

ADDRESS: 1535 W GIRARD AVE

Name of Resource: Charles T. Yerkes House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Willis W. Berry, Jr.

Nominator: Philadelphia Historical Commission staff

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1535 W. Girard Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property, constructed between 1864 and 1865, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, D, and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the property is significant for its association with Charles Tyson Yerkes, Jr., one of shrewdest businessmen and most influential mass-transit financiers of the late nineteenth century. While Quaker-born Yerkes got his start in business in Philadelphia, his influence extended beyond the city, and even the nation, as he would go on to give Chicago its “L,” and London its “Tube” systems. Through his questionable morals and unfettered ambition, Yerkes exemplified the Gilded Age robber baron to such an extent that he was immortalized, shortly after his death, in Theodore Dreiser’s *Financier* trilogy of the early twentieth century. The nomination argues that the free-standing townhouse, located along Girard Avenue, just west of Broad Street was designed in a high-style Italianate or Italian Renaissance style, satisfying Criterion D, and also exemplifies the development of West Girard Avenue as it transitioned from a rural area to a streetcar suburb and ultimately a fashionable thoroughfare for the nouveau riche elite in the second half of the nineteenth century, satisfying Criterion J.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1535 W. Girard Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and J.



NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 1535 W Girard Avenue

Postal code: 19130

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Charles T. Yerkes House

Current/Common Name: _____

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Building

Structure

Site

Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: excellent good fair poor ruins

Occupancy: occupied vacant under construction unknown

Current use: Residential

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1864 to 1886

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1864-65

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: _____

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: _____

Original owner: Charles T. Yerkes, Jr.

Other significant persons: _____

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (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; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (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.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization Staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Date 8/12/2019

Name with Title Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner Email Laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

Street Address 1515 Arch St, 13th Fl Telephone 215-686-7660

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19102

Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 8/12/2019

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 8/15/2019

Date of Notice Issuance: 8/15/2019

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Willis W. Berry Jr.

Address: 1535 W Girard Avenue

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19130

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: _____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

Designated Rejected

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All that certain lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, containing in front or breadth on W. Girard Avenue 21 feet and extending in length or depth northward between parallel lines at right angles with the said Girard Avenue, the westerly line thereof extending along the east side of 16th Street 150 feet to the south side of Flora Street.



6. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Located on the northeast corner of W Girard Avenue and N 16th Street, the property at 1535 W Girard Avenue is set within a context of predominantly three- to three-and-a-half-story rowhouses and other buildings of varying nineteenth-century architectural styles, mixed with newer construction buildings. Constructed c. 1865 in the high-style Italianate/Italian Renaissance Revival style by an unknown architect, the property at 1535 W Girard Avenue extends the full width to Flora Street and features a three and a half story, red brick main block with a gabled roof and coated brownstone façade; a full-width, three-story, brick rear extension with a sloped roof; and a two-story brick and iron-clad frame rear extension with a flat roof (see Figure 8).



Figure 1: View of 1535 W Girard Avenue looking northeast from the intersection of Girard Avenue and N 16th Street, May 2019.

South Elevation (W. Girard Avenue)



Figure 2: South elevation and details, May 2019.

The front, or south, elevation of the main block along W Girard Avenue features three vertical registers of round arch openings, with the door set in the easternmost bay of the first floor, and set on an intricate base with two arched basement windows. The first and second-story window and door openings are round arched and set within rectangular surrounds under projecting hoods with carved floral panels in the spandrels. The first-floor window and door surrounds also feature a central modillion keystone. The pair of full-lite wood doors, which are accessed by a wide brownstone stairway with curved bannisters and varved balusters, features a round-arched transom. The third-floor windows are also round-arch, but set within arched surrounds without the projecting hoods of the lower-floor windows. The second and third-floor window openings feature Gothic arch two-over-two windows, while the first-floor features arched one-over-one windows. Projecting belt courses run in line with the first-floor window sills and hoods, second and third-floor window sills, and above the third-floor windows. The latter serves as the sill for three, small, rectangular windows set beneath the projecting cornice, which is supported by four brownstone brackets that flank the windows.

West Elevation (N. 16th Street)



Figure 3: West elevation along 16th Street, showing the main block (to the right), the three-story rear extension (center), and a portion of the two-story rear extension (to the left), May 2019.

The west, 16th Street elevation of the main block is red brick and features a gently gabled roof broken by two chimneys connected by a parapet. The parapet and roof slopes are edged with simple crown trim, ending in the returns of the south and dentillated north elevation cornices. While the southerly half of the west elevation of the main block is unfenestrated, the northern half features rectangular windows with stone lintels and sills. A round-arched window is set below the broken parapet.

The west elevation of the full-width rear extension features five irregularly-spaced bays of rectangular windows with stone lintels and sills. No original windows remain in the openings. The basement windows have been infilled with glass block. The sloped roof of the ell terminates in a bracketed cornice that tops the west elevation.

West/North Elevations (Rear Extension)



Figure 4: Looking southeast at the rear (north) and west side elevations, May 2019.

Beyond the three-story rear extension is a two-story extension with a masonry base and an iron-clad frame upper floor supported by large brackets and thin metal posts. Historically, the upper floor extended out over the brick first-floor, leaving a porch which has since been infilled with a stuccoed enclosure. The metal cladding of the second floor, which is remarkably intact, features a series of paneled pedestals with Composite order pilasters and entablature. The second-floor features two windows per elevation.

The north portion of the property, which terminates at Flora Street, is undeveloped, as it was historically. It is surrounded by a stone retaining wall, which is partially rebuilt along 16th Street.



Figure 5: View south towards the rear, north elevation of the property from Flora Street, May 2019.



Figure 6: Details of the metal-clad second-floor rear extension, May 2019.

East Elevation

The east elevation of the property features a prominent mural, titled “Celebrate the Arts,” by artist Parris Stancell, installed c. 2004. Although stuccoed, the wall is not and was not historically a party wall, and features several window openings, including an arched window at the third-floor of the main block and several windows in the rear extensions, including a bay window at the second floor of the three-story portion.



Figure 7: East elevation, May 2019.

