

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

**5 DECEMBER 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 9:35 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Comment</b>
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
- Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner I
- Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner I

The following persons were present:

- Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
- George Thomas, CivicVisions, LP
- Andrew L. Wade
- David Burkholder, Esq., Wisler Perlstine, LLP
- John Ratanaprasatporn
- David Groverman
- Victor Gur
- Michael Phillips, Esq., Obermeyer
- Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
- S. Peitzman
- Starr Herr-Cardillo, Hidden City
- Whitney Martinko
- Nancy Pontone
- George Poulin, University City Historical Society
- J.M. Duffin
- Katie Law
- Caitlin McCabe
- David S. Traub, Save Our Sites
- Jessica Senker
- Elizabeth Stegner, University City Historical Society

Celeste Morello  
Alex Balloon, Tacony CDC

## **CONTINUANCE REQUESTS**

### **JEWELERS' ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Proposed Action: Designation

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the Jewelers' Row Historic District and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The proposed district is located on Sansom Street primarily between S. 7<sup>th</sup> and S. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and along a portion of S. 8<sup>th</sup> Street between Chestnut and Walnut Streets. The nomination contends that the proposed district, which is composed of 57 buildings constructed between 1800 and 2015, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, G, H and J.

Under Criteria A and J, the nomination states that as the site of Carstairs Row, Printers' Row, and Jewelers' Row, the district has significant character, interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of Philadelphia and exemplifies the community's cultural, economic, and historical heritage. In support of Criteria C and D, the nomination asserts that the architectural resources of Jewelers' Row span more than two hundred years and include significant examples of multiple building types and architectural styles important to Philadelphia's history, including (but not limited to) Federal rowhouses, Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial lofts, and Depression-era and postwar commercial fronts. The district includes surviving works by a number of architects whose careers have significantly influenced the architectural development of the City, including Thomas Carstairs, Collins & Autenrieth, Theophilus P. Chandler, Frank T. Watson, Louis Magaziner, and possibly even Frank Furness, supporting an argument for Criterion E. Furthermore, under Criteria H and G, the nomination contends that owing to its unique location along a block of Sansom Street offset from Center City's otherwise regular grid and distinguished by an iconic and distinctive streetscape, the district represents an established and familiar visual feature of Philadelphia and constitutes a distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural and architectural motif.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Jewelers' Row Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, G, H and J. The staff proposes updating 113-15 S. 8<sup>th</sup> Street as a non-contributing addition to 731 Sansom Street. The staff also proposes that all buildings be categorized as Significant, Contributing or Non-Contributing without separate determinations for façades and storefronts.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING:** 00:03:30

#### **PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Mehley presented the continuance request for the district.
- Attorney Michael Phillips represented the majority of the property owners in the proposed district.
- Paul Steinke represented the nominator, the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Phillips said architectural historian, George Thomas, is working to complete a response report to the nomination document and they plan to have a completed draft by the end of the year to provide to the CHD and Commission for their consideration. Mr. Phillips stated they are requesting a continuance to the February 2020 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Mr. Steinke said the Preservation Alliance does not object to the continuance.
- Mr. Cohen inquired how long Jewelers’ Row has been under consideration by the Historical Commission.
  - Ms. Mehley responded that notice was sent to the owners in December 2018.
  - Mr. Cohen said this seems like a long continuance.
  - Mr. Phillips pointed out that this is a district rather than an individual property and that there are 62 properties under consideration. He stated that the report is close to being done and has met with Mr. Thomas. Mr. Phillips added that the owners are eager to proceed but want to make sure that the nomination is fully analyzed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Katie Law, resident of Jewelers’ Row, opposed the continuance.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The response report from George Thomas will be complete at the end of 2019.
- The Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission will have time to review and consider the response report prior to the February 2020 Committee and March 2020 Commission meetings.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The review of the nomination should be continued until February 2020.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue the review of the Jewelers’ Row Historic District and remand it to the February 2020 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

<b>ITEM: JEWELERS’ ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT</b>					
<b>MOTION: Continue and remand to February 2020 CHD meeting</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b>					
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	5				1

**ADDRESS: 1810 CHESTNUT ST**

Name of Resource: Samuel T. Freeman & Co. Auction House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: The Business Known As "C"

Nominator: Staff of the Historical Commission

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1810 Chestnut Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criterion for Designation D. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that architectural firm Tilden & Register designed the Samuel T. Freeman & Co. Auction House in 1923-24 in Renaissance Revival style; the building's style offered a sense of distinction and grandeur to a company with a legacy of auctioning the exclusive collections of Philadelphia's elite.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1810 Chestnut Street satisfies Criterion for Designation D.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING:** 00:09:018

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Keller presented the continuance request for the property.
- No one represented the property owner.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Keller explained that the property is currently or has recently changed owners, and the request was submitted by the attorney representing Freeman's Auction House, the owner at the time of the issuance of the notice. She added that the staff does not oppose the request.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- It typically supports continuance requests proffered by property owners.
- The property would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction during the continuance period.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue the review of 1810 Chestnut Street and remand it to the January 2020 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

<b>ITEM: 1810 CHESTNUT ST</b>					
<b>MOTION: Continue and remand to January 2020 CHD meeting</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Milroy</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Barucco</b>					
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	5				1

**ADDRESS: 1045-49 SARAH ST**

Name of Resource: Otis Elevator Company Boiler and Engine House  
 Proposed Action: Designation  
 Property Owner: Antal Group Inc.  
 Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia  
 Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1045-29 Sarah Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former boiler and engine house of the Otis Elevator Company, built in 1904, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, G, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that the property is significant in the development of Fishtown/Kensington as part of the Morse Elevator Works and the Otis Elevator Company. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the building is representative of industrial power plant design of the early twentieth century. Under Criterion G, the nomination argues that the building is part of the earliest, extent, coherent industrial complexes in Fishtown, but does not propose to designate the complex as a district. Many of the other properties associated with the former Morse and Otis Elevator Companies were individually designated in 2015 and 2016.

