was held.

New floors will be inserted into the church building. The new floors will run across the large stained glass windows, necessitating some changes to the windows. The application proposes to remove some stained glass windows from the side facades. The stained glass will be retained on the front façade and the first floor and top floor of the side facades. The spandrel panels will be retained in their present positions. The central portions of the side windows will be replaced with clear and spandrel glass to allow light and air to the new floors. The application also proposes to add mechanical equipment to the roof of the building, and add a ramp at the front door. The mechanical equipment should not be visible from the street as shown in the site line study. Although the Historical Commission does not have interior jurisdiction over this property, the applicant has made appropriate plans to address any potential archeological concerns related to the former cemetery in the basement. The developer no longer plans to alter the basement to create additional living units. Also, the developer is no longer proposing to add skylights in the roof.

**ACTION:** See Consent Agenda.

**ADDRESS: 2216 WALNUT ST**

Proposal: Demolish building behind façade; construct 6-story building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Ascent Design and Builders

Applicant: Stuart Rosenberg, Stuart G. Rosenberg Architects, P.C.

History: 1880; Façade replaced 1950, reclassified as NC 2/9/2018

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Non-contributing, 2/8/1995

Preservation Easement: Yes

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

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10, with the following comments:

- the applicant should work with the staff to coordinate the plans, sections, and massing diagrams before the Historical Commission meeting to accurately represent the proposed building;
- the minimum five-foot setback of the deck required along Walnut Street is reflected in the drawings;
- the railing system at the deck is executed in a way that prevents future residents from removing it to expand the deck;
- aluminum rather than glass railings in keeping with a 1950s building are used at the decks along Walnut Street; and,
- additional storefront details are provided to make them as streamlined as possible.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to demolish all but the front façade of the existing four-story building at 2216 Walnut Street and to construct a six-story building behind the retained facade. At its 9 February 2018 meeting, the Historical Commission voted to reclassify the property from contributing to non-contributing in the Rittenhouse-Fidler Historic District. The new building would be clad in brick, and the top two stories would be stepped back from the Walnut Street façade. The stepped upper stories would have decks with glass railings, and a roof deck would be further incorporated above. The building's rear would follow a similar pattern of stepped upper stories and decks. A new steel and aluminum storefront system would be installed within the existing limestone opening at the ground floor of the Walnut Street façade.

**ACTION:** See Consent Agenda.

**ADDRESS: 262 S 16TH ST**

Proposal: Demolish non-contributing building; construct 6-story building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Briarpatch Holdings LLC

Applicant: Adam Montalbano, Moto DesignShop, Inc.

History: 1980

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fidler Residential Historic District, Non-contributing, 2/8/1995

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

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to demolish a non-contributing building in the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District and to construct a six-story building with pilot house and front-facing decks with glass railings. The Historical Commission has full jurisdiction over the proposed construction. The Historical Commission reviewed an earlier iteration of this project at its September 2018 meeting. This application proposes three stories flush with the street and clad in red brick and cast stone. The fourth floor would feature a mansard roof with large dormer windows and a cornice aligned with those of the neighboring properties. The front elevation of the fifth and sixth floors would be clad in spandrel glass, while the side elevations would be clad in metal panels. The fifth floor would be set back 10 feet from the front façade and feature a 42-inch railing set back five feet from the front façade, rising directly out of the proposed mansard roof. The sixth floor would be set back 15 feet from the front façade, and the pilot house, which runs over 40 feet along the south elevation, would be set back approximately 22 feet from the front elevation. Following the Architectural Committee meeting, the applicant revised the application to feature a metal picket railing at the 5<sup>th</sup> floor and replaced the proposed metal panels on the side elevations with fiber cement panels.

At the September Historical Commission meeting, the Commission noted that a change in materials between the lower and upper floors in addition to greater setbacks of those upper floors might make the project more appropriate for this location. While the applicant has changed the materials between the lower and upper floors, the 10-foot setback for the fifth floor remains the same as the application reviewed and denied at the previous Historical Commission meeting. At the September meeting of the Historical Commission, the Commission and architect discussed projects at 2110 Walnut Street and the Curtis Institute of Music. By contrast, the upper-floor setbacks of those projects are approximately 19 feet and 40 feet, respectively.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Historical Commission. Architect Adam Montalbano and attorney Michael Phillips represented the application.

Ms. DiPasquale noted that the applicants had distributed additional sets of photographs of other projects in Philadelphia.

