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February 28, 2020

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pa 119102
Attn: Jonathon Farnham, Executive Director

Re: Proposed Creation of Automobile Row Tagmatic Historic District (the "District") /142-144 North Broad Street (the "Property")

Dear Mr. Farnham:

This office represents Convention Center Parking, LLC (the "Owner"), the owner of the Property. The letter from you dated January 17, 2020 advised the Owner that the Property had been included as a proposed contributing property within the proposed District. The District has been proposed as a result of a nomination submitted by The Preservation Alliance For Greater Philadelphia, dated December 2, 2019, which nomination was incorporated by reference in your correspondence.

Convention Center Parking is opposed to the inclusion of the Property in the District, and by this letter requests a removal of the Property from the District by the Philadelphia Historical Commission ("PHC"). The basis for the requested withdrawal are twofold. First, the property owner has been engaged in significant effort, and at significant expense, to plan development at the Property. The site has been not utilized for parking for approximately three years, and during that time has been vacant. The Owner eagerly anticipates a development plan which will revitalize the parcel and contribute to increased activity on the block. While the regulations of the PHC result in jurisdiction being asserted over the Property, as building permits are not currently pending for the proposed redevelopment, we believe the active efforts of the Owner warrant consideration by PHC.

Second and perhaps more importantly, the Owner has engaged respected structural engineers at Keast & Hood to examine the Property. Based on their inspection, there is significant concern

whether or not the building can be preserved, given the degree of deterioration that exists in the interior structural concrete, and there is related concern that any procedure which may allow for the preservation of the building will also require replacement of most aspects of the front façade of the building, such that the building which would remain would retain so little part of the original construction elements that it would not meet the requirements for historic designation. Nearly half of terra cotta pieces of the façade are cracked and areas of glazing are lost which would require replacement. This condition is exacerbated by the structural conditions of the interior which would necessitate demolition and reconstruction of the front quarter of the building, which would cut loose the front façade and with the deteriorated terracotta would lead to the requirement of a new façade.

I have attached preliminary reports by George Thomas of Civic Visions and Fred Baumert of Keast & Hood, in support of the summary outlined above.

We have shared these concerns with the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia, the nominator for the proposed District, and the Alliance has indicated to us that it has no objection to a decision by PHC to remove the Property from the District.

In summary, we believe there are significant legal and policy reasons that 142-144 North Broad Street should not be included in the proposed District. The nominator has no objection to removal of the Property. In order to avoid significant costs to the Owner, and in order to avoid significant disruption to the PHC's process of considering the proposed District, we request the removal of the Property.

If our request is denied, the Owner intends to challenge the narrative, boundaries and conclusions of the proposed District, and would enlist other owners and City Council to block or to drastically revise the nomination.

If the staff's determination is to recommend inclusion of the Property, we request a continuous of at least thirty (30) days to allow for completion and refinement of our experts' analysis and reports.

Very truly yours,

William F. Martin

WFM:cl

cc: Paul Steinke, The Preservation Alliance For Greater Philadelphia
Myron J. Berman, Convention Center Parking
George Bochetto, Esquire

William Martin
Fox Rothschild
cc. Mike Berman

Site visit to 142 N. Broad 2.5.20

With Fred Baumert, Keast & Hood: on site 10:50 AM – 1:00 PM

Observations:

The building is an early twentieth century structure constructed to store and exhibit automobiles. The Broad Street façade is clad in glazed terra cotta with large industrial window openings reaching down to floor – reflecting the original car showroom use; the rear façade is brick with limestone lintels, again with large but shorter industrial windows. All of the windows were replaced with square section bronze finish aluminum sash that are different than the original steel sash.

From Broad Street it is clear that the terra cotta is in poor, degraded condition. Most of the jack arch pieces above the windows have fractured horizontally and the impost positions have also failed in many locations. The vertical piers show signs of vertical cracking. Large areas of the terra cotta glazing have spalled off, leaving the soft interior exposed and absorbing moisture which in turn allows the iron hangers to rust, expand and further damage the affected terra cotta blocks. Bracket pieces are missing that hold the projecting sign at the fourth floor and chain anchors are missing on the second floor.