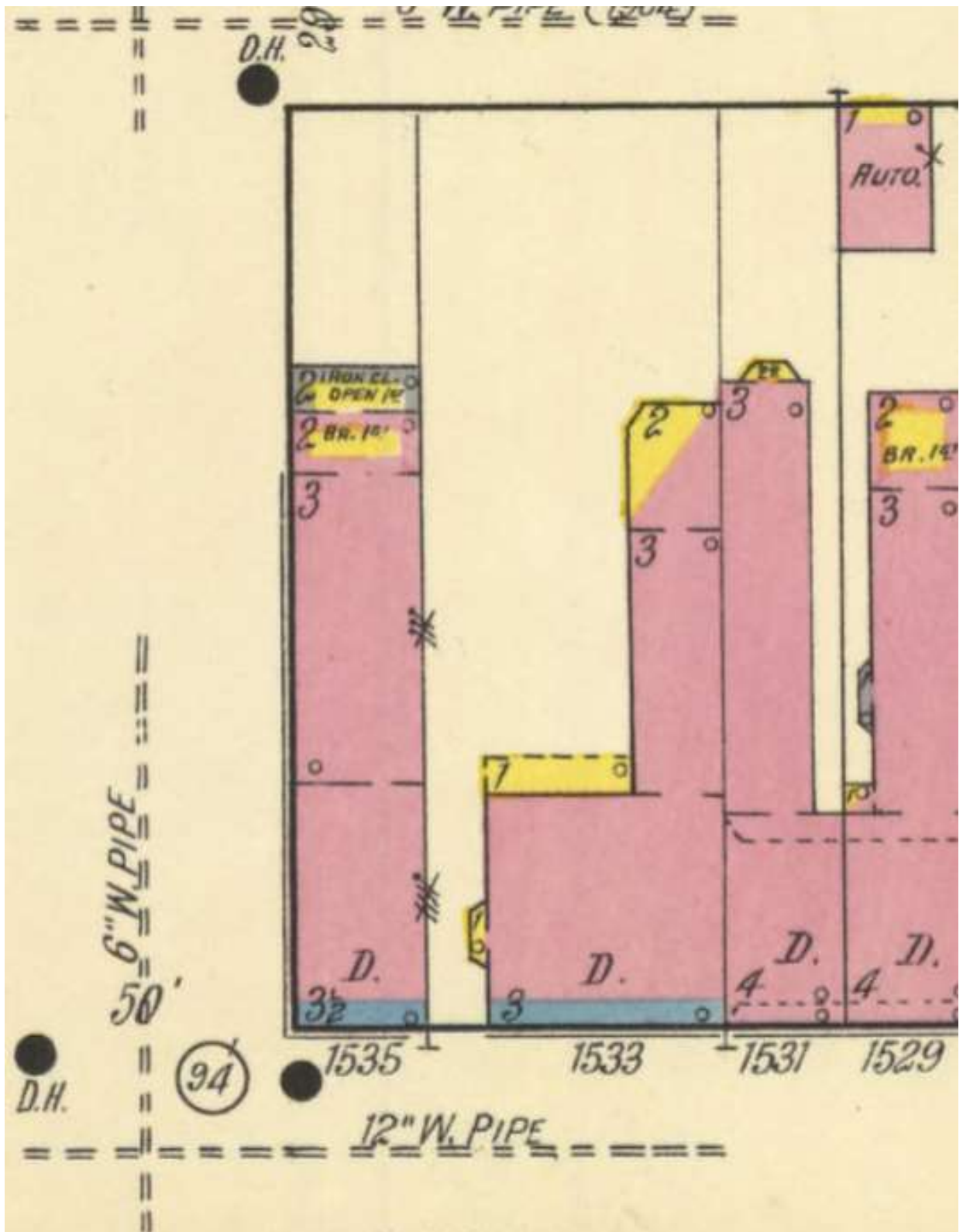


Figure 8: Detail of the 1918 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 7, sheet 613. Source: Pennsylvania State University Digital Archives.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The property at 1535 W Girard Avenue is historically significant and should be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Pursuant to Section 14-1004(1) of the Philadelphia Code, the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and J. The property:

- (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 last; and,
- (D) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (J) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Constructed between 1864 and 1865 for Charles Tyson Yerkes, the property at 1535 W Girard Avenue is significant under Criterion A for its association with Yerkes, one of shrewdest businessmen and most influential mass-transit financiers of the late nineteenth century. While Quaker-born Yerkes got his start in business in Philadelphia, his influence extended beyond the city, and even the nation, as he would go on to give Chicago its “L,” and London its “Tube” systems. Through his questionable morals and unfettered ambition, Yerkes exemplified the Gilded Age robber baron to such an extent that he was immortalized, shortly after his death, in Theodore Dreiser’s *Financier* trilogy of the early twentieth century. His home along Girard Avenue, just west of Broad Street, designed in a high-style Italianate style (satisfying Criterion D) likewise exemplifies the development of West Girard Avenue as it transitioned from a rural area to a streetcar suburb and ultimately a fashionable thoroughfare for the nouveau riche elite in the second half of the nineteenth century, satisfying Criterion J.



Figure 9: Charles T. Yerkes, from Catalog of Paintings and Sculpture in the Collection of Charles T. Yerkes, New York, 1904.

Born in Northern Liberties in 1837, Charles Tyson Yerkes, Jr. began his business career at age 17 as a clerk in a local grain brokerage in Philadelphia. In 1859, at the age of 22 and with a recent inheritance from an uncle who died the previous year, Yerkes opened his own stock broker’s office at 20 S. 3rd Street, and joined the Philadelphia Stock Exchange.¹

Although Yerkes was an early investor in Philadelphia’s street railways—and would be again later in his career—it was his success in government bonds following the Civil War that would truly galvanize his career.² By this time, Yerkes’ firm, C.T. Yerkes, Jr. & Co., had moved into banking, specializing in high-risk deals. In the financial turmoil that followed the Civil War, the City of Philadelphia issued a series of bonds, but their price on the open market stagnated between 65 and 85 percent, preventing the City from disposing of them.³ Yerkes, however, was able to sell the bonds at par, relieving the impasse, and earning him a reputation as a financial genius among the city’s political and financial leaders.

¹ Robert Forrey, "Charles Tyson Yerkes: Philadelphia-Born Robber Baron," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 99, no. 2 (April 1975): 227.

² Yerkes first invested in Philadelphia’s street railways in 1861 at age 24. Stephen Salsbury, "Charles Tyson Yerkes (1837-1905)," *American National Biography*, February 2000.

³ Forrey, op. cit. 228; and Salsbury, op. cit.