Mr. Phillips explained that they had used the project at 2110 Walnut Street as a model for the revised design. Mr. Phillips noted that this is a non-contributing property and can be demolished by right. He argued that non-contributing properties are to be treated by a different standard than contributing properties. He explained that he understands that the Commission has full jurisdiction over the proposed construction, but opined that the Commission should be placing emphasis on the compatibility of the project with the materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and massing within the historic district. He opined that the proposed project does so within the

district as a whole. He explained that the height of the proposed building is less than that allowed by zoning.

Mr. Montalbano noted that the previous submissions were included in the Commission's packets. He explained that, over the course of several meetings, the height of the building has been reduced by several floors. He opined that the revised design with a mansard roof mediates between the gable roofed building to the north and the mansard roofed building to the south. He explained that the upper floors have now been revised so the front elevations of the upper floors are glazed. He explained that they studied different setback depths, including the fifth and sixth floors being flush, but determined that the mass and scale of that option felt taller than with two setbacks. He noted that, although the adjacent properties are three and four stories, there are taller buildings nearby.

Mr. Thomas opened the floor to public comment. Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia commented that the project has evolved considerably. He commended the fact that it has evolved into having a three-story flat façade with a mansard, which he opined makes it much more contextual in terms of the scale, massing and materials of the block. He questioned why the window openings are rendered so dark and whether they will read that way in real life. Mr. Montalbano responded that the windows will probably be closer in color to the neighboring Monk's building. Mr. Steinke responded that a more conventional treatment of the window openings would improve the building.

Mr. McCoubrey noted that the Architectural Committee had still taken issue with the setbacks, and that no changes have been made to the fifth-floor setback. He noted that the entire building will be visible from across the street. He acknowledged that the Committee appreciated the changes to the lower part of the building. Mr. Montalbano reiterated that increasing the setbacks at the fifth and sixth floors would create an undesirable 20-foot vertical face.

**ACTION:** Mr. Mattioni moved to approve the application as revised, pursuant to Standard 9. Mr. Hartner seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 8 to 2. Commissioners McCoubrey and Cooperman dissented.

## **THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION, 17 OCTOBER 2018**

Emily Cooperman, Chair

### **ADDRESS: 348 GREEN LN**

Name of Resource: Lepton Terrace/Thomas Kenworthy House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Stone Door LLC

Nominator: Celeste Hardester, Central Roxborough Civic Association

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 348 Green Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 348 Green Lane and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property, constructed around 1872 for mill owner Thomas Kenworthy, is significant under Criteria for Designation A and J. The nomination argues that Kenworthy was an influential member of the

mill and industrial community of Manayunk, satisfying Criterion A. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the Kenworthy family was part of a wave of mill owners who constructed homes up the hill from their Manayunk mills in Roxborough, particularly in the area around Green Lane and Manayunk Avenue, exemplifying the development of the Roxborough/Manayunk communities in the second half of the nineteenth century.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. No one spoke on behalf of the nominator or the property owner.

Mr. Thomas opened the floor to public comment. Julia Heberle, a near neighbor of the property, spoke in support of the nomination. The Commission's reviewed the nomination and concluded that the property merits historic designation.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 348 Green Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADDRESS: 3850 THE OAK RD**

Name of Resource: Henry W. Brown House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: William Penn Charter School

Nominator: Steven Peitzman, East Falls Historical Society

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3850 The Oak Road satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3850 The Oak Road and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property, constructed in 1907 for businessman Henry W. Brown, satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J. The nomination explains that Brown was a notable figure in the insurance industry in his day, and the person responsible for the establishment of The Oak Road. The nomination contends that Brown's development of the property and The Oak Road connected the history of School House Lane as a secluded realm of country estates to the early twentieth century suburban transformation of the adjacent section of East Falls, satisfying Criterion J. Nearly unchanged since its construction, the grand former residence is an excellent representative example of the Colonial Revival period in American architecture and culture, satisfying Criteria C and D.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Steven Peitzman of the East Falls Historical Society represented the nomination. William Penn Charter School chief operating officer Hal Davidow represented the property owner.

Mr. Peitzman noted that his colleague and co-author, David Breiner, was present, should there be any questions. He also thanked Ms. DiPasquale for her assistance with the nomination.