Nearly half of the façade terra cotta pieces have cracked and crazing on other pieces indicates that more pieces will fail. Pointing is largely missing from between blocks.

The rear façade is similarly affected by weather. Areas of brick require extensive pointing repair, and steel window lintel above the limestone have failed, expanded, and damaged windows and masonry.

Because of the quasi-industrial use of the building, it has not received the attention that would be normal for an office or residence. The result is that both facades are in severely deteriorated condition that would require extensive reconstruction and repair.

Because Philadelphia has a façade inspection regulation, the building façade has been regularly inspected and short-term repairs have been made that protect the public but which do little to maintain the integrity of the original materials. Fractured jack arch pieces have been sutured together with metal plates; cracks have been repaired with caulking to keep out water. But the underlying problems – water penetration from above and behind the terra cotta, caused in part by lack of heat in a garage building, which permits water to condense on exterior walls and then work its way into the rear, unglazed portions of the front terra cotta and the rear brick have damaged both facades. (Figs 1-8)

Interior:

The interior of the garage suffers from material degradation that is typical of such structures. Water and salts, brought in on the tires of automobiles soak into the concrete decking and then damages the early 20th century iron reinforcing and the steel girders and beams that are integral to the reinforced concrete structure. As water and salts infiltrate and rust the metal, the metal rusts and expands, causing damage to the concrete which separates from the structure, exposing the underlying metals to additional moisture from

interior humidity with additional condensation accelerating the deterioration. The lack of heat in the building is part of the problem – as is the new garage neighbor to the north which replaced the Scottish Rite Masonic Hall. The new structure is unheated and no longer conveys heat through the party wall.

The building is constructed using two different structural systems – the front half is conventional early twentieth century reinforced concrete with massive spanning girders infilled with reinforced concrete panels carried on metal reinforcing. The rear is carried on spanning steel girders with shallow reinforced concrete vaults carried on spanning steel I-beams. Early reinforced concrete had numerous material issues that affect long-term structural stability and survival. [1] Reinforcing was unprotected iron and the concrete mixtures included a variety of materials from salt to cinders, all of which damaged the underlying metal elements and destroy the structural integrity.

Neither system is surviving in reasonable condition. The basement structure, which receives the greatest amount of tire-born water and salt has extensively damaged the eastern structural bays toward Broad Street. Because cars were stored on the upper levels using elevators to lift them, the upper levels toward Broad Street are similarly extensively damaged with lessening damage on the upper stories presumably reflecting the decreasing number of wet automobiles stored at higher levels.

The first floor ceiling is not visible because it has been sheathed in plaster – presumably on wire lath as part of the more public interior with tapered columns and cast Ionic capitals. However, one of the girder covers is suspiciously lower (Fig. 15) suggesting that there are problems concealed by the sheathing. In the case of the front bays visible from the second, third, and fourth stories, massive deterioration is visible on the three eastern-most bays with loss of concrete cladding that has been forced off by rusting of the steel and with the steel itself reduced to little more than powder in many instances. (Figs 8-16)

The condition of these bays should be evaluated by the engineer. If they are sufficiently damaged to require reconstruction, the process would also affect the stability of the front façade and would dramatically increase the cost of a project that, because of historic designation, is required to preserve the Broad Street facade. Given that more than half of the terra cotta elements of the façade have been damaged, in the end it would be beneficial to reconstruct the entire façade because blocks that have yet to fail will likely fail in the future as their iron hangers rust and fail.

One other note is worth reporting. The south interior wall shows a significant crack that suggests that the front façade started to pull out to the east. Work in 1975 on the restoration of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, to the south discovered major movement of the main stair that pushed east and began to collapse apparently as a result of the open trench for the Broad Street Subway. It is possible that the same work damaged 142 N. Broad Street.

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[1] My research on reinforced concrete goes back to my Ph.D. dissertation on the Atlantic City hotels of William L. Price, *"William L. Price: Builder of Men and of Buildings* (Ph.D. diss, UPenn. 1975). Additional research on the Traymore hotel was published in "A House Built on Sand," *Via 7: The Building of Architecture.* eds. Paula Behrens, Anthony Fisher, (Philadelphia: Graduate School of Fine Arts, 1984) p. 8-21. Additional research is included in George E. Thomas, *William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to Modern Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000).