The Committee on Historic Designation reviewed this nomination on March 12<sup>th</sup> and recommended that the property satisfies Criteria D and J. The owner, who did not attend the Committee’s review, requested that the Historical Commission remand the nomination to the Committee to provide him with an opportunity to participate in the review. The Commission granted the request, sending the nomination back to the Committee.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 10:55:00**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Chantry presented the continuance for the property.
- No one represented the property owner or nominator.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Chantry explained that neither the property owner nor his attorney was able to be present at today’s meeting, but that both are allegedly available for the 19 February 2020 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

- Ms. Cooperman noted that the Committee already reviewed this nomination at its 12 March 2019 meeting, but that the owner subsequently requested that the matter be remanded back to the Committee so that he and his attorney can be present for the discussion.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Steven Peitzman commented that the Commission should develop a better set of guidelines for continuance requests.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- It typically supports continuance requests proffered by property owners.
- The property would remain under the Historical Commission’s jurisdiction during the continuance period.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue the review of 1045-49 Sarah Street and remand it to the February 2020 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

<b>ITEM: 1045-49 SARAH ST</b>					
<b>MOTION: Continue to February 2020 CHD meeting</b>					
<b>Moved BY: Barucco</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Milroy</b>					
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	5				1

**ADDRESS: 1617 WALNUT ST**

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Rosenberg Family Partners

Nominator: Staff of the Historical Commission

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1617 Walnut Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criterion for Designation D. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the Seeburger & Rabenold-designed building conveys the aesthetics of the Italian Renaissance Revival style through its classical temple form, verticality, and classical detailing.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1617 Walnut Street satisfies Criterion for Designation D.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:15:50**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Keller presented the continuance request for the property.
- No one represented the property owner.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Keller noted that this is the first request for a continuance from the property owner. She added that the owner is unable to attend the meeting owing to a health issue and would like an opportunity to participate in the process.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- It typically supports continuance requests proffered by property owners.
- The property would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction during the continuance period.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue the review of 1617 Walnut Street and remand it to the March 2020 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

<b>ITEM: 1617 WALNUT ST</b>					
<b>MOTION: Continue and remand to March 2020 CHD meeting</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b>					
<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney					X
Total	5				1

**ADDRESS: 315 AND 317 N 33RD ST**

Name of Resource: Marot-McIlvain Residence

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Caroline Millett

Nominator: Benjamin Leech, University City Historical Society

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 315 and 317 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, located in West Philadelphia's Powelton Village, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of

Historic Places. The three-story residential twin, the former Marot-McIlvain Residence, was constructed circa 1860 in the Italianate Villa Style. The nomination states that the property meets Criteria C and D for its distinct architectural form and style, and also represents the least altered Italianate Villa style building with a central tower in the Powelton neighborhood. The nomination further contends that the property meets Criterion J, for its close association with the Marot and McIlvain families, two of Powelton Village's historically notable families.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 315 and 317 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING:** 00:17:20

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Mehley presented the continuance request for the properties.
- George Poulin of the University City Historical Society represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Mehley explained that the building's ownership changed around the time the notice letter was sent to the property owner. She explained that the new owner contacted the Historical Commission the day before the meeting to request the continuance but did not ask for a specific date for the new meeting.
- Mr. Poulin echoed the request that the nomination be calendared for a future meeting.
- Ms. Milroy inquired if the new owner purchased the entire property.
  - Ms. Chantry responded that she spoke to the new owner the night before the meeting and he had only recently learned of the notice letter and proposed nomination. She stated that she believed he only purchased half the twin property, 315 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. Ms. Chantry explained that the new owner lives in Boston and could not attend the Committee meeting on short notice.
  - Ms. Mehley clarified that the building is technically two properties but at the time of notice had one owner.
- Mr. Laverty noted that the current owner indicates that he was never told by the seller of the nomination. He inquired if there is any recourse for the Committee to compel that or any penalty for non-disclosure.
  - Ms. Mehley responded that the notice was sent on 5 November and the property was sold on 8 November. She continued that it is possible that the seller did not have the notice from the Historical Commission at the time of the sale.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The new owner of 315 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street was not aware until after he purchased the property that it was under consideration for designation. The new owner requested additional time to better understand the process and implications.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination review should be continued to the January 2020 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue the review of 315 and 317 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and remand it to the January 2020 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

<b>ITEM: 315 AND 317 N 33RD ST</b>					
<b>MOTION: Continue to the January 2020 Committee on Historic Designation meeting</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Laverty</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Barucco</b>					
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	5				1

**ADDRESS: 2527-37 N BROAD ST**

Name of Resource: The E.A. Wright Bank Note Company

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 2509 N Broad Street Assoc.