Mr. Davidow commented that Penn Charter School is in support of the designation of the building, but would like the land across the driveway excluded from the designation. He

explained that the school has plans to extend their parking area. Mr. Thomas asked if there is a site plan available to show what the school is asking for. Ms. DiPasquale responded that there is an aerial view of the property in the nomination. Ms. Cooperman asked whether the area in question was once the garden of this house. Mr. Peitzman responded that it once was, but is now a grassy area. Ms. DiPasquale noted that the existing site plan is on page one of the nomination, and maps that show the historic boundaries of the property are on pages 10 and 11. Ms. Cooperman explained that the area that the school is requesting to exclude from the designation is part of the historic property. She contended that the Commission should retain full jurisdiction over the property and review whatever the school is proposing for that portion of the property, but that the designation would not necessarily prevent the school from altering or developing the land. Mr. Thomas agreed. Ms. DiPasquale noted that the Department of Licenses & Inspections does not distinguish between portions of historically designated tax parcels, so the owner would have to seek Historical Commission review and approval for any work to the property. Mr. Thomas noted that, given that the building faces the grassy area, it is clearly part of the building's context. Ms. Cooperman agreed, noting that it is part of the historic garden context. She also noted that the property originally extended all the way to School House Lane.

Mr. Thomas opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3850 The Oak Road satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADDRESS: 701-65 E WESTMORELAND ST**

Name of Resource: Ascension of Our Lord Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: New Phila Investment LLC

Nominator: Amy Lambert, Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the church building at 725 E. Westmoreland Street, part of the larger property known as 701-65 E. Westmoreland Street, satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, H and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the church building at 725 E. Westmoreland Street, part of the larger property known as 701-65 E. Westmoreland Street, in the Kensington neighborhood of the city and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination describes the church building, designed in 1914 by architects Henon & Boyle and completed in 1928, as a Romanesque-Revival structure clad in quarry-faced Port Deposit granite with Indiana limestone trim and a red tile roof.

The nomination argues that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, H and J. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the former Roman Catholic church is a particularly spectacular example of the Romanesque Revival style of architecture, giving the undeniable impression of a grand Italian church.

Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the Ascension of Our Lord Church was designed in 1914 by the firm of Henon & Boyle, the precursor to the Hoffman-Henon Company, and completed by Hoffman-Henon Co. in 1928. According to the nomination, Hoffman & Henon built their international reputation based on the deep foundation of church and theater design as pioneered by Henon & Boyle. The nomination also argues that the stained glass windows were designed by artist Paula Himmelsbach Balano, the first woman in the United States to have her own stained glass studio that handled operations from design to installation.

Under Criterion H, the nomination contends that the church is a character-defining feature of this eastern section of Kensington, rising as if in an Italian village church surrounded by ordinary houses.

Finally, under Criterion J, the nomination contends that over the course of 100 years, the parish of the Ascension of Our Lord has been involved with direct and active charitable outreach within and outside of its immediate community. It argues that, while it seems to have been founded mostly by working-class Irish-Americans, the congregation's mission has been deep and wide, reaching all races, ethnicities, and income levels.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Paul Steinke and Patrick Grossi of the Philadelphia Alliance for Greater Philadelphia represented the nominator. No one represented the property owners.

Mr. Thomas asked if the nominators had any comments, and Mr. Grossi responded that he did not have anything to add to the staff overview, but that he would be happy to answer any questions. Mr. Steinke said that they also wanted to give credit to Amy Lambert, who researched and prepared the nomination on behalf of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia.

Mr. Reuter, attorney to the Historical Commission, said that he wanted to make sure that the record was clear that the church building itself had a postal address of 725 E. Westmoreland and asked the nominators if 701-765 E. Westmoreland was the actual parcel. He requested confirmation that 701-765 was one parcel and that 725 E. Westmoreland was just a postal address and not a City-recognized address. Mr. Grossi confirmed that this was correct, and that 701-65 E. Westmoreland was one parcel that included multiple buildings, but that their nomination was solely focused on the primary church, the Ascension of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church. He explained that they had done something very similar with Our Mother of Sorrows in West Philadelphia; however, this was without prejudice to any future nominations of buildings on the parcel or amending this nomination. Mr. Grossi confirmed that currently they were just talking about this building.

Mr. Reuter responded that the current case was actually slightly different from the case they had just heard about the Penn Charter-owned parcel, which was one single address and one single parcel. He said in that case, the property owner was asking if a part of the front lawn could be removed from the designation because of plans the school had for parking, whereas in the current case of the Ascension of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church, the nominators were proposing to designate one building on the site. Mr. Steinke confirmed that the intention of the nomination was to designate the single building that was the former parish church. Mr. Reuter said that any applications that were to come in to alter any buildings on the site would still be referred to the Historical Commission, at which time it would be clarified that those buildings were not a part of this designation. He commented that he assumed that the owners were

aware of this, to which Ms. Cooperman responded that, should they proceed with the designation, the motion should clarify that only the church building was being designated at this time. Mr. Reuter asked if the decision letter sent to the owners after the meeting could reflect this, and Mr. Farnham confirmed that it would.