Fig. 1) Broad St. Façade

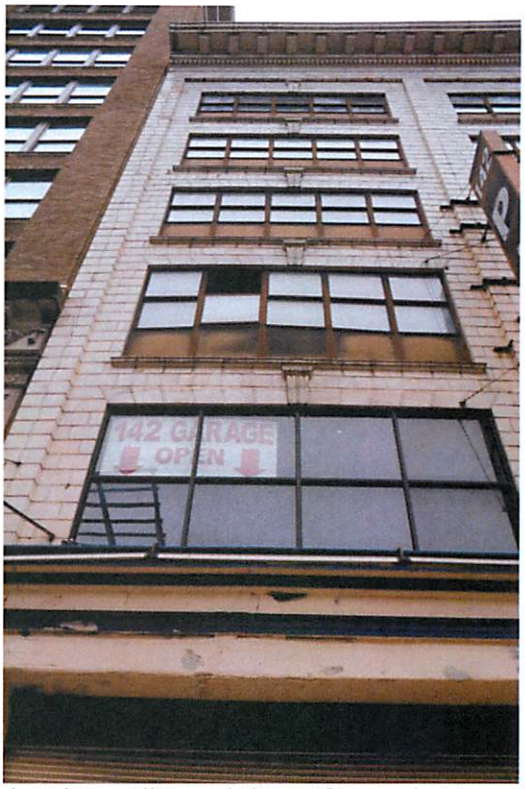

Fig. 2) Detail, south bay of Broad St. Facade

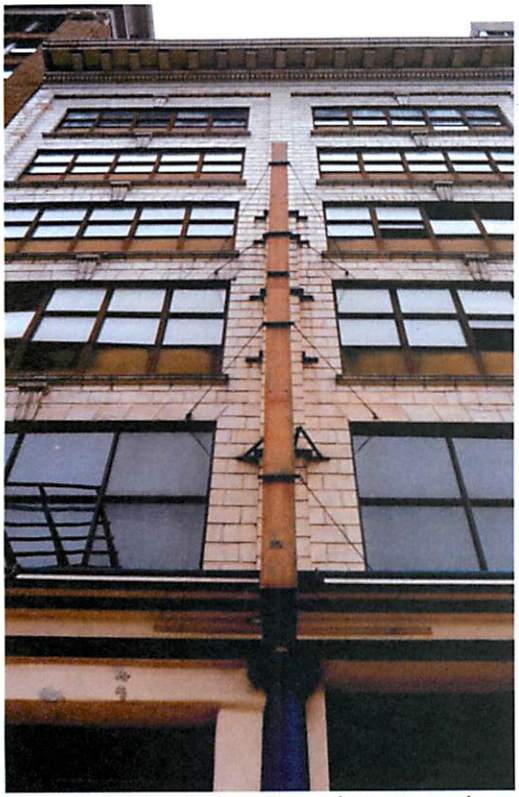
Fig. 3) Central Pier, Broad St. Façade

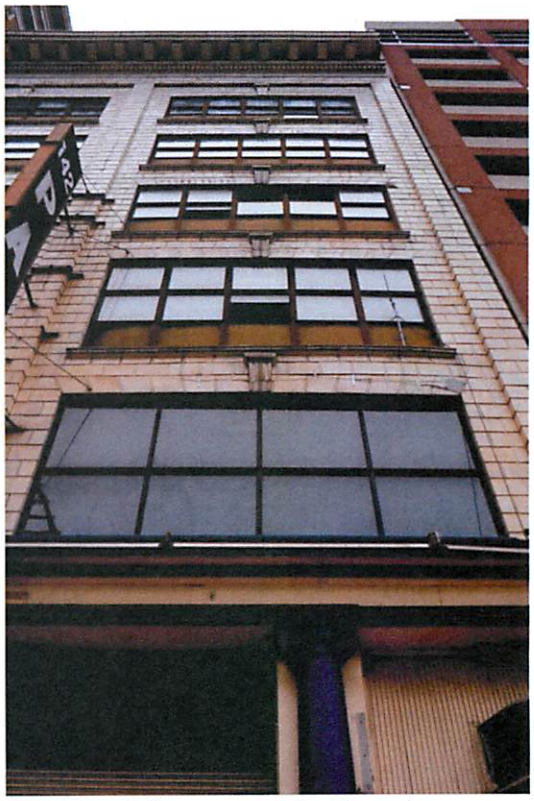
Fig 4. North bay Broad St. Facade

Fig. 5 Deglazed terra cotta, cracked terra cotta, missing terra cotta bracket in cornice, dark staining marks areas of water infiltration