It is also around this time that Yerkes moved from 1320 N. 7th Street to a new home he had built at the corner of 16th and Girard Avenue between 1864 and 1865.⁴ Girard Avenue west of Broad Street had been laid out in the early 1840s following the establishment of Girard College, which pushed development further north into what was then a rural part of Penn Township. The openness of the area, known then as Green Hill, invited institutional development, including the John Notman-designed Green Hill Presbyterian Church (c. 1847) and St. Joseph's Hospital (c. 1849) on the 1600 block of W Girard Avenue, as well as the construction of large country estates (see Appendix).⁵ Half again as wide as most Philadelphia streets, Girard Avenue also proved ideal for the installation of one of the earliest horse-drawn streetcar lines in the city, which, after it opened in 1859, in turn elevated the thoroughfare's status and made it even more attractive to wealthy would-be residents.⁶ In the pre-automobile era, easy access to public transportation was viewed as an advantage rather than a liability, and Girard Avenue quickly became one of the most accessible and fashionable streets in North Philadelphia.⁷



Figure 10: Detail of the 1862 Samuel Smedley atlas, showing the trolley lines along Girard Avenue. The red dot shows the undeveloped parcel of 1535 W Girard Avenue, prior to construction of the existing building. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

It is along this newly-minted transportation corridor that Charles T. Yerkes, Sr., a banker, purchased two large pieces of property in the early 1860s.⁸ Within six months, Yerkes Sr. sold the vacant lot at the corner of Girard Avenue and 16th Street to his son, Charles T. Yerkes, Jr., keeping the double-width property and house at 1533 W Girard Avenue for himself.⁹ Construction of the house at 1535 W Girard Avenue was apparently complete by 1865, as Charles T. Yerkes, Jr. is listed in city directories as residing at

⁴ Yerkes' Civil War Draft Registration card as well as the 1863 and 1864 Philadelphia City Directories list Charles T. Yerkes, Jr.'s home as 1320 N. 7th Street. The 1865 city directory lists his home address as 1535 W Girard Avenue. Source: Ancestry.com. *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

⁵ James A. Jacobs, "Historic American Buildings Survey form, Green Hill Presbyterian Church," HABS No. PA 6668. Available: <https://cdn.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/pa/pa3800/pa3861/data/pa3861data.pdf>

⁶ Opened in 1859, the Richmond and Schuylkill River Passenger Railway along Girard Avenue would eventually connect to multiple other streetcar lines, including the Ridge Avenue and Broad Street lines, as well as the Girard Avenue Bridge that opened in 1875. "Girard Avenue Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form*, 1984.

⁷ George E. Thomas, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Girard Avenue Historic District," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 13 May 1985.

⁸ Deeds of Sale: James Clark to Charles T. Yerkes Sr., 10/20/1862; William Jarden to Charles T. Yerkes Sr., 4/11/1863.

⁹ Despite his Civil War Draft Registration Record, it does not appear that Charles Yerkes, Jr. ultimately served in the Civil War. Deed of Sale: Charles T. Yerkes, Sr. to Charles T. Yerkes, Jr., Deed Book ACH 125, p. 69, 10/7/1863.

that address following that date.¹⁰ In fact, it may have been his earnings as an early investor in Philadelphia's horsecar system that allowed Yerkes, Jr. to locate his home in a burgeoning streetcar suburb.

For the design of his new mansion, the ambitious young Yerkes chose a high-style version of the popular Italianate style, which drew inspiration from fifteenth-century Italian palazzo design, the classical detail, elegance, and gravitas of which were "deemed eminently suitable for symbolizing prosperity and social position in a limited space."¹¹ Dominant during the period from 1855 to 1880, the Italianate style lent itself well to numerous building forms, including urban and rural residences, commercial, and institutional buildings. Distinguishing characteristics of the urban townhouse adaptation of the Italianate style found at 1535 W Girard Avenue include its low-pitched roof with wide eaves supported by decorative brackets; tall, narrow two-over-two arched double-hung windows with decorative hoods; small, rectangular top-floor windows; a prominent entry with double doors set in a decorative surround; and decorative cast iron elements, a newly developed technology in this period.¹² A free-standing townhouse with a brownstone façade (now coated), the building at 1535 W Girard Avenue further presented a higher-style version of the often brick-fronted Italianate rowhouses found throughout Philadelphia.

During the Yerkes' tenure along Girard Avenue following the Civil War, North Philadelphia, and the city as a whole, experienced dramatic social and cultural change. Philadelphia witnessed a population boom brought on by a rapid influx of immigrants, the migration of freed slaves northward, and the general movement in the country from an agrarian to an industrial economy. Industry, fueled by breakthroughs in technology, flourished in Philadelphia, which had long been considered the "Workshop of the World." With changes came opportunity, and as capitalist empires were built, a new upper class emerged.¹³ In the late nineteenth century, the focal point of development for this nouveau riche class was around the intersection of West Girard Avenue and North Broad Street, where the Yerkes had established themselves in the preceding decades. At the peak of the Gilded Age, the axis of Girard Avenue and Broad Street would be connected by the great mansions of the Widener and Elkins families, constructed in 1887 and 1893, respectively (both now demolished, see Figure 11).



Figure 11: Detail of the 1895 G.W. Bromley atlas showing increased development along and around Girard Avenue. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

¹⁰ Despite the fact that Yerkes owned the property until 1886, city directories only list his address as 1535 W Girard Avenue through 1882. After that, his company remains in city directories, but Yerkes himself is noted to live in Chicago.

¹¹ Suzanne Spellens, "Italianate Architecture." *Brownstoner*, April 6, 2016.

¹² "Italianate Villa/Italianate Style 1840 - 1885." *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide*. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/italianate.html>.

¹³ E. Digby Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1958).

As a descendant of Welsh farmers and tradesmen who came to the New World in the seventeenth century and converted to Quakerism after the arrival of William Penn, Charles T. Yerkes, Jr. did not technically fit into either the world of the old money or nouveau riche families of Philadelphia.¹⁴ Nevertheless, he came to exemplify the latter; he was solidly a man of his time, taking full (and not always legal) advantage of the monumental growth and industrialization of Philadelphia and, eventually, beyond.

Previously admired, Yerkes' reputation in Philadelphia suffered a substantial blow in 1871, after the Chicago Fire caused panic at the Philadelphia Stock Exchange. Yerkes, who was overcommitted financially, was unable to pay back the money he had been paid for municipal bonds.¹⁵ Authorities found that Yerkes, in collusion with city treasurer Joseph F. Marcer, had misused considerable public funds.¹⁶ Yerkes denied the charges, but was arrested and indicted along with Marcer for embezzlement. During his trial, where he was found guilty of larceny and sentenced to two years and nine months at Eastern State Penitentiary, Yerkes was admonished by the judge, who said, "If your case points no other moral, it will at least teach the lesson long needed at the present time, that the treasury of the city is not to be invaded with impunity, under the thin disguise of a business transaction, and that there is still a law to vindicate itself and protect the public."¹⁷

After serving only seven months in prison, Yerkes was pardoned and publicly exonerated of all charges. Although the cause for the pardon was cited as "loss of business," Yerkes biographer John Franch noted that it may have actually involved a deal of political corruption itself: "In return for a pardon from the governor, Charles [Yerkes] agreed to furnish information that would neutralize [the governor's] principal enemies..."¹⁸ Nevertheless, local support for Yerkes at the time was strong, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* opining that Yerkes and Marcer were "...the unfortunate victims of unforeseen circumstances," as well as the "first victims of the wholesome spirit of reform which demanded a blameless administration of the municipal government."¹⁹

Following his release, Yerkes made assignments of his property—including his home at 1535 W Girard Avenue—to an attorney, and set to work recouping his losses.²⁰ As he recounted to an English journalist in 1901, "By the time I was thirty-five, I had accumulated a fortune of some \$1,000,000, which in those days was looked upon as a large fortune. Then, by a stroke of ill-luck, I lost it all, and had to start the world over again."²¹ Luckily for him, the Panic of 1873, brought on by the failure of Philadelphia's Jay Cooke & Co., allowed Yerkes to buy stock cheaply and quickly regain much of his lost fortune.²² In October 1873, a judge released him from bankruptcy, cancelling the \$478,000 Yerkes owed the city. Out of bankruptcy, he was able to resurrect his brokerage firm, Charles T. Yerkes, Jr., & Company, and was eventually readmitted to the Stock Exchange.²³ By December of 1874, he was also able to buy back his property at 1535 W Girard Avenue.²⁴

¹⁴ Forrey, op. cit., 226.