Mr. Steinke said that one of the points that the members of the Committee on Historic Designation had noted was that the stained glass windows that were discussed in the nomination had been removed and reinstalled in a parish church in North Carolina. Even though they were no longer a part of this church, their history and their creation by Paula Himmelsbach Balano was an important aspect of the site's history because she was the first female stained glass artist to own and operate her own studio.

Mr. Thomas asked if there was any further discussion, and there was none.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrated that the Ascension of Our Lord church building at 725 E. Westmoreland Street, located on the parcel at 701-65 E. Westmoreland Street, satisfied Criteria for Designation D, E, H, and J and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADDRESS: 2301-03 AND 2305-07 N BROAD ST**

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 2301 North Broad Associates; Broad Street Equities LLC

Nominator: Amy Lambert, The Keeping Society

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 2301-03 and 2305-07 N. Broad Street satisfy Criteria for Designation C and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the properties at 2301-03 and 2305-07 N. Broad Street and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the properties satisfy Criteria for Designation C and J. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that the properties reflect the distinctive residential form of high Victorian eclecticism. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the properties exemplify the upper middle-class housing that once lined and significantly characterized North Broad Street toward the end of the Gilded Age and before the turn of the twentieth century.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Oscar Beisert represented the nominator, the Keeping Society. No one represented the property owners.

Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society stated that he would like to recognize Amy Lambert's work in preparing the nominations. He added that the buildings are among the most distinctive residential properties remaining on North Broad Street.

Ms. Cooperman clarified that, in its discussion, the Committee on Historic Designation found that the buildings should not be classified as high Victorian eclecticism but instead as late Victorian eclecticism due to the date of construction. She noted that the distinction does not affect the applicability of Criterion C.

**ACTION:** Ms. Turner moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 2301-03 and 2305-07 N. Broad Street satisfy Criteria for Designation C and J and to designate them as historic, listing them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Long seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADDRESS: 4111-23 CHESTNUT ST**

Name of Resource: African Friends to Harmony Burial Ground

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania

Nominator: Donna J. Rilling

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4111-23 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation I and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate a section of the former African Friends to Harmony Burial Ground at 4111-23 Chestnut Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation I and J. Under Criterion I, the nomination argues that the property is located in the principal nineteenth-century African American neighborhood of West Philadelphia and served as a nondenominational burial site for the community until 1882. The nomination notes that 136 burials have been documented at the site with no record of disinterment. The nomination further contends that the benevolent society, the African Friends to Harmony, is significant under Criterion J for the role it played as a black mutual aid society and its establishment of the West Philadelphia burial ground. The western section of the former cemetery at 4125 Chestnut Street is not proposed for designation under this nomination. A large building was recently constructed on the site, likely disturbing any subsurface resources.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Donna Rilling represented the nominator. Ira Kauderwood represented the property owner, the University of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Kauderwood stated that the University of Pennsylvania only became aware of the property's historic significance in recent years, adding that some research has been conducted. He then expressed his appreciation for the wealth of additional information provided by this nomination. He noted that the university supports the nomination and that he looks forward to working with the Historical Commission in the future.

Ms. Rilling commented that she has been in touch with the pastor at Monumental Baptist Church and introduced the historian, Cheryl Morris Davis, from Mt. Pisgah AME Church. The two churches, she noted, contributed to the African Friends to Harmony benevolent society.

Ms. Morris Davis stated that she has been interested in her church's history for the past four or five years and met Ms. Rilling over email. She remarked that she is interested in learning more about the church's history and was amazed to learn about the African Friends to Harmony Burial Ground. She explained that she has information about approximately 2,000 individuals who were Mt. Pisgah AME Church members in a database, but noted that some records were destroyed when the church burned in 1943. Records that would verify some of Ms. Rilling's information, she added, have been lost.

**ACTION:** Ms. Turner moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4111-23 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation I and J and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADDRESS: 6907-11 TORRESDALE AVE**

Name of Resource: Tacony Post Office

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Eugene C. Cheung and Diana Kwok

Nominator: Alexander Balloon

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 6911 Torresdale Avenue, part of the larger property known as 6907-11 Torresdale Avenue, satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the former Tacony Post Office building at 6911 Torresdale Avenue, part of the larger property known as 6907-11 Torresdale Avenue, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. The former post office was constructed in 1935, during a time when Art Deco architecture was commonly used for commercial buildings. The nomination, while brief, argues that the building's façade is an example of Art Deco Classicism, incorporating classical elements of architecture, including pilasters, pediments, and capitals, in a stylized and streamlined form, resulting in a unique building for the Tacony Disston Community Development District.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Alexander Balloon represented the nomination. No one represented the property owner.