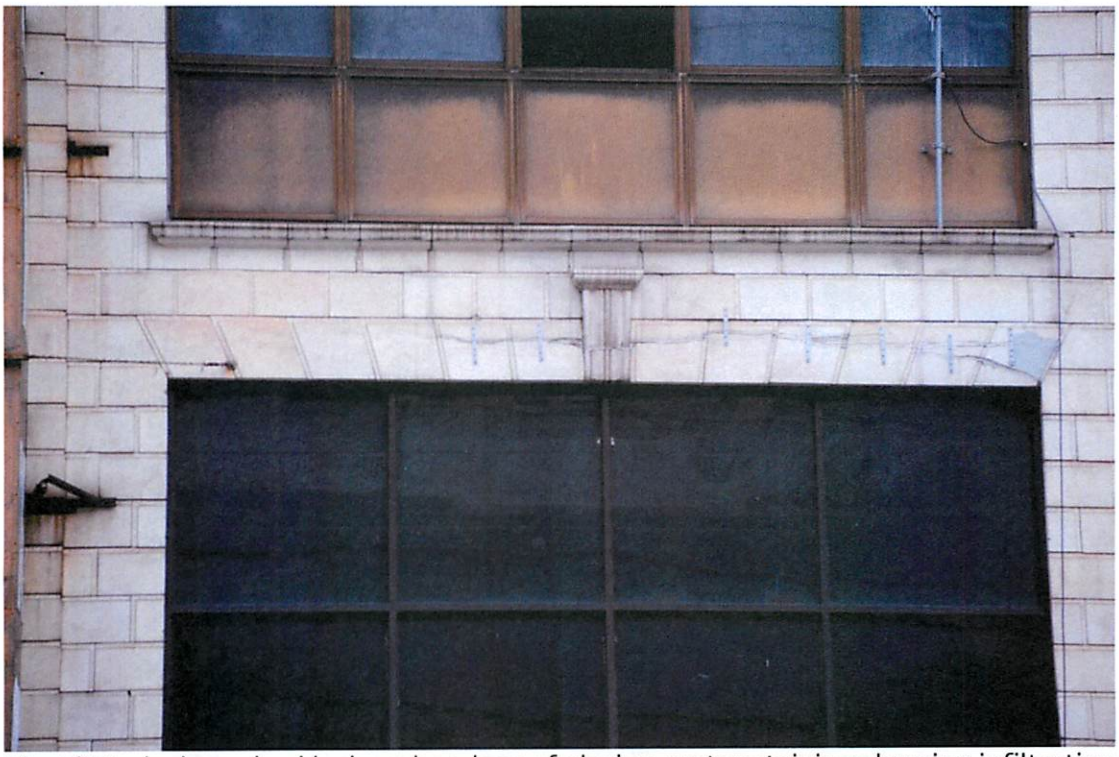

Fig. 6) Typical repaired jack arches, loss of glazing, water staining showing infiltration at sills

Fig. 7) Center Pier, fourth level, damage to jack arches, cracking of central pier (gray caulk), dark water stains below sills

Fig. 8) Fourth level window, north bay, cracked jack arch, damage at impost on right, cracking of piers, etc. This damage is typical at all openings and piers.