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2527-37 N. Broad Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Built in 1913, the former E.A. Wright Bank Note Company building is a six-story, reinforced-concrete factory building with a stylized facade on North Broad Street. Under Criterion D and E, the nomination contends that the subject building was constructed during the formative phase of reinforced-concrete construction and was completed by William Steele & Sons Company during a period of great success for the firm. The nomination asserts that the E.A. Wright Bank Note Company building exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the printing and engraving industry in Philadelphia, specifically, the manufacture of bank notes, stock certificates, and diplomas, satisfying Criterion J.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2527-37 N. Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and J.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING:** 00:22:20

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Victor Gur and David Groverman represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert and James Duffin represented the nominator.

## DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Gur said he bought the building two years ago and is planning to redevelop the building as residential or commercial. He described his general plan to rehabilitate the building.
- Mr. Groverman stated that he is assisting Mr. Gur with the redevelopment of the building. He noted that they are aware of the implications of the historic designation of the property and said that, based upon their development plans, they believe that a designation would not interfere with their plans. He added they are interested in pursuing a federal historic designation for the property as well as a façade easement. Mr. Groverman said he wanted to know how a federal designation and façade easement would be impacted by the local designation. He said they are not looking to fight the designation but are looking to obtain the best economic outcome for the owner and partners.
  - Ms. Cooperman inquired if the owner had spoken to the staff about these questions.
  - Mr. Groverman confirmed they had preliminary meetings with staff about this. He added that the work the nominators have done has provided a lot of information to assist with a federal designation.
  - Mr. Cooperman stated that the local designation and the federal designation, a façade easement, and tax credits are different things and one does not necessarily preclude the other.
  - Mr. Cooperman explained that, when the property owners are ready with their development plans and building permit application, those plans will be reviewed in a separate process that involves the staff and, if necessary, the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission.
  - Mr. Farnham added that for projects that are seeking Historic Preservation Tax Credits and are subject to the Philadelphia Historical Commission review, the staff coordinates with the State Historic Preservation Office, which undertakes the initial reviews for the tax credits. He added that both offices work together so the owner is not caught trying to work with two contradictory sets of requirements. Mr. Farnham said that, if a project is approved for Historic Preservation Tax Credits, then it is almost assured to be approved by the Philadelphia Historical Commission. He concluded that the designation of this property to the local register will not have negative implications in terms of seeking Historic Preservation Tax Credits.
- Mr. Cohen thanked the nominators for their work. He said that visually this building stands out in its location because of its height and design, and because of the history the nominators brought out such as the use of reinforced concrete. He commented that the criteria correspond to its importance as an engineering specimen, to the engineer, and to its role in local community heritage. Mr. Cohen noted that the nomination taught him more about bank note printing than he had ever known before. He said that, under Criterion J, the stronger argument is its prominence as a key to the industrial history of the neighborhood. He pointed at that its visual landmark presence in this area of N. Broad Street is the stronger argument versus its history in the bank note industry. Mr. Cohen commented on the architectural terminology used in the nomination. He said the nomination contained an impressive description and an intensely researched story of the industry.
- Mr. Cohen inquired if William Steele & Sons was acting as architect and engineer or only as engineer.

- Mr. Beisert responded that it was a good question and said that for a lot of these industrial buildings like this they would have an architect in their office and the company would serve as architect and engineer.
- Mr. Cohen said that, since design is central to the nomination’s argument, it would have been good to know more about the designer.
- Mr. Cohen stated that he thought it was a solid nomination and is glad the nominators put it forward.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property owners are not opposed to local designation and may pursue designation on the National Register of Historic Places and a façade easement separately.
- The nomination is well researched and effectively supports the Criteria for Designation.
- The nomination provides in-depth information on the bank note printing industry in the twentieth century.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The building was constructed during and is representative of the formative phase of reinforced-concrete construction, satisfying Criterion D.
- The construction was completed by William Steele & Sons Company during a period of great success for the firm, satisfying Criterion E.
- The building exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the printing and engraving industry in Philadelphia, specifically, the manufacture of bank notes, stock certificates, and diplomas, satisfying Criterion J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2527-37 N. Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and J.

<b>ITEM: 2527-37 N BROAD ST</b>					
<b>MOTION: Designate, Criteria D, E and J</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Milroy</b>					
<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney					X
Total	5				1

**ADDRESS: 4017-21 CHESTNUT ST**

Name of Resource: New Tabernacle Baptist Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: West Park Church of Deliverance Association Inc.