¹⁵ Salsbury, op. cit.

¹⁶ For a more detailed account of Yerkes' crimes, see Forrey, op. cit., 228.

¹⁷ Ibid., and Eastern State Penitentiary, Convict Register, February 10, 1872.

¹⁸ John Franch, *Robber Baron: The Life of Charles Tyson Yerkes* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008): 56.

¹⁹ "Pardoned! Jos. F. Marcer and Chas. T. Yerkes, Jr.," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 September 1872, p.1. and "The Pardon of Marcer and Yerkes.," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 September 1872, p.4.

²⁰ Philadelphia Deed Book JAH 226, p. 160: Charles T. Yerkes to Bankruptcy, 3/18/1872; Philadelphia Deed Book FTW 26, p. 1, John Sparhank, George J. Gress and J. Davis Duffield, assignees in Bankruptcy of Charles T. Yerkes, Jr. to Ludovic C. Cleeman, 2/5/1873; Philadelphia Deed Book FTW 32, p. 446: Charles T. Yerkes, Jr. to Ludovic C. Cleeman, 4/15/1873.

²¹ Franch, op. cit., 78.

²² The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "Charles Tyson Yerkes," Encyclopædia Britannica, December 25, 2018.

²³ Franch, op. cit., 81.

²⁴ In December 1874, Ludovic C. Cleeman, Yerkes' assignee, sold the property at 1535 W Girard Ave to John S. Hopkins, the trustee for Susannah G. Yerkes, who in turn was nominated to take the conveyance of the property on behalf of her husband,

Although he tried for a time to go straight, implementing strict rules for deals on his firm and opening a new office on Chestnut Street in the ultra-respectable “Banker’s Row,” Yerkes soon fell into his old ways and began associating with William Kemble, a notorious politician and savvy manager of the city’s burgeoning horsecar lines.²⁵ Kemble, who had pushed through a charter for the patriotically-named Union Passenger Railway Company during the Civil War, became Philadelphia’s foremost horsecar operator. After falling out with the more conservative directors of the Union Railway, who objected to Kemble’s aggressive drive for a monopoly over Philadelphia’s transit systems, Kemble left and formed a competing company, the Continental Passenger Railway Company. He soon recruited Yerkes in his fight against the Union Railway, making Yerkes a director of the Continental, and allowing him to make a fortune buying stock in the company at bargain basement prices.²⁶

Kemble would also introduce Yerkes to “traction twins” Peter A.B. Widener and William L. Elkins, who shared Kemble’s belief that investment in streetcar lines was the way of the future. Kemble coached the three younger men on how to run a railroad, including the importance of economical operation and keeping tight control over the firm’s costs.²⁷ Since railway companies required charters from the legislature, which could also take them away, Kemble also stressed the significance of shrewd political maneuvering, favors, and, if necessary, blackmail or bribery. The latter landed Kemble in jail for a time, but that minor setback did not stop him from relentlessly pursuing his goal of controlling the Union Railway and forming a monopoly over Philadelphia’s streetcar systems.

Yerkes’ break from Kemble, Widener, and Elkins came around 1880, after Kemble’s ultimate takeover of the Union Railway. Yerkes, one of the largest stakeholders in the Continental Passenger Railway, did not feel that stakeholders were adequately compensated for the Union deal and complained loudly and publicly about the situation. The “big three” in turn saw Yerkes’ complaints as disloyal, and his Philadelphia streetcar career came to an abrupt end.²⁸ Kemble, Widener and Elkins would go on to become the biggest names in Philadelphia’s traction history, forming the Philadelphia Traction Company in 1883 with the purpose of acquiring existing streetcar lines and converting them to cable operation (an investment that proved less profitable than some of their other ventures). After Kemble’s death in 1891, Widener and Elkins abandoned cable operation for electrification, and within three years of the formation of their Union Traction Company in 1895, would come to control nearly all the lines in the city.

Life for Yerkes, meanwhile, had become not only uncomfortable professionally, but personally. In 1881, he divorced his wife of 21 years and married a younger woman with whom it was rumored he had been having an affair for some time. Yerkes and his new bride started afresh in the Midwest, aided in establishing a new career by his Philadelphia connections to Widener and Elkins, as well as financier Anthony J. Drexel, who wrote him a letter of introduction to use in Chicago, where he settled in 1882.²⁹

In Chicago, Yerkes initially opened a stock and grain brokerage and dabbled in gas franchises for a time, but he quickly returned to his true love, street railways. Through a series of complex financial deals involving numerous business associates (including long-distance partners Widener and Elkins), political maneuvering, bribery, and blackmail, Yerkes soon gained control of two of the three main street railway companies that covered the north and west sides of Chicago. Within a decade, he had modernized and

Charles. Philadelphia Deed Book FTW164, p.316, 12/5/1874. Yerkes regained control of the property, and owned it until January 1886, when he conveyed it to Thomas Twibill. This deed was not recorded, but is discussed in the deed of sale between Thomas Twibill and M. Adele Kremer, Philadelphia Deed Book GGP109, p. 214, 2/1/1886.

²⁵ Franch, op. cit., 85.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Franch, 87.

²⁸ Franch, 88.