Mr. Balloon thanked the staff and Committee on Historic Designation for its assistance regarding the nomination. He commented that this will be the first addition from the Tacony neighborhood to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 25 years.

Mr. Thomas asked for public comment, of which there was none.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 6911 Torresdale Avenue, part of the larger property known as 6907-11 Torresdale Avenue, satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADDRESS: 1524-38 GERMANTOWN AVE**

Name of Resource: Gretz Brewery

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: TR-GRETZ LP

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1524-38 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J, but that the brick and concrete block building at the corner of Germantown Avenue and Redner Street, constructed in 1946 and identified in the nomination as Building 12, should be considered to be non-contributing for the purposes of the designation.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the former Rieger & Gretz Brewery complex at 1524-38 Germantown Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues that eight of the eleven surviving buildings that comprise Rieger & Gretz represent a distinctive period of Philadelphia's architectural heritage at a time when German brewers were commissioning buildings that employed a stylistic treatment greatly influenced by the *Rundbogenstil*. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the former brewing complex represents a significant period of Philadelphia's commercial and industrial heritage as an important American brewing center, home to one of the most prominent mid-sized breweries in Philadelphia, and represents the cultural, economic, and social heritage of brewing history in Philadelphia.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Oscar Beisert and Patrick Grossi represented the nomination. No one represented the property owner.

Ms. Chantry displayed several photographs on the projection screen of Building 12, which the Committee recommended for non-contributing status for the purposes of the historic designation. Mr. Grossi commented that he does not oppose Building 12 being classified as non-contributing, but noted that it historically had larger window openings which improved its overall appearance. He stated that the nomination was prepared on the Preservation Alliance's behalf by Mr. Beisert. Mr. Beisert asked if all new construction or alterations to the property would be reviewed by the Historical Commission, even if Building 12 is considered non-contributing. Ms. Chantry confirmed this. Mr. Thomas asked if Mr. Beisert is referring to review and comment jurisdiction. Mr. Grossi responded that the Commission should have plenary jurisdiction over any work to the entire property. Ms. Chantry agreed.

Mr. Thomas asked for public comment, of which there was none.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination that the property at 1524-38 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J, but that the brick and concrete block building at the corner of Germantown Avenue and Redner Street, constructed in 1946 and identified in the nomination as Building 12, should be considered to be non-contributing for the purposes of the designation, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADDRESS: 836 N PRESTON ST**

Name of Resource: Alexander McGaw house

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Sarah Allen Community Home

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 836 N. Preston Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J.

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the former McGaw Mansion at 836 N. Preston Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that 836 N. Preston Street is associated with mason and contractor Alexander McGaw, who owned the property from construction in 1890 until his death in 1905. In addition, the property relates to a significant period in which the Belmont neighborhood experienced immense growth and change as residential development increased around emerging institutions and new transportation connections. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination contends that the property is distinctive as an example of a freestanding Queen Anne Villa in a neighborhood that primarily transitioned to rowhouse and institutional development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Paul Steinke and Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia represented the nominator.

Mr. Steinke stated that he believes that the nomination speaks for itself and is pleased the Committee on Historic Designation has voted to recommend designation. He noted that the nomination was prepared on behalf of the Preservation Alliance by recent Penn Preservation graduate, Joshua Bevan. He added that Mr. Bevan could not attend the meeting because he has relocated to California.

Ms. Cooperman pointed out that the building is described as a villa but is actually a mansion. She contended that a villa is something that stands in much more open grounds. Ms. Cooperman added that this was only a technical point she wished to raise and does not speak in any way to a lack of merit of the building or the nomination.

Mr. Thomas commented that this building went through a very difficult period and was previously occupied as apartments. He continued that it then fell into ruin and was eventually restored as part of the overall hospital complex. Mr. Thomas inquired if the building was on the National Register of Historic Places. Mr. Steinke and Mr. Grossi replied that it was not. Mr. Steinke and Mr. Thomas discussed if the windows were original or had been replaced.