Nominator: Arielle Harris, University City Historical Society

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 4017-21 Chestnut Street in the University City neighborhood of West Philadelphia, formerly known as New Tabernacle Baptist Church, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that New Tabernacle Baptist Church satisfies Criteria A and J by exemplifying not only what became a common practice of merging Baptist congregations in nineteenth-century Philadelphia but also the migration of Philadelphians to West Philadelphia in the mid to late nineteenth century. The nomination asserts that the New Tabernacle Baptist Church satisfies Criteria D and E as an important example of Gothic Revival architecture, designed by noted church architect and native Philadelphian Frank Rushmore Watson. In addition, the nomination argues that the church has continuously occupied this parcel along Chestnut Street since 1860, thereby satisfying Criterion H as a recognizable visual feature of its local community and City of Philadelphia.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4017-21 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, H, and J.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:39:25**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- George Poulin of the University City Historical Society represented the nomination

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Cooperman noted that there was no owner or owner's representative present and inquired if the staff heard from the owner.
  - Ms. Mehley said the staff not heard from the owner.
  - Mr. Poulin said they had reached out to the owner, via phone and email, when they began work on the nomination. He stated they communicated their intent but unfortunately did not have any additional dialogue with the property owner.
- Mr. Poulin said the University City Historical Society (UCHS) is the nominator, but the nomination's author Arielle Harris could not attend the meeting. He stated that he could not speak to the technical aspects of the nomination but that UCHS believes the building is worthy for designation based on the criteria outlined in the nomination, particularly as an intact Gothic Revival structure along Chestnut Street. He stated that the building tells the story of West Philadelphia, the merging of congregations, and architect Frank Watson.
- Ms. Milroy thanked the nominator for their work and said that it was absolutely fascinating how peripatetic the Baptists were in the nineteenth century. She added that it is a strong nomination.
- Mr. Cohen said that the nomination contains a wonderful amount of research and was not aware that the building's specification and drawings existing all this time. He commented on the interior's "funky" design. He questioned the building

measurements provided in the nomination, that the towers are 87 feet tall and the building is 60 feet wide.

- Mr. Poulin stated that there were originally bell towers and this may reflect the building height when they were in place.
- The Committee members agreed the measurements still seemed odd.
- Mr. Cohen noted that the nomination wrongly describes features as turrets in the description, but they are steeples. He said that the building is late Gothic Revival. He noted that there is a slight double curve in the top of some of the arches that distinguishes the mid nineteenth-century Gothic Revival from the later nineteenth-century Victorian-era Gothic Revival. Mr. Cohen pointed out the tracery on church's rear elevation and noted its originality. He stated that he does not think that he has seen anything quite like it. He added that there is a lot of originality in this building and that simply labeling the building "Gothic Revival" does not quite capture the true style.
- Mr. Cohen said that he was curious and would have liked to have seen information on the identities of the Baptists in Philadelphia in the 1890s. He added that he was not quite sure how to think about them demographically.
- Mr. Cohen said he agree with all of the Criteria for Designation cited in the nomination. He stated that it is nominated for A, D, E, H, and J, but questioned A and H.
- Mr. Laverty said he would argue for H. He pointed out that it stands out on the block and is different than any other church in the city. The building has a very strong visual impact.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The nomination is well researched and strong overall.
- Although the church is identified as Gothic Revival, there are architectural details that point to the influence of earlier mid nineteenth-century Gothic Revival churches, in addition to unique features that can be attributed to the architect Frank Watson.
- The building has a strong visual presence in University City and especially on this block of Chestnut Street.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The church does not satisfy Criterion A.
- The church is an important example of Gothic Revival architecture and is designed by noted church architect and native Philadelphian Frank Rushmore Watson, satisfying Criteria D and E.
- It has continuously occupied this parcel along Chestnut Street since 1860 and is a recognizable visual feature of its local community and City of Philadelphia, thereby satisfying Criterion H.
- The church exemplifies a common practice of merging Baptist congregations in nineteenth-century Philadelphia and the migration of Philadelphians to West Philadelphia in the mid to late nineteenth century, satisfying Criterion J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at

4017-21 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, H, and J, but does not satisfy Criterion A.

<b>ITEM: 4017-21 CHESTNUT ST</b>					
<b>MOTION: Designate, Criteria D, E, H, J</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Laverty</b>					
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	5				1

**ADDRESS: 4501, 4503, 4505, AND 4507 SPRUCE ST**

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owners: Bryce and Samantha McNamee (4501); Jessica Senker and Brian Donlen (4503); Sadequa Dadabhoy (4505); Joseph Marchaman (4507)

Nominator: University City Historical Society

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the properties at 4501, 4503, 4505, and 4507 Spruce Street and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the buildings satisfy Criteria for Designation A, D, and E. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the properties are significant for their association with Charles Mosley Swain, a prominent Philadelphia businessman and the land owner who constructed the row of buildings to galvanize development in West Philadelphia. Under Criteria D and E, the nomination contends that the row of buildings were designed in the Tudor Revival style, with characteristic half-timber framing and steeply pitched roofs, by one of Philadelphia’s best known architects, Wilson Eyre.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nominations demonstrate that the properties at 4501, 4503, 4505, and 4507 Spruce Street satisfy Criteria for Designation A, D, and E.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:05:53**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nominations to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- George Poulin of the University City Historical Society represented the nomination
- Property owner Jessica Senker represented the property at 4503 Spruce Street.
- Property owner John Ratana represented the property at 4505 Spruce Street.

## DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman asked the staff if they been in contact with any of the other property owners.
  - Ms. Schmitt responded that they had not.
- Ms. Cooperman asked the owners if they had any comments.
- Ms. Senker replied that she and her husband were very much in support of the nomination.
- Mr. Ratana replied that he had hesitation about accepting the nomination. He explained that this was his first time attending a hearing of this nature so he was perhaps not entirely informed. Mr. Ratana explained that, based on what he had seen and heard, he did not see the purpose or the benefit to his house being designated.
  - Mr. Ratana said that, after reading the nomination, he did not understand the cultural relevance of the history of the houses, but that he was willing to have a discussion.
- Ms. Cooperman asked if there were any additional comments about the proposed nominations.
  - George Paulin of the University City Historical Society thanked Jennifer Loustau for preparing the nominations. He explained that they had nominated the properties because, as the work of architect Wilson Eyre, they play a significant role in the development of Philadelphia.
- Ms. Milroy remarked that though they had received four separate nominations, they were going to review them as a group.
- Mr. Cohen thanked the University City Historical Society and Ms. Loustau for putting forth the nominations. He commented that they are very important buildings as they are among the earliest known work of architect Wilson Eyre. Mr. Cohen said that he was very pleased to learn more about the properties and was particularly interested in the fact that the developer, Charles M. Swain, did not sell the properties for more than two decades.
- Mr. Cohen noted that the main appeal of these properties was the extraordinary design by an extraordinary architect, marking the beginning of Wilson Eyre's work. He stated that he disagreed with the characterization of the architectural style as Tudor Revival, noting that it was much more inventive than that.
- Mr. Cohen told Mr. Ratana that he preferred to interpret the nominations rather than take on the role of advocate. Mr. Cohen told Mr. Ratana that his property was one in a group that created an extraordinary work of architecture. He further commented that should anything happen to any one of these buildings, it would diminish the whole.
  - Mr. Ratana responded that he could not comment on the architectural significance but was put off by this designation process, specifically that his property had been designated without his input.
  - Mr. Lavery interjected that the property had not yet been designated; it is only nominated at this point in the process.
  - Mr. Ratana continued that his property had been nominated without his input and that people had taken photographs of his home and that it felt invasive. He noted that there had not been any conversation with him about the process.
  - Mr. Ratana reiterated that, while he could not speak to the architectural significance, the social history did not seem relevant to him. He said that the names of the people mentioned in the nomination did not mean anything to

- him. Mr. Ratana also said that no one had had any conversation with him regarding the benefits of designation.
- Ms. Cooperman encouraged Mr. Ratana to speak with the staff about the benefits of designation.
    - Mr. Ratana responded that he felt insulted that the person who nominated his property had not initiated a conversation with him.
  - Ms. Cooperman said that she agreed that the argument about the significance of the developer may not have been strong enough to convince her. She agreed completely with the buildings being extremely important early works of Eyre, but she was not sure that she supported the argument about the importance of Mr. Swain, the developer.
  - Mr. Cohen remarked that he agreed with Ms. Cooperman. Both Mr. Cohen and Ms. Cooperman noted that the argument for Criterion A was not as strong as was the argument for Criterion E. Mr. Cohen and Ms. Cooperman said they supported Criteria D and J rather than A.
  - Ms. Barucco asked if there were any thoughts about the period of significance being 1885 to 2019.
    - Mr. Cohen suggested that the period of significance be changed to end in 1910 which would include an alteration to one of the porches that was mentioned in the nomination.
  - Mr. Lavery told Mr. Ratana that he could appreciate his concerns. He explained that the Committee on Historic Designation was charged with reviewing nominations for the strength of their accuracy and for the argument as to whether a building is historically important enough to designate. Mr. Lavery reminded Mr. Ratana that their recommendation is only advisory to the Historical Commission itself, where property owners have an additional opportunity to comment.
  - Mr. Lavery reiterated Ms. Cooperman's suggestion that Mr. Ratana speak with the staff to address his questions and concerns.
  - Mr. Lavery asked Mr. Ratana why he purchased this specific house.
    - Mr. Ratana replied that it was a duplex in an otherwise prohibitively expensive neighborhood. He added that the size of the house was conducive to his family. Mr. Ratana explained that in the year he and his family looked for a home, they had made offers on other properties. He told the Committee on Historic Designation that he did not believe that curb appeal had been among the deciding factors in purchasing the property.
    - Mr. Ratana stated that, although he was not arguing against the fact that his house possessed distinguishing characteristics, he did not know if that was strong enough to warrant the additional review that comes along with designation.
    - Mr. Lavery responded that he appreciated Mr. Ratana's concerns and that he was not the first property owner to raise such questions. Mr. Lavery again suggested that Mr. Ratana speak to the staff and said that he did not want Mr. Ratana to leave the meeting today thinking that the Committee on Historic Designation did not hear his concerns.
  - Mr. Ratana asked if someone could explain to him what other buildings the architect Wison Eyre had designed.
    - Mr. Cohen said that he would be happy to speak with him about Eyre's career at his convenience. Mr. Lavery added that perhaps Eyre's best known building is the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