²⁹ Forrey, op. cit., 231.

integrated the transit systems, converting the horsecar lines first to cable and then to electric traction, and extending the tracks from less than 75 miles to 575.³⁰ In 1897, he opened the elevated Union Loop around the central business district, a move that connected the city's otherwise detached business areas on the north, west, and south sides and changed the direction of future development of the city.³¹

Now a Chicago landmark, the Loop, or "L," greatly increased the rapid transit system's convenience, but the turmoil around its construction and operation fomented political distrust, amplified Yerkes' negative public image, and cemented his robber baron reputation. Such was Yerkes' infamy that several pages were devoted to his wheelings and dealings in British journalist William T. Stead's 1894 expose on Chicago's political corruption and underground economy, *If Christ Came to Chicago*. "Of the predatory rich in Chicago there are plenty and to spare," Stead wrote, "but there is one man who stands out conspicuous among all the rest... I refer to Mr. Charles T. Yerkes."³² An "incurable suspicion" and anger mounted against the cavalier Yerkes who, "cheated his stockholders and partners, insulted newspaper editors, bribed city officials with impunity, and retaliated against customers who complained about inadequate services and broken-down equipment."³³ After he attempted to force a bill through state legislature that would have given transit companies a 50-year extension of their franchises, Yerkes' opponents united against him in a two-year court battle. Finally defeated, in 1899 the traction magnate sold out to the inflated tune of \$20 million, and moved to New York.³⁴

In New York, Yerkes installed his wife in a luxurious Fifth Avenue mansion overlooking Central Park, outfitted with his extensive art collection and lavish furnishings collected from Europe and Asia (see Appendix); he set up his favorite mistress, 19-year-old Emilie Grigsby, in a similarly-adorned flat two blocks away on Park Avenue.³⁵ But rather than settle into a quiet—if multi-amorous and hedonistic—retirement in New York, the 63-year-old Yerkes soon departed for London. Biographer Robert Forrey speculates that Yerkes was encouraged to make the move by Miss Grigsby, a social climber who wanted to establish herself in English society after being prevented from doing so in New York by the public revelation of her mother's past as a brothel owner.³⁶

In 1900, after surveying the densely-populated city of London from the summit of Hampstead Heath, Yerkes was convinced to invest in the development of the London underground railway system. Using the techniques he learned in Philadelphia and honed in Chicago, Yerkes established the Underground Electric Railways Company of London and took over control of the existing District Railway and several other partially-built but poorly-funded lines.³⁷ As he had in the United States, Yerkes used complex financial arrangements to finance the construction of new lines and to electrify the District railway.

The "Tube," as it became known—along with the defeat of rival financier J.P. Morgan in the process—would be Yerkes' swan-song. He died in a New York hotel apartment in 1905 of kidney disease, prevented from returning to his Fifth Avenue mansion by his estranged wife. His legacy would live on, however, not only in the form of public transit systems worldwide, but—surprisingly—in the field of astrophysics. In 1892, in an effort to improve his public image, Yerkes had decided to bankroll the world's

³⁰ Harold L. Platt "Charles Tyson Yerkes and Street Railways." In *Encyclopedia of Chicago*. (Chicago Historical Society, 2005). <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/2416.html>.

³¹ Patrick T. Reardon, "The Elevated Loop, a Chicago Landmark in Everything by Name." *Chicago Tribune*, September 25, 2017. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/commentary/ct-perspec-elevated-loop-chicago-landmark.0924-story.html>.

³² William T. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago: A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who Suffer* (London: The Review of Reviews, 1894).

³³ Platt, op. cit.

³⁴ Salsbury, op.cit., 3.

³⁵ "Conquistador of Metroland." *The Economist* Vol. 413, No. 8918 (December 17, 2014): 71.

³⁶ Forrey, op.cit., 238.

³⁷ "The American Father of the London Underground: Charles Tyson Yerkes." *The American* (January 22, 2019). <https://www.theamerican.co.uk/pr/ft-Charles-Tyson-Yerkes-London-Underground>.

largest telescope at the urging of astronomer George Ellery Hale and University of Chicago president William Rainey Harper. He ultimately footed the bill for not just a telescope, but an entire observatory. The Yerkes Observatory, a 77-acre facility in Williams Bay, Wisconsin, credited as the “birthplace of modern astrophysics,” opened in 1897 (see Appendix).³⁸ Yerkes also contributed significant funds to ensure that the Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago, and served on the Exposition’s Committee on Fine Arts. An avid art collector, much of his fine collection was displayed at the World’s Fair.³⁹ Upon his death, his grand mansion and art collection were supposed to be left to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a hospital in the Bronx founded in his name. These lofty posthumous philanthropic goals never came to fruition, however; Charles T. Yerkes, Jr., it turns out, had already spent most of his fortune and died nearly in bankruptcy. His art collection had to be auctioned off to meet claims against the estate. Unlike other Gilded Age magnates, Yerkes was “fated to be remembered, when he is remembered at all, as a Robber Baron and philanderer nonpareil.”⁴⁰

Constructed between 1864 and 1865, the high-style Italianate townhouse at 1535 W Girard Avenue stands as Philadelphia’s last physical reminder of the ambitious, prolific, and deeply flawed Charles T. Yerkes, whose experiences in Philadelphia shaped his tumultuous future as one of the most notorious, if now forgotten, traction magnates of the Gilded Age.

³⁸ Elizabeth Howell, “Yerkes Observatory: Home of Largest Refracting Telescope.” Space.com (August 16, 2014). <https://www.space.com/26858-yerkes-observatory.html>.

³⁹ A self-published catalog of Yerkes’ art displayed at the Chicago Columbian Exposition is available at Archive.org. Charles T. Yerkes, “Catalogue from Collection of Charles T. Yerkes, Chicago, U.S.A.,” 1893. <https://archive.org/details/cataloguefromcol00yerk>

⁴⁰ Forrey, op cit., 239.

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL IMAGES



Figure 12: Green Hill Presbyterian Church, Girard Avenue Above Sixteenth Street. Source: Presbyterian Historical Society, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.



Figure 13: St. Joseph's Hospital, 16th & Girard Avenue. Source: Library Company of Philadelphia, Item No. pdcc00846.

Number	7128 Charles S. Yerkes Fire Engineer	
Age	34 years	
Native of	Penn	
Bound	Not	
Trade	Doctor	
Complexion	Dark	
Eyes	Brown	
Hair	Brown	
Stature	5 ft. 11 in. Foot 4 in.	
Mark	Not any	
No. of Convictions	1st	
Parents	Father living	
Books	None	
Writes	None	
Temperate	Temperate	
Married	Married by 2 children	
Property	5 1/2 + 1/4 and part since W. K. Kitchin	
Crime	Larceny	
Sentence	2 years and 9 mos } Delinquent Oct. 1872 and fined with } commitment	
County and Court	Phil a - O. B. C. J.	
Sentenced	February 10, 1872	
Received	" " 18	
Remarks	9. 27. 72 Paid	

Figure 14: 1872 conviction, Eastern State Penitentiary. Source: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; *Convict Reception Registers*; Series: 15.56. Available on Ancestry.com. *Pennsylvania, Prison, Reformatory, and Workhouse Records, 1829-1971* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016.



Figure 15: The Yerkes Observatory, opened in 1897, and photographed here in 1925. Source: Frank Elmore Ross, University of Chicago Photographic Archive, apf6-00296, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.



Figure 16: Yerkes' New York mansion, c. 1901. Constructed in 1898, the mansion was an upgrade from his Philadelphia townhouse, reflecting his The house and the adjacent art galleries built for Yerkes' collection were demolished in 1925 to enlarge the flower garden of neighbor Thomas Fortune Ryan. Source: Museum of the City of New York. http://collections.mcny.org/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult_VPage&VBID=24UP1GG3PPFF&SMLS=1&RW=1366&RH=603

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Correspondence received by
the Historical Commission
regarding the nomination
for 1535 W Girard Avenue

Letter of opposition from owner

Reply | Delete Junk | ...