Fig. 9) Basement deterioration of steel set into concrete, front of building

Fig. 10) Basement, delaminating steel beams and girders

Fig. 11) Basement rear, delaminating steel beams carrying reinforced concrete of first floor

Fig. 12) Massive damage to first three bays of 2nd floor ceiling (3rd floor)

Fig, 15) Depressed beam cover, first floor ceiling

Fig. 16) Typical beam cover, floor, upper level, rear steel frame section

Fig. 13) Vertical cracking, 2nd floor rear, south wall

Fig. 14) Vertical cracking 4th floor pier, south wall

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142 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA

FAÇADE REVIEW

Prepared for:
Fox Rothschild, LLP
2000 Market Street, 20th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103-3222

February 27, 2020

Prepared by:
Keast & Hood
K&H No. 200016A.01

Frederick C. Baumert PE | John R. Davis PE | Constantine G. Doukakis PE | Thomas J. Normile PE | Denise L. Richards PE
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1.0 General Overview and Purpose of the Assessment

The building was visited on February 5, 2020, to review the condition of the primary façade facing east onto North Broad Street, and the rear façade facing west onto N. Carlisle St. The building is bounded on the north and south by other buildings so the brick party walls are mostly not visible except from the interior of the subject building. Those party walls are load-bearing, supporting the floor structure at each level, and thus change thickness with height.

2.0 Description of Assessment Methods

The review was solely visual to understand the overall conditions, applying our experience with similar façades. No probes were made to reveal the interior supports of the exterior materials, and no exploration methods were employed such as X-ray or thermal photography. These types of investigations can be added if desired.

3.0 Observations and Discussion of Existing Façades

3.1 - East Façade facing North Broad Street

This elevation of the building was arranged as two bays wide by six levels tall. The ground floor is fairly tall, which allows for roll-up doors that fill the majority of that level. The windows for the second through sixth levels are commercial grade aluminum frames, relatively modern, arranged in glazing panels three high by five wide. The majority of the front façade is covered with an off-white terra cotta cladding. There are fake jack arch sections above each window with a scroll-like keystone unit at the center of each jack arch. At the top of the parapet there are terra cotta "dentil" blocks and a modest cornice.

The terra cotta is in poor condition. Over twenty percent (20%) of the units have lost some of their face glazing, which is the only protection against moisture intrusion and resulting freeze-thaw degradation. About sixty percent (60%) of the the "column cover" units have a vertical split, which again allows water intrusion. This is particularly obvious on the southern column cover, where the units are trapped against the adjacent building and thus have split due to flexure (outward bending). One hundred percent (100%) of the jack arch units have a horizontal split, including right through the keystone units, indicating advanced corrosion of the supporting steel elements. These cracks have been crudely addressed with caulk and plates but the deterioration is obvious. There are quite a few terra cotta units that are out of place either vertically (some of the jack arch units have slipped downward) or horizontally (moved out of plane relative to the surrounding units). It was also noted that the entire southern bay bulges outward at the fourth floor level, and there is a vertical tension crack in the southern party wall near the front corner.

Because terra cotta is a relatively brittle material, good repairs in place are difficult and expensive. Often when there is extensive damage such as this, the units are removed and replaced. Replacement of the terra cotta is even more warranted for this building because the interior structure consists of cast-in-place concrete beams and slabs which have become severely deteriorated and must be replaced in several locations. A large portion of the front bays for levels 2-5 need to be replaced. Since the wall is braced and supported by the floors, removal of the floor for reconstruction will require disassembly of the façade for several levels. The owner may consider replacement of all the terra cotta units below the cornice dentil band.

3.2 - West Façade facing North Carlisle Street

The rear elevation of the building consists of multi-wythe brick construction with limestone "lintels" (supported by steel) and window sills. The general field of the brick wall is in fair (serviceable) condition. There are various generations of mortar and crack repairs throughout. The limestone elements exhibit some minor cracks and spalls. The supporting steel has some visible corrosion; the condition of the parts buried in the masonry is unknown.

There are marks at the parapet that suggest a former cornice that probably was removed many years ago – there is now a simple aluminum cap. All of the windows are an aluminum system similar to that at the front. There is an enclosed fire stair on the north side of this face, albeit the fire balconies have been removed so the stair is not accessible from the interior.

4.0 Representative Images

Figure 1: East Elevation

Figure 2: Detail view showing spalled shell glazing, cracked jack arch units with aluminum straps, cracked column cover units, and corroded sign supports (one is fractured).