- Mr. Ratana asked for clarification about which of the Criteria for Designation the Committee was recommending to keep and which it was proposing to add.
  - Ms. Cooperman replied that a property only needs to satisfy one criterion to be designated.
- Mr. Ratana asked for an explanation as to why the Committee on Historic Designation found that Criterion J was applicable when it had not been selected by the nominator.
  - Ms. Cooperman responded that the Committee on Historic Designation was a group of technical experts and their opinion was that Criterion J was more appropriate than Criterion A.
- Mr. Ratana asked how Criterion J was defined.
  - Ms. Milroy read it to him and explained that they were considering the unique architectural personality of West Philadelphia, especially in this immediate area, and so it was really the sense of how these building occupy and contribute to the character of the neighborhood.
  - Ms. Cooperman stated that the Committee members were of the opinion that Criterion A was not applicable but that Criterion J was.
  - Mr. Ratana replied that he disagreed about the applicability of Criterion J and that only Criteria D and E should be applied.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The four houses under consideration were designed by architect Wilson Eyre and constructed in 1885 at the north side of Spruce Street west of 45<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination substantiates that the subject properties are the extraordinary design of an extraordinary architect, Wilson Eyre, satisfying Criteria for Designation D and E.
- The nomination supports how the subject properties are representative of the unique architectural personality of West Philadelphia and contribute to the character of the neighborhood, satisfying Criterion for Designation J.
- The nomination fails to support the claim that the buildings are significant for their association with the developer Charles Mosley Swain and therefore does not satisfy Criterion for Designation A.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 4501, 4503, 4505, and 4507 Spruce Street satisfy Criteria for Designation D, E and J, with a period of significance from 1885-1910.

**ITEM: 4501, 4503, 4505, and 4507 SPRUCE ST**  
**MOTION: Designate, Criteria D, E and J**  
**MOVED BY: Cohen**  
**SECONDED BY: Barucco**

<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney					X
Total	5				1

**ADDRESS: 5250 UNRUH AVE**

Name of Resource: Tacony Worsted Mills  
 Proposed Action: Designation  
 Property Owner: 5250 Unruh Avenue Assoc.  
 Nominator: Alexander Balloon, Tacony Community Development Corp.  
 Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, [megan.schmitt@phila.gov](mailto:megan.schmitt@phila.gov), 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5250 Unruh Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the Tacony Worsted Mills is an early and intact example of an industrial complex designed by Walter Harvey Geissinger, a prolific architect who designed several commercial and industrial buildings throughout Philadelphia. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the Tacony Worsted Mills was considered locally and nationally to be one of the finest and largest worsted yarn mills of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5250 Unruh Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 01:14:10**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Alex Balloon of Tacony Community Development Corporation and Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society represented the nomination.
- Property owner Andrew Wade, attorney David Burkholder, and preservation consultant George Thomas represented the property.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Burkholder stated that he had recently learned that Ms. Cooperman had been married to his consultant, Mr. Thomas. He therefore requested that she recuse from the discussion.

- Ms. Cooperman thanked Mr. Burkholder for his request and responded that she did not have a conflict of interest as defined by the City of Philadelphia and she had every ability to be impartial about this matter.
  - Mr. Burkholder thanked Ms. Cooperman for her response and stated that they reserved the right to later object.
- Mr. Burkholder said that what he had heard in the cases leading up to his client's item confirmed Mr. Thomas' argument that the subject property should not even have been nominated. Mr. Burkholder stated that the nomination did not support either of the Criteria for Designation being argued by the nominator.
- Mr. Burkholder explained that the subject building was not innovative, culturally significant, a specimen of engineering, the work of a prominent designer, or any of the other terms that had been used to describe the previous items under consideration at today's meeting. He added that no comparison could be made between the cultural, architectural and social significance of the subject site and the Disston & Sons Keystone Saw Works immediately adjacent to his client's property.
- Mr. Burkholder argued that the subject property is not visible from Unruh Avenue, the Delaware River, or the highway. Mr. Burkholder added that in order to take some of the photographs that appear in the nomination, a member of the public would have had to trespass onto his client's property.
- Mr. Burkholder remarked that the nominator erroneously bases much of the history of worsted wool mills in Philadelphia on the mischaracterizations of his sources. Mr. Burkholder argued that the nomination seeks to equate prolific with significant.
- Mr. Burkholder questioned the nomination's attempt to portray the architect, Walter Geissinger, as a significant architect by listing several of his other buildings that were previously demolished. He said that very little was known about Mr. Geissinger other than that he ceased working as an architect after designing this building and became a real estate developer. Mr. Burkholder remarked that the firm attributed to his client's building did not become famous for this work but rather for innovations that occurred later. Mr. Burkholder also suggested that the social and cultural significance that the site played in the community was overstated in the nomination.
- Mr. Burkholder asked why someone would nominate his client's property for listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. He concluded that someone was trying to use the Philadelphia Historical Commission to continue to take Mr. Wade's private property away from him.
  - Mr. Balloon asked if he could please object to Mr. Burkholder's suggestion as it is beyond the consideration of the Committee on Historic Designation.
  - Mr. Burkholder responded that it is relevant because a 2010 ordinance had already tried to take away part of Mr. Wade's property.
- Ms. Cooperman thanked Mr. Burkholder for his comments but said that this concern is, in fact, beyond the purview of the Committee on Historic Designation.
  - Mr. Burkholder said that he disagreed and that it was appropriate for their consideration.
  - Ms. Cooperman replied that it was something that Mr. Burkholder could raise at the Historical Commission meeting.
  - Mr. Burkholder stated that they reserved their right to bring this matter up to the Historical Commission. He introduced George Thomas to proceed with his technical review of the nomination.
- Mr. Thomas told the Committee on Historic Designation that it was his opinion that the Criteria for Designation were not met. He said that the Criteria for Designation