Fwd: 1535 W Girard 19130

W w1535@netscape.net
Thu 8/22, 7:13 PM
Laura Dipasquale

Reply |

Inbox

You replied on 9/5/2019 11:47 AM.

Label: 50 Day Inbox Purge - Allow Dumpster Recovery (1 month and 20 days) Expires: 10/11/2019 7:13 PM

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

-----Original Message-----

From: w1535 <w1535@netscape.net>
To: Laua.dipasquale <Laua.dipasquale@phila.gov>
Sent: Thu, Aug 22, 2019 7:04 pm
Subject: [1535 W Girard 19130](#)

Read the nominating petition and am opposed to the certification, for what it's worth [Nix opinion]. Please send me any and all information, including, text, letters, emails, summaries of meetings and or conversations concerning my property and names of any and all persons involved with this nomination. Curious, i its so historic, going back over 200 years, why did the city wait so long? Is it because the area is now becoming gentrified and Philadelphia in the process of slowly forcing Blacks out? On that part of Girard, I'm about the only one left except for Margaret at 1529 whose house is probably equally historic and more archetechelly suited than mine because it's been that way since built, while I, sustanially changed mine, back in 1988 and just a few years ago, when your police action tried to take down scaffolds to repair work on the front I see this action as just another attempt to frustrate me and dive me out of a neighborhood I've lived in for 40 years.

So why am I so adamantly apposed; well, among other things, I'll be 77 Friday, and have no pension. Your position will devalue my property [and 1533 which I also own and can get more if I can sell both for development]. This is, no doubt, a taking. Not many folks would want toto deal with all the bureaucracy involved with a historic property close by; your actions cuts my pool of perspective buyers to just a niche. I do't care about a some sort of plaque or some advice from some city folks that just steer you to one of there people that will, undoubtedly, charge some exhorbadant amount for "expert professionals and preservationists" ; that's about all the City offers, as far as I know. Your listing **does** NOT require any governmental agency to monetarily help homeowner to maintain or preserve the property, give any tax breaks I do know that some of the things that must be considered is the the commissions actions should not be unduly oppressive and/or cause substantial hardship upon the property holder, ie., considering the economic impact and governmental intrusion involved with the regulation. I'm told that my insurance will dramatically be increased as well. This place has been lived in for over 200 years, is now a multi-family dwelling [7 apartments and 3 rooms, I believe] Does this certification apply to the inside or just the outside? There is a good chance that renovations and or additions, at least some of the updates don't match historic requirements. Especially if the repairs were made in different decades (think: a 60's style kitchen with an 80s style bathroom to now) and I may not be able to change or add-on to their home without going through more and additional bureaucracy requiring special permits [public hearings] added to the ordinary L&I bureaucracy. Is this designation for local significance or national registry?

I submit that it will do all of these things, and more. Also I'm thinking about the extent to which the government physically intrudes, maybe to the point of ordering allowance of strangers/folks to look around [for surveillance/inspection/compliance-without a warrant]. And, what about the mural on the East side of he building, am I to be responsible for that? And what if I can sell 1533,[R-4, multi family, I think] what will be the responsibility as far as that mural is concerned-can its be covered? You can bet this action will mount to much governmental intrusion constituting Police Action and fines against me or whomever is inside should I not comply with requirements. For now, these are just some of my concerns and will most certainly have many more as I look into this further,

Other than this email to you and contacting the commission through their site, is there anything else I must do to make my ;position clear?

PHILADELPHIA PA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Philadelphia Pa Historical Commission

vs

Willis W Berry, Jr and

1535 W. Girard Ave

Philadelphia Pa 19130

DEFENDANT MEMO TO HISTORICAL COMM, DESIGNATION WITH REASONS & OBJECTIONS, RE: 1535 W GIRARD AVE. 19130

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE ABOVE COMMISSION

BELIEVE THE ORDINANCE/LAW AND STATUTE YOU ARE OPERATING UNDER IS SEVERELY UNCONSTITUTIONAL amounting simply to a *regulatory taking* or *inverse condemnation*. See Oliver Wendell Holmes in *Pennsylvania Coal* made the following often quoted pronouncement

The general rule at least

is, that while property may be regulated to a certain extent, if regulation goes too far it will be recognized as a taking.... We are in danger of forgetting that a strong public desire to improve the public condition is not enough to warrant achieving the desire by a shorter cut than the constitutional way of paying for the change

Bottom Line: The US Supreme Court has indicated that decisions on takings should be made on a case- by-case basis. It was for about 3 years until Justice Nix overturned the first opinion by Justice Larson - It should be looked at again. Motive:

This appears to be a "hostile designation" — many in the area have died, moved on, abandoned or sold their property. Im there with my son and another gentleman who has helped me for almost as long as I've been there fixing up one thing or another but its like that game Whac-A-Mole - as soon as you knock down one thing, something else comes up. I'm trying to hold on as long as I can, am mindful of offers from various buyers and things needed to be done. I ask myself if there is some sort of nefarious agenda here, and why shouldn't I, I mean, why now? Is it because the property has gone up in value and I'm not supposed to benefit from this even after 40 years of expense, sweat equity and lost fingers working on the building? If the property had so much true civic and/or cultural value, why take so long to get around certifying it [can it be because the original owner was of dubious character]? It appears the

motive may not be preservation but to stop change and prevent me from getting back some of the money that's been thrown into the building for the past 40 years.

Historic preservation should be restricted to places and buildings that are of true significance. Doesn't Yerkes already have a street in Philadelphia named after him [right near Stenton & Washington Lane in Mt Airy]? If he was such a revered icon, loved in the community, important leader or person of the community, wouldn't Chicago, NY & London have something named for him? He lived in all of those places; how about his prison cell at Eastern State, is there some sort of plaque or to show he slept there? They have something at Eastern State for Willie Sutton don't they; was Sutton thought of more highly? Waiting over 150 years to certify, why cant you wait maybe another 20-30 years when I'm no longer around? It appears the city's interest in preserving this so called, historic structure particular, is surely not compelling, especially after waiting so long to take action on the designation.