**ACTION:** Ms. Turner moved to find that the nomination that the property at 836 N Preston Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Long seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Various

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Lutheran Theological Seminary Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, I, and J; that the Garage, Staff House, 1973 addition to the Krauth Memorial Library, and 1974 additions to the Hagan Center should be classified as non-contributing in the inventory; and that the area of archaeological potential should be limited to the section of the historic district once owned by William Allen.

**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 are currently up for sale by the Lutheran Theological Seminary or have been recently sold to new owners.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Attorney Michael Phillips and Peter Knudsen represented the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, the owner of most of the property in the proposed district. Oscar Beisert and James Duffin represented the nomination.

Mr. Phillips stated that the Lutheran Theological Seminary fully supports the nomination. He continued that as Mr. Knudsen will explain, Lutherans are stewards of history and care very deeply for this entire campus. Mr. Phillips noted, however, they did make a few requests about the contributing and non-contributing nature of some of the properties, including the 1973 additions to the Krauth Memorial Library, 1974 additions to the Hagan Center, Staff House, and Garage. He stated that those were recommended as non-contributing by the Committee on Historic Designation. Mr. Phillips stated they have two other requests, the first being the area of archaeological significance and impact. He continued that they have no objection to the area of the former Mount Airy Estate and foundation area being designated. Mr. Phillips explained that Jim Duffin had sent him a proposed overlay the previous evening and it was not included in the Historical Commission nomination packet. Mr. Phillips noted that he now providing paper copies to the Commissioners that show the proposed area of archaeological potential. Ms. Cooperman asked Mr. Phillips if the map provided showed the area that corresponds to the area of the

historic Mount Airy Estate. Mr. Phillips confirmed that it did. He pointed to the projected image on the screen and indicated where the boundary would be.

Mr. Phillips stated that over time and its history the campus has expanded and evolved. He continued that it has been done respectfully and tastefully while keeping in mind the needs of the Seminary and for the greater good of the public. He continued that this is why they have changed and had to grow, and why they have now had to sell off some of their properties to continue to do the good they do. Mr. Phillips explained this relates to the one other request that the Seminary has, which is to designate the President's House as non-contributing due to the fact that it is a vacant property. He pointed out the building in aerial image of the proposed historic district. He continued that it is vacant, it is not one of the Furness buildings, and does not really have any street frontage, and it is not in great condition. Mr. Phillips noted that the Seminary is not planning anything right now, but in the future, if there is a need to develop or change that area, it would be advantageous to have it classified as non-contributing. He pointed out that, even if non-contributing, the Seminary would have to go through the design review process because there is a building on the site now. The Seminary is trying to avoid the cost and expense of the financial hardship posed by this vacant building. It is not one of the Furness properties and has been in poor condition for some time. He commented that it is not like the other properties, like those on Boyer Street, which have the street frontage; it is really set back and presents challenges. Mr. Phillips concluded that this is the only other request that the Seminary has in regards to the designation. Mr. Phillips asked Mr. Knudsen to briefly speak about the Seminary and its history and dedication to historic preservation.

Mr. Thomas asked Mr. Phillips to point out the different building he referenced earlier in the aerial photograph. Mr. Phillips pointed out the Garage, the Staff House, the 1973 addition to the Krauth Memorial Library, and the 1974 addition to the Hagan Center. Mr. Thomas inquired about the structure near the parking lot. Mr. Knudsen responded that it is a 1930s structure with five garage bays and is known as the Garage. Mr. Phillips also pointed out the location of the President's House. He stated that the Seminary agrees that everything else should be considered contributing.

Mr. Knudsen stated he wished to provide some background on the institution. He commented that many organizations will tell you they support historic preservation but that the Lutheran Seminary can demonstrate that they have "walked the walk rather than talked the talk." He continued that the institution is part of a 500-year tradition. Mr. Knudsen stated that recently two Lutheran seminaries, this one in Philadelphia and another in Gettysburg, have merged into what is now called the United Lutheran Seminary. He noted that he is the chairman of the Philadelphia corporation that controls all the assets of the Philadelphia organization and also on the board of the endowment foundation and the Seminary Ridge Preservation Foundation. Mr. Knudsen continued that the Seminary has invested nearly \$10 million over the years preserving the original Gettysburg Seminary building which played a significant role in the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg and have invested their capital to turn it into a museum and center for study with a particular focus on what the National Park Service cannot describe, the role of religion and the role of the abolitionist in Pennsylvania through the time of the Civil War and what happened prior to and after that conflict and how our society has evolved from some of those actions. Mr. Knudsen stated that they have been working with Oscar Beisert and his group. He stated that the Seminary is a treasure to the Mount Airy community. He continued that the Seminary is beginning to work on a master plan, which will include all of the historic structures. He noted that one of the considerations is removing the 1970s addition to Hagan Hall. Mr. Knudsen commented that one of the overriding things that might not signify historic preservation