- call for a higher than average level of significance intended for buildings whose influence is worth recognizing.
- Mr. Thomas remarked that the nomination itself makes clear Mr. Geissinger's lack of significance. He argued that simply designing several buildings did not make an architect important, as the nomination suggested.
  - Mr. Thomas commented that there is a reason why little has been written about Mr. Geissinger and it is because he is not a particularly important figure and therefore is not deserving of scholarship.
  - Mr. Thomas said that the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record & Builders' Guide* had really become the basis for our understanding of Philadelphia's late nineteenth-century architectural history. He further noted that Ms. Geissinger barely appears when the document is searched, nor has anyone found Mr. Geissinger interesting enough to study as part of a thesis.
  - Mr. Thomas noted that historians have attributed no innovation to the designs of Mr. Geissinger during his career.
  - Mr. Thomas explained that the significance of an architect is determined by consulting various local resources such institutions like the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
  - Mr. Thomas listed architects that he described as having "real qualities and talents [whose] buildings reflect that" to show how a determination of the significance of an architect is established.
  - Mr. Thomas challenged the nomination's claim that the subject property was one of the finest and largest worsted yarn mills of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. He offered examples of mills in the states of Rhode Island and New Jersey that he argued were more significant due to their architectural integrity and massive scale. Mr. Thomas argued that the reader cannot gauge what is truly important because the nomination provides no context.
  - Mr. Thomas dismissed the few references made to Mr. Geissinger in various publications as insignificant. He argued that Mr. Geissinger simply disappeared out of the building business in 1894.
  - Mr. Thomas then asked why the nomination does not include the two largest buildings of the mill complex. He answered that the nomination has been submitted for a reason other than the importance of the buildings. Mr. Balloon objected to Mr. Thomas' claim.
  - Mr. Thomas told the members of the Committee on Historic Designation that the Disston Mill complex exemplifies the heritage of the community, but the subject property does not. Mr. Thomas argued that the identity of the Tacony community was linked to the Disston Mill complex. He noted that the workforce of the subject property were recent immigrants who came from Bridesburg, not from Tacony.
  - Mr. Thomas pointed out that the Disston Mill buildings have architectural character and are located right on the street, visible from the public right-of-way. In contrast, Mr. Thomas argued that the buildings associated with the subject property are ordinary, highly altered, and not visible from any public right-of-way. He asked why part but not all of this minor complex was nominated but the very, very important, adjacent Disston site was not.
  - Mr. Thomas opined that the nomination itself makes the case that Mr. Geissinger is not an important architect, and that the workforce did not even come from Tacony. He urged the members of the Committee on Historic Designation to reject the nomination.

- The property owner, Andrew Wade, verified that Mr. Thomas had visited the subject property and had done the research to allow him to come to this conclusion.
- Mr. Wade clarified that the only way to reach his property is through easements; it does not stand on the public right-of-way.
- Mr. Balloon told the members of the Committee on Historic Designation he would like to respond to some of Mr. Thomas' comments.
  - Mr. Balloon urged the Committee on Historic Designation to reject Mr. Thomas' interpretation of Criterion J that a building must be considerably more than ordinary. Mr. Balloon argued that to "exemplify" was to be a "typical example" rather than an exceptional one.
  - Mr. Balloon refuted Mr. Thomas' claim that the buildings at 5250 Unruh Avenue were "pedestrian," arguing that they had more architectural detailing than many of the buildings on the Disston complex.
  - Mr. Balloon argued that Mr. Thomas' interpretation of Criterion J was incorrect. Mr. Balloon stated that though the Disston family had a major influence on the development of the area, many industrialists were attracted to the area owing to the infrastructure that the Disston family and others had built.
  - In response to Mr. Thomas' assertion that the industrialists associated with the subject property did not have ties to Tacony because they lived in other neighborhoods, Mr. Balloon pointed out that Henry Disston also lived outside of the neighborhood and was buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery.
  - Mr. Balloon argued that the workers and managers of Tacony's mills joined the local clubs, social organizations and religious institutions. Mr. Balloon also explained that Mr. Thomas' claim that the subject property's employees did not live in the neighborhood was specifically refuted in the nomination.
  - Mr. Balloon suggested that Mr. Thomas had been highly selective in his use of Google Streetview, arguing that the subject complex was highly visible from many publicly accessible thoroughfares.
  - Mr. Balloon explained that, in order for the public to access the Philly Reclaim Warehouse which is located adjacent to the subject property, one must pass directly by Mr. Wade's warehouse. Mr. Balloon stated that the allegation that someone had trespassed on to Mr. Wade's property in order to take the photographs for the nomination was false.
  - Mr. Balloon closed by urging the members of the Committee on Historic Designation to reject Mr. Thomas' claims and to recommend that the subject property be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.
- Mr. Beisert stated that he maintained the arguments made in the nomination about the buildings' significance and reiterated that the subject property is visible from several public rights-of-way.
- Mr. Beisert said that this property along with others support the claim that Geissinger was an important architect of industrial buildings of the period.
- Mr. Cohen questioned the claim that the nominators had nominated the subject property with ulterior motives that were unrelated to their belief in the significance of the buildings.
- Mr. Cohen suggested that the members of the Committee on Historic Designation limit their discussion to Criteria E and J.
- Mr. Cohen said that Geissinger had piqued his curiosity many years ago when he and Mr. Thomas were researching various architects. Mr. Cohen remarked that

clearly Geissinger was prolific and he interested them because his name appeared in the records so frequently.