One may easily conclude, the Commission intends to block further construction in an evolving area even as housing prices skyrocket and sites worthy of landmark status become increasingly rare. One may also conclude that the Commissions actions amounts to a sort of EXCLUSIONARY ZONING often noted as NIMYism [Not In My Neighborhood] by the historical society in an area that is trying real hard to "increase access, diversity and inclusion as well as block development. This may strike some to suspect motives rooted in racial and class exclusion. Cultural icons and marvels are important to protect but historic preservation can inhibit cities from growing and striving. Some historic sites keep society grounded by showing the past accomplishments and what we've overcome, but they can inhibit society by limiting, diversity, interaction of different peoples and innovation, further if people want to preserve a historic building, then they ought to buy it. Besides, Once a structure is built it automatically becomes a candidate for "historic" designation as it ages. Our cities are not museums but living and evolving centers of commerce and culture and City preservation commissions have and use their police powers to enforce high costs, fines and even jail on the residents for non compliance with Commission rules or guidelines. The Commission should be required to examine the expense [time, architects, legal, engineering], fees and costs and economic challenges to the owner as well as viability and benefits of a historic designation and there are no zoning, process, or tax-credit incentives on the local level specifically designed to encourage owners to preserve historic properties. Historic preservation, when it interferes with homebuilding, can worsen a city's shortage of homes, driving up rents and pushing out low-income residents. See <https://www.sightline.org/2017/12/19/when-historic-preservation-clashes-with-housing-affordability/> WHEN HISTORIC PRESERVATION CLASHES WITH HOUSING AFFORDABILITY Author: Dan Bertolet

The building not what it originally was, has been substantially changed since 1988 [31 years ago - less then 50 years]. It has been altered to suit the evolving needs of the area and businesses that have occupied it over time, including significant changes to the entrance area, windows and doors. Much money has already gone into the buildings which needs constant upkeep. To declare it historic could cause it to be forcibly neglected because of feared expense as well as delay in getting highly scrutinized bureaucratic approvals for even small cosmetic repairs. Your imposition of rigid controls over demolitions, remodeling can and most likely will dramatically limit repair, maintenance, upkeep and redevelopment. What if I wanted to put air conditioners in windows or how about the iron bars on the first floor windows and front doors,

will I have to get special permission from the Historical Commission or city to put them in or to keep the bars? To rehab it in a historically "correct" way—that is, through the stringent application standards for rehabilitation—would be extraordinarily challenging where traditional financing options would be scarce, and historic preservation tax credits are not a likely source of financing which is prohibitively expensive for this owner. Redevelopment is subject to stringent review, historic protections on such buildings often serve to put them in a sort of purgatory, ie., John Coltrane House. Old and deteriorating buildings then become safety hazards because the owner can't afford retrofitting and isn't allowed to alter or demolish the building that could be used to create the next cultural icon. Conventional financing for these projects is equally challenging - exceptionally challenging considering the economic circumstance given the decline in lending for small projects and the unfavorable economics of rehabilitation in distressed markets and income of this particular owner who is now 77 years old.

Further, I argue the building [not presently contemplated to be demolished] is nice but needs work which was going on outside before L & I stopped us working and took down scaffolds some years ago. Thanks to many hours of work by myself and dedicated friends back in 1988, we got it to where it is now. It should not be considered as an exceptional individual example of the architecture back in 1864 but sort of a hybrid taking it into the 90's. The facade was dramatically changed from the chipping, falling down and deteriorated brownstone to a Drivet, foam, nylon fabric, stucco like exterior. It should not be deemed to be of any exceptional cultural significance. Plenty of similar three-story brownstones, brick buildings are nearby, in better shape, even more architecturally significant and more aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Put simply, 1535 is no longer such a uniquely significant resource.

Of course I appreciate the recognition but really, all I can say is, thanks but no thanks. Preservation laws are a blunt instrument and I just don't want the aggravation. Neither I or my building should be put through the level of bureaucratic delays, wasted time going back and forth down town, one meeting to another trying to make futile attempts to navigate through a permit minefield, scrutiny and legal mum-bo-jumbo as well as other expense to get work done. Your designation, further, adds layers of discretionary approvals not only from your commission, but also from various community groups. The need to get added approval and permits gives NIMBY opponents a powerful tool to prevent additional development, fails to protect, and often block desirable development to save buildings of large and small little value. See the John Coltrane house - nothing done or can be done because unnecessary expense and bureaucratic red tape - amounts to a taking from the owner. Everything old ain't good. <https://philly.curbed.com/2017/7/31/15967490/historic-preservation-philadelphia-how-to-nomination-guide>.

Buildings of little historical worth are preserved by rules and regulations that are used as a pretext to slow competitors, maintain monopoly rents, and keep neighborhoods in a kind of aesthetic stasis that benefits a small number of people at the expense of many others by keeping the area frozen in time. If today's rules for historical preservation had been in place in the past the buildings that some now want to preserve would never have been built. There is a very simple way that truly great buildings can be preserved—they can be bought or their preservation rights paid for. A building worth preserving is worth paying to preserve. Attempting to force costs on owners almost inevitably leads to a system full of lawyers, high

transaction costs and delay. Other cities have bolstered preservation incentive packages with tax credits or abatements, whether Philadelphia's task force will advocate for instituting such a tax credit or amending the 10-year tax abatement to incentivize more preservation has not been decided, as far as I know.

Conclusion

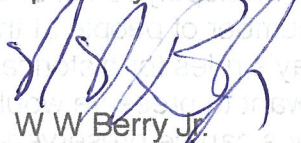
Lastly; suppose you were me, would you honestly welcome the designation? How would you feel if you woke up one day and found your house subject to 40+ pages of rules and regulations? Burdensome regulations that require you to get permission from a government committee to work on and improve your home the way they want rather than the way you want and can afford, ie., get approval for paint color, or the style and brand of windows you buy, a certain type of door knob, etc. If you don't comply, you will be subject to inspections and intrusions by unwanted, condescending, self-righteous, self-aggrandizing city officials out to do seemingly justifiable work, face fines, attorney's fees, costs, police action and even JAIL, and also, have your financials subject to subpoena if you claim financial hardship. The City can also claim "necessity" through suspect L&I enforcement of "dangerous conditions" that the building or structure must be worked on to remove a public safety hazard - expenses charged to the owner who may be subject to suite or costs - recouped by imposing a lien and judgment on your property.

My original opposition should be documented through email sent back in August 22nd. 2019 and in remarks sent through the commissions site. I wanted to attend your first meeting but had a medical emergency and ask that you accept my apology. I'm 77 years old, no pension, get SS and *may* get a few rents. As mentioned, been working at this red lined 1535 W Girard Ave. 40 years, lost part of my fingers doing so. Watched the area go from all Black to predominately other. Now that people care about North Phila. and my area and developers are putting \$\$\$\$ in the area, you want to make me jump over more as well as higher hurdles. Can't you find some way to give an old Vet. a break?

Consider the below and attached emails as being part of this memo expressing my dissent/objection to your designation [Historicalhttp://www.vlrc.org/articles/33.html](http://www.vlrc.org/articles/33.html) Also see: **Six Reasons to Say No to Local Historic Districts** By

[[[Some of the information in my memo has been cut, pasted then modified from various sites and information taken from the internet - when feasible, sites are provided]]].

Respectfully Submitted



W W Berry Jr.

To a new date.

