

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

**16 OCTOBER 2019, 9:30 A.M.
1515 ARCH STREET, ROOM 18-029
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair	X		
Suzanna Barucco	X		
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.	X		
Bruce Laverty		X	
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.		X	
Douglas Mooney		X	

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner I
Sharon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner I

The following persons were present:

Baile Carey
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Nancy Pontone, Tudor East Falls
Deidre DeAscanis, JKRP Architects
Blake Krevolin, JKRP Architects
Sean McGovern, Fairmount Partners LP
Steven Peitzman, Drexel University
Steven Ortiz
Nick Korableva
George Gunning
Colleen Giarrocco
Wei Qian
Rodolfo & Hilma Williams
Deborah Cianfrani
Anthony L. Cianfrani

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 81-95 FAIRMOUNT AVE

Name of Resource: Terminal Warehouse Company Headquarters

Proposed Action: Amend boundary of individual designation

Property Owner: VMDT Partnership

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to amend the boundary of the designated property at 81-95 Fairmount Avenue to exclude the non-contributing portion of the property to the north and west of the historic buildings. In November 2016, the Historical Commission designated the property as historic and listed it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. While the entire tax parcel was subject to that designation, only the row of eight Federal-style buildings fronting Fairmount Avenue was categorized as historically significant in the nomination. The buildings immediately to the north, noted as 707-09 N. Front Street and 704-08 N. Beach Street in the nomination, were identified as non-contributing.

On 4 October 2019, the staff approved an application submitted by the property owner to demolish the non-contributing buildings, with the condition that the rear party walls of the historically significant buildings are properly sealed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends amending the boundary of the individual designation of the property at 81-95 Fairmount Avenue to exclude the non-contributing portion to the north and west of the row of eight Federal-style buildings.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:15:35

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the boundary amendment to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Architects Deidre DeAscanis and Blake Krevolin and owner Sean McGovern represented the property.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Barucco asked for clarification about the locations of the connections between the historic structures and the non-contributing structures.
 - Ms. Keller showed an aerial photograph and indicated that the historic buildings adjoin the non-contributing buildings at two locations. Those locations, she clarified, are where the rear walls of the historic structures intersect the non-contributing buildings. She further noted that the image shown comes from the nomination and identifies the significant and non-contributing resources.
- Mr. Cohen asked whether there is information in the nomination about the date of the non-contributing buildings.
 - The applicants responded that the buildings consist of an empty warehouse and garage.
 - Mr. Cohen asked if the Wagon House is the building with the pitched roof and again asked the date of the building.

- Ms. Keller stated that she does not see any information about the building in the nomination and reiterated that the staff approved a demolition permit for the building.
- Mr. Farnham commented that his memory is that the building to the east, the so-called Wagon House, is a late nineteenth-century building and the other buildings are twentieth-century structures.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The amended boundary would eliminate the non-contributing portions of the individually designation property at 81-95 Fairmount Avenue.
- The staff of the Historical Commission approved a permit for the demolition of the non-contributing structures on 4 October 2019.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The proposed amendment would exclude the buildings deemed non-contributing in the nomination and would not change the Historical Commission’s jurisdiction over the row of significant Federal-style buildings.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the boundary of the individual designation of the property at 81-95 Fairmount Avenue to exclude the non-contributing portion to the north and west of the row of eight Federal-style buildings.

ITEM: 81-95 FAIRMOUNT AVE					
MOTION: Amend boundary of individual designation					
MOVED BY: Barucco					
SECONDED BY: Cohen					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty					X
Elizabeth Milroy					X
Douglas Mooney					X
Total	3				3

ADDRESS: OVERBROOK FARMS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owners: See list on file at Historical Commission

Nominator: Philadelphia Historical Commission staff

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

OVERVIEW: This proposed historic district, located in West Philadelphia, is composed of 501 properties, approximately 90% of which are residential, with the remaining serving commercial and institutional uses. Thirteen properties are considered significant, 430 properties are considered contributing and 58 properties are considered non-contributing. An additional two properties are already listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

The proposed Overbrook Farms Historic District is bounded at the north to City Avenue, the east by N. 58th Street, the south by the property line of the properties facing onto Woodbine Avenue, and the west by N. 66th Street.