but the Seminary wishes to keep the campus open to the community in any development they do. He continued there is no plan to put up walls and they are going to encourage the use of the Seminary to the people that reside nearby or have local activities. Mr. Knudsen explained that the most recent building, Brossman Hall, includes a first floor with public spaces that have no religious iconography and nothing designating it as a religious institution. He continued that the Seminary has opened up the building to the East Mount Airy Neighborhood Association, where it holds its meetings and the Seminary welcomes its role as a steward in the neighborhood. Mr. Knudsen invited questions about the Seminary's intent and stated he would be happy to respond.

Mr. Beisert, the nominator, stated that he is amenable and agrees with all of the proposed changes, but still believes the President's House is contributing and is in an important location. He noted that, although he realizes that the location may have to undergo development, the hope is that the President's House could be incorporated into future plans. He continued that in the future this may not work, so he is leaving it up to the Commissioners to decide whether the President's House is contributing to the historic district.

Mr. Thomas asked for public comment.

Dana Fedeli of the Northwest Preservation of Philadelphia organization stated that it is in full support of the nomination and thanked the Seminary and the nominator for their work on the nomination. She noted that several of her neighbors, who could not attend the meeting, support the nomination as well. Ms. Fedeli stated that they believe the President's House should remain standing and added that you can see it from the public right-of-way from the east and west and it affects the neighbors. She continued that her organization supports the nominator's view on this point to further the nomination, but personally feels that the President's House is contributing. Ms. Fedeli concluded by restating that her organization is in full support of the nomination.

David Traub of Save Our Sites spoke in support of the nomination. He inquired about the President's House, noting that he knew nothing about it, and requested that an image of the building be shown on the conference room screen for all meeting attendees to see. After seeing an image of the house, Mr. Traub concluded that the President's House should be saved as part of the complex.

Mr. Knudsen stated that he appreciated the concerns regarding the President's House and agreed that it is a beautiful home. He explained that, with all the changes that are occurring, the Seminary has a limited budget and it is just starting to build the endowment back up to where it can sustain its mission. Mr. Knudsen expressed concern that continuing to maintain the President's House will put a burden on the institution, but it will continue to do so as long as it is standing. He continued that the building has no value or use to the Seminary at this time. Mr. Knudsen stated that, in the master planning, the Seminary is looking at maintaining that corner, Germantown Avenue and E. Gowen Avenue, without any real intrusive structures on it, so if that building is removed, he would say there is a high probability that nothing will go up there that would change the character of the view coming up Germantown Avenue or change the character of the entire campus itself. Mr. Knudsen noted the Seminary is trying to do the best it can, but every nickel helps in what they are trying to do with the transition. He continued that knowing that the Seminary does not have to continue to renovate the President's House, as a renovation would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, to return it to any kind of use and to sell that property would have to include a large parcel of land and given the land value would

put that cost well above the median price of the neighborhood. Mr. Knudsen concluded that they are kind of in a corner of the issue of the President's House.

Mr. Duffin stated he wanted to speak partly as the nominator and partly as a member of the community. He continued that he grew up in a house that was around the corner from the Seminary and still owns a house in that location. Mr. Duffin noted that the Seminary has been an integral part of the life of Mount Airy. He explained that, although his family members were not Lutheran, they always went to different events at the Seminary and actually went to nursery school in the basement of Ascension Lutheran Church. Mr. Duffin added they always went to the Advent Vespers, which was a major community event, and the Seminary also participated in many of ecumenical events that happened at the church his family attended. He stated that what his family always loved about the Seminary was that it was always open for the community. Mr. Duffin described that he was involved with the Seminary when he worked with a group of people to organize historic house tour of the Gowen Estate and for 10 years they started the tour with a lecture at the Hagan Center, and the Seminary was always welcoming to his group. Mr. Duffin stated that he had to commend the Seminary for its willingness to work with the nominators and community. He continued that he is almost in awe of this compared to the other non-profits that have come before the Historical Commission with nominations. Mr. Duffin pointed out the Seminary is a rare exception. For a non-profit religious institution, it is nice to see a non-profit that is looking at the larger community. Mr. Duffin continued that this will become Mount Airy's first historic district if it is voted through, which would be a great accomplishment.