-----Original Message-----

From: Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>
To: w1535@netscape.net <w1535@netscape.net>
Sent: Tue, Sep 17, 2019 11:24 AM
Subject: Re: Re: 1535 W Girard 19130

Hi Mr. Berry,

I'm so sorry to hear that. To clarify, when you say continue, do you mean proceed with the review (making your objections known) or postpone the matter?

Wishing you a quick recovery!

Thanks,

Laura

Laura DiPasquale Zupan
Historic Preservation Planner II
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Fl.
215-686-7660

From: w1535@netscape.net <w1535@netscape.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2019 11:16 AM
To: Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>
Subject: Re: Re: 1535 W Girard 19130

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Fell out on street hour ago. At Temple Hos. Cant be at meeting tomorrow to object. Please continue and make my objections known. Let me know new date. \$strenuously Object. Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>
To: w1535@netscape.net <w1535@netscape.net>
Cc: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>
Sent: Thu, Sep 5, 2019 11:47 AM
Subject: Re: 1535 W Girard 19130

Dear Mr. Berry,

Thank you for your email. I understand your concerns and hope to address them as best I can, both through this email and through the attached FAQs.

From: w1535 <w1535@netscape.net>
To: Laura.Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: 1535 W Girard 19130
Date: Wed, Oct 9, 2019 9:50 am

Feeling about the same i was before it happenrd. Was at Temple about 5 days, a lot of tests but couldnt find anything. Think I was exhausted maybe dehydrated, not eating right, worry, stress - a lot of stuff may have causrd it. Thanks for your concern.

So tje new date will be in November, same time, same place. You waited 150 years to do this cant see why you guys cant wait till im no longer around. Let me know for sure, thank?

-----Original Message-----

From: Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>
To: w1535@netscape.net <w1535@netscape.net>
Sent: Wed, Oct 9, 2019 09:30 AM
Subject: Re: Re: Re: 1535 W Girard 19130

Hi Mr. Berry,

I hope you are doing well and have recovered from your fall. I wanted to let you know that I presented your request to continue the review of the nomination at the Committee on Historic Designation's September 19th meeting. They agreed, and recommended that the nomination be continued and remanded to their November 13th meeting. The Historical Commission will review your request and the Committee's recommendation at its meeting this Friday. They will not be voting on the merits of the nomination or making a determination of whether or not to designate the property. Are you amenable to a November 13th Committee review? That would then place the nomination on the Commission's December 13th agenda.

Thanks!

Laura

Laura DiPasquale Zupan
Historic Preservation Planner II
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Fl.
215-686-7660

From: w1535@netscape.net <w1535@netscape.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2019 5:39 PM
To: Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>
Subject: Re: Re: Re: 1535 W Girard 19130

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First, I want to stress that the nomination is limited to the exterior of the property at 1535 W Girard Avenue only. While this would include any development on the land around the building, it would not impact development of the parcel at 1533 W Girard Avenue unless that development proposed to broach the property line and attach to 1535 W Girard Avenue. The Historical Commission also has no jurisdiction over the use of the property.

The mural on the side of the building is not considered a historic element. You may keep it as long as you want to, or you may propose to alter it in some way or paint over it completely. The Historical Commission would only be looking at the impact of any proposed alterations to the wall itself, not the mural.

The nomination was researched and written solely by the staff of the Historical Commission, which is charged with identifying and nominating potentially historic properties to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. There has been no correspondence with outside parties in regards to the nomination.

While you are correct that local designation does not currently provide financial or other incentives, the City is taking steps to improve that. The Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation issued a series of recommendations earlier this year for ways to incentivize historic preservation. This property is, however, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which does offer potential incentives in the form of historic preservation tax credits for qualified substantial rehabilitation projects.

We will distribute copies of your email to the members of the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Laura DiPasquale Zupan
Historic Preservation Planner II
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Fl.
215-686-7660

From: w1535@netscape.net <w1535@netscape.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2019 7:13 PM
To: Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>
Subject: Fwd: 1535 W Girard 19130

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

-----Original Message-----

From: w1535 <w1535@netscape.net>

To: Laua.dipasquale <Laua.dipasquale@phila.gov>
Sent: Thu, Aug 22, 2019 7:04 pm
Subject: 1535 W Girard 19130

Read the nominating petition and am opposed to the certification, for what it's worth [Nix opinion]. Please send me any and all information, including, text, letters, emails, summaries of meetings and or conversations concerning my property and names of any and all persons involved with this nomination. Curious, it's so historic, going back over 200 years, why did the city wait so long? Is it because the area is now becoming gentrified and Philadelphia in the process of slowly forcing Blacks out? On that part of Girard, I'm about the only one left except for Margaret at 1529 whose house is probably equally historic and more archetechelly suited than mine because it's been that way since built, while I, sustanially changed mine, back in 1988 and just a few years ago, when your police action tried to take down scaffolds to repair work on the front I see this action as just another attempt to frustrate me and drive me out of a neighborhood I've lived in for 40 years.

So why am I so adamantly apposed; well, among other things, I'll be 77 Friday, and have no pension. Your position will devalue my property [and 1533 which I also own and can get more if I can sell both for development]. This is, no doubt, a taking. Not many folks would want toto deal with all the bureaucracy involved with a historic property close by; your actions cuts my pool of perspective buyers to just a niche. I do't care about a some sort of plaque or some advice from some city folks that just steer you to one of there people that will, undoubtedly, charge some exhorbadant amount for "expert professionals and preservationists"; that's about all the City offers, as far as I know. Your listing **does** NOT require any governmental agency to monetarily help homeowner to maintain or preserve the property, give any tax breaks I do know that some of the things that mustt be considered is the the commissions actions should not be unduly oppressive and/or cause substantial hardship upon the property holder, ie., considering the economic impact and governmental intrusion involved with the regulation. I'm told that my insurance will dramatically be increased as well. This place has been lived in for over 200 years, is now a multi-family dwelling [7 apartments and 3 rooms, I believe] Does this certification apply to the inside or just the outside? There is a good chance that renovations and or additions, at least some of the updates don't match historic requirements. Especially if the repairs were made in different decades (think: a 60's style kitchen with an 80s style bathroom to now) and I may not be able to change or add-on to their home without going through more and additional bureaucracy requiring special permits [public hearings] added to the ordinary L&I bureaucracy. Is this designation for local significance or national registry?

I submit that it will do all of these things, and more. Also I'm thinking about the extent to which the government physically intrudes, maybe to the point of ordering allowance of strangers/folks to look around [for surveillance/inspection/compliance-without a warrant]. And, what about the mural on the East side of he building, am I to be responsible for that? And what if I can sell 1533, [R-4, multi family, I think] what will be the responsibility as far as that mural is concerned-can its be covered? You can bet this action will mount to much governmental intrusion constituting Police Action and fines against me or whomever is inside should I not comply with requirements. For now, these are just some of my concerns and will most certainly have many more as I look into this further,

Other than this email to you and contacting the commission through their site, is there anything else I must do to make my position clear?