According to the nomination, Overbrook Farms is a neighborhood initially financed by investors known as the Drexel Syndicate and envisioned by developers Herman Wendell and Walter Bassett Smith that illustrates trends in suburban community planning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The nomination argues that many of the various architectural styles that were popular at this time (roughly 1893-1929) are represented in the Overbrook Farms Historic District. Although there are over 20 styles represented, the majority of houses are Colonial Revival or Tudor Revival. Other styles include Arts & Crafts, Dutch Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Prairie, Romanesque, and Shingle.

The majority of the buildings in the Overbrook Farms Historic District, particularly the dwellings, maintain their original form and materials. In many cases, additions and alterations were made within the period of significance (1850-1929). More recent alterations include replacement windows, glazed porches, and wing additions. Although modern alterations and materials are present, original or otherwise historic exterior materials dominate this district. This is likely owing to the predominance of masonry construction. The majority of buildings are in good to excellent condition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Overbrook Farms Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, F, H and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:11:45

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.

DISCUSSION:

- The Committee members noted that the nomination presents a very clear discussion of the development of the historic district. It provides information on the various models of houses and the architects to whom they are attributed.
- The Committee members noted that the developers were especially good at hiring very talented young architects, the work of whom is seen throughout the historic district.

- Mr. Cohen suggested that the staff pursue the publication of the nomination as a book.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Anthony and Deborah Cianfrani, the owners of 6381 Church Road, spoke in opposition to the historic district and argued that their house did not contribute to the historic district. The Cianfranis claimed that their house is a kit house.
 - The Committee explained the difference between a kit house, a house designed from a pattern book, and a house designed by an architect using the same design more than once. Mr. Cohen of the Committee stated that Cianfranis' house is not a kit house. It is an architect-designed house, albeit of a design that was used more than once. Mr. Cohen explained that this does not detract from the significance of the house.
- Steven Ortiz, the owner of 5985 Drexel Road, said that he purchased the house five years ago because he believed that it was a historic home that was going to be designated as contributing to the historic district. He expressed concern about the surrounding homes that he described as having fallen in to blighted conditions.
 - Mr. Farnham explained the mechanisms through which the Historical Commission and other City agencies can seek to compel delinquent property owners to maintain their houses.
- Thaddeus Squire identified himself as chair of the Overbrook Farms Club and also as the owner of a property within the proposed historic district. On behalf of the Overbrook Farms Club, he explained the outreach activities of the Registered Community Organization related to the proposed historic district, including a mailer, a survey and two community meetings to gather and provide information to the owners of properties within the proposed historic district. Mr. Squire explained that the Overbrook Farms Club was taking a neutral position on the historic district, choosing to educate their members rather than support or oppose the proposal. As a property owner and resident, Mr. Squire expressed his support for the historic district.
- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia spoke in support of the proposed historic district.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The nomination was very thorough, well documented, and interesting.
- The nomination includes extensive documentation of the developers, architects, and engineers who designed the buildings, landscapes, and infrastructure of the district.
- The nomination includes extensive documentation of owners and occupants of the residences and of the owners and operators of the businesses in the district.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination is an authoritative history of the development of Overbrook Farms, successfully demonstrating the district's satisfaction of Criterion for Designation A.
- The nomination demonstrates that the developers, architects, and engineers who developed the neighborhood are historically significant and that they designed and created a historically significant, cohesive collection of houses and other structures that represent several of the most popular architectural styles of the era, satisfying Criteria for Designation C, D, and E.

- The nomination demonstrates that the developers created a neighborhood that included innovative infrastructure systems, landscaping, and design, satisfying Criteria for Designation F
- The nomination demonstrates that the neighborhood includes several structures that, owing to their unique locations and singular physical characteristics, represent established and familiar visual features of the neighborhood, thereby satisfying Criterion for Designation H.
- The nomination demonstrates that the development of the Overbrook Farms exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, and historical heritage of the community, thereby satisfying Criterion for Designation J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the Overbrook Farms Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, F, H and J.

ITEM: OVERBROOK FARMS HISTORIC DISTRICT					
MOTION: Designate, Criteria A, C, D, E, F, H and J					
MOVED BY: Barucco					
SECONDED BY: Cohen					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery					X
Elizabeth Milroy					X
Douglas Mooney					X
Total	3				3

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Committee on Historic Designation are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the audio recording for this meeting. The start time for each agenda item in the recording is noted.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

§14-1004. Designation.

(1) Criteria for Designation.

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

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