Ms. Fedeli stated that she wanted to follow up on the comment made by Mr. Knudsen about the President's House. She wished to clarify that her group, Northwest Preservation of Philadelphia, is not anti-development. She noted that to take down the President's House and not build anything is also distressing to the group. She stated that we embrace our history by keeping it there; they do not build things like that anymore. Ms. Fedeli noted that she appreciated Mr. Knudsen taking all of their thoughts into consideration and she hoped that, if it is demolished, that it be salvaged, but she would prefer if it remained.

Mr. Thomas stated that, if the Seminary sold the President's House, it would need to sell a significant piece of land with it. He continued that, if it is designated, the Seminary will be compelled to maintain a building that has no value to their mission. Mr. Thomas pointed out that the Historical Commission's job in looking at a district is not to pick and choose the buildings based on how nice they look or how important they are, but to look at the whole district that was proposed. Mr. Thomas stated that the Commission has dealt with this issue in the past. For example, Temple University came to the Commission many years ago with a request to demolish the Baptist Temple on Broad Street. He continued that Temple University told the Commission that the building had no purpose, was unable to be repaired, and was a drain on the non-profit institution. However, Temple was able to consider other alternatives. Mr. Thomas added that today Temple is proud of the building. Mr. Thomas emphasized that the Commission would not be doing their job if it did not help property owners look at alternatives for buildings. He noted that the President's House is a corner building; when you look at a district, what you first see is very important. Mr. Thomas continued that there are many different avenues that non-profits can take and there would need to be other options investigated before the Commission would agree that the building is non-contributing. He explained that the President's House plays a role in the district's satisfaction of the Criteria for Designation. It would be disingenuous and perhaps incorrect to designate this district without its critical pieces. Mr. Thomas stated that lots of things are possible, for example the property could be leased on a

long-term basis. He continued that, rather than having a hole there, this is a corner that has tremendous commercial capacity and there are commercial options that would be compatible with the Seminary's mission, whether it is lodging or a bookstore or other use. He added that this does not have to be at the Seminary's expense. He continued that they could retain ownership as other non-profits have done and utilize tax credits, or a limited partnership with a long-term lease. Mr. Thomas stated that he respected the Seminary position and all that the organization has done. He continued that there are alternatives to putting the property to good use and that the corner where the President's House stands is an important corner and should be left alone. Mr. Thomas stated that he believes the President's House should remain as part of the corner and that the nomination would be flawed without it. He stated that he agrees with classifying the other buildings that the Seminary has suggested as non-contributing. He added that the President's House and the corner are important to understanding the entire district. Mr. Thomas stressed that the Seminary should mine the economic value of what is there and offered assurances to the Seminary that the Commission will work with it rather than simply tell it what to do.

Mr. Knudsen stated he was in agreement with Mr. Thomas. He added that, on a personal note, the first time he entered the President's House was when he was 11 years old when his father was considering becoming President of the Seminary. Mr. Knudsen stated they are just scratching the surface of developing the property. He noted that the goal is to remain involved with the local community as has been the tradition for over a century. Mr. Knudsen commented that he does not see the President's House as a deal breaker and the Seminary can certainly use the property somehow. He continued that he will concede on that and he will not take a strong position against it. Mr. Knudsen stated that what his attorney and the team have worked up is perfectly satisfactory to the Seminary and will let the Seminary proceed with its task. He concluded that the Seminary looks forward to working with the Historical Commission and it intends to put a whole team together, including the neighborhood, as it evolves a master plan over the next couple years. He continued that he wants something that Philadelphia and our institution will be proud of and can serve as a model for development.

Mr. Phillips requested that the handout presented with the revised area of archaeological significance be appended to the nomination and any archaeology be restricted to the zone shown. Mr. Thomas inquired if the staff and nominators concur with the revised area. Mr. Farnham confirmed that they do.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination that the Lutheran Theological Seminary Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, I, and J; that the Garage, Staff House, 1973 addition to the Krauth Memorial Library, and 1974 additions to the Hagan Center should be classified as non-contributing in the inventory; and that the area of archaeological potential should be limited to the section of the historic district once owned by William Allen, specifically the area of his garden and house as mapped and presented to the Commission at the 9 November 2018 meeting, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:50 a.m., Mr. Mattioni moved to adjourn. Ms. Long seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES CITED IN THE MINUTES**

Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Roofs Guideline: Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving roofs—their functional and decorative features—that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. This includes the roof's shape, such as hipped, gambrel, and mansard; decorative features such as cupolas, cresting, chimneys, and weathervanes; and roof material such as slate, wood, clay, tile, and metal, as well as its size, color, and patterning. Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

### **CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION**

§ 14-1004(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.