- Mr. Cohen said that part of the discussion before them had to do with typicality versus innovation. Mr. Cohen opined that the argument for Criterion J was about the industrial landscape more generally as a characteristic of the community. He added that Geissinger became important because he represented standard practices for designing mill buildings, noting that one did not have to be innovative to be influential. Mr. Cohen remarked that Geissinger's work represented what was typical of his time.
- Ms. Milroy commented that she agreed with Mr. Cohen and added that Geissinger was hired by some of the major manufacturers throughout Philadelphia. Ms. Milroy pointed out that a lack of innovation did not prevent Geissinger from being known as a reliable builder.
- Mr. Laverty said that Geissinger's association with manufacturers such as the owners of the Bromley mills and John B. Stetson was significant owing to their local, national and even international importance.
- Mr. Laverty stated that he agreed with Mr. Cohen's point that Geissinger had been at the beginning of an architectural and engineering dynasty that is still alive today. Mr. Laverty said he rejected the idea that because no biography has been written about him or because so many of his buildings have been demolished Geissinger is not worth noticing.
- Ms. Barucco echoed Mr. Laverty's remarks.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that she wanted to expand on one of Mr. Balloon's points. She said that Henry Disston purchased a large property so that he could move his operations from Northern Liberties to Tacony over a long period of time. Ms. Cooperman remarked that this relocation was also to establish a workforce that would remain in the immediate area by the creation of housing and accompanying institutions. Ms. Cooperman explained that as a result, almost immediately, other industrialists began moving into the area, in part because of the infrastructure that Disston had started to create. She clarified that it was the arrival of this larger group of manufacturers and not simply Disston, that spurred the development of housing and other institutions in the Tacony neighborhood.
- Mr. Cohen commented that someone could be influential for reasons other than innovation.
- Mr. Cohen said that, although he believed that the research could support Criterion D by recognizing that the subject property embodies distinguishing characteristics of an engineering specimen, he thought the stronger argument was Criterion J

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Celeste Morello supported the nomination.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination.
- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia supported the nomination.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The Tacony Worsted Mill, located at 5250 Unruh Avenue, was designed by architect Walter H. Geissinger with construction beginning in 1886-1887.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination substantiates architect Walter H. Geissinger's influence on the standard practices of mill design, resulting in commissions by many of Philadelphia's major manufacturers, satisfying Criterion E.
- The nomination supports the role that the Tacony Worsted Mill played in the development of the neighborhood's cultural, economic and social development, satisfying Criterion for Designation J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5250 Unruh Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J.

<b>ITEM: 5250 UNRUH AVE</b>					
<b>MOTION: Designate, Criteria E and J</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Milroy</b>					
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	5				1

**ADDRESS: 2100 S 21ST ST**

Name of Resource: St. Edmond of Abingdon Roman Catholic Church and Rectory

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia, St. Edmonds Church

Nominator: Celeste Morello

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2100 S. 21<sup>st</sup> Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that St. Edmond's Roman Catholic Church and Rectory satisfy Criteria for Designation D and E. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the church and rectory embody distinguishing characteristics of the Romanesque Revival and Italian Renaissance Revival styles of architecture. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the buildings, designed by George I. Lovatt, Sr. beginning in 1923, are the work of an architect whose designs have significantly influenced the historical and architectural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2100 S. 21<sup>st</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D and E.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING:** 02:10:50

**PRESENTERS:**

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

- No one represented the property owner.
- Celeste Morello represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Chantry stated that she had a phone conversation with the pastor of the parish, who had called the staff after receiving notice of the proposed designation. She observed that Michael Phillips, the attorney for the Archdiocese, was present earlier in the meeting for another matter but did not remain for this matter and did not provide the staff with comments regarding the proposed designation.
- Ms. Morello stated that she targets Roman Catholic churches in higher-crime areas for designation because they are vulnerable.
- Mr. Cohen stated that Ms. Morello’s use of the architectural style “Christian” should instead be “Early Christian” throughout the nomination. He agreed with the comparison to the Early Christian style of architecture.
- Ms. Barucco agreed that George I. Lovatt is a significant architect but opined that the nomination did not sufficiently make the argument. She explained that the nomination is not a good example of one that argues for significance under Criterion E.
  - Ms. Cooperman responded that the Committee can still recommend that it satisfies Criterion E.
  - Ms. Morello noted that she authored two other nominations for Lovatt churches, which were accepted by the Commission under Criterion E.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The use of the architectural style term “Christian” should be changed to “Early Christian” throughout the nomination.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The church and rectory embody distinguishing characteristics of the Romanesque Revival and Italian Renaissance Revival styles of architecture, satisfying Criterion D.
- The church and rectory were designed by George I. Lovatt, an architect whose designs have significantly influenced the historical and architectural development of the City, satisfying Criterion E.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2100 S. 21<sup>st</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D and E.

**ITEM: 2100 S 21ST ST**  
**MOTION: Designate, Criteria D and E**  
**MOVED BY: Lavery**  
**SECONDED BY: Cohen**

<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney					X
Total	5				1

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 12:13 p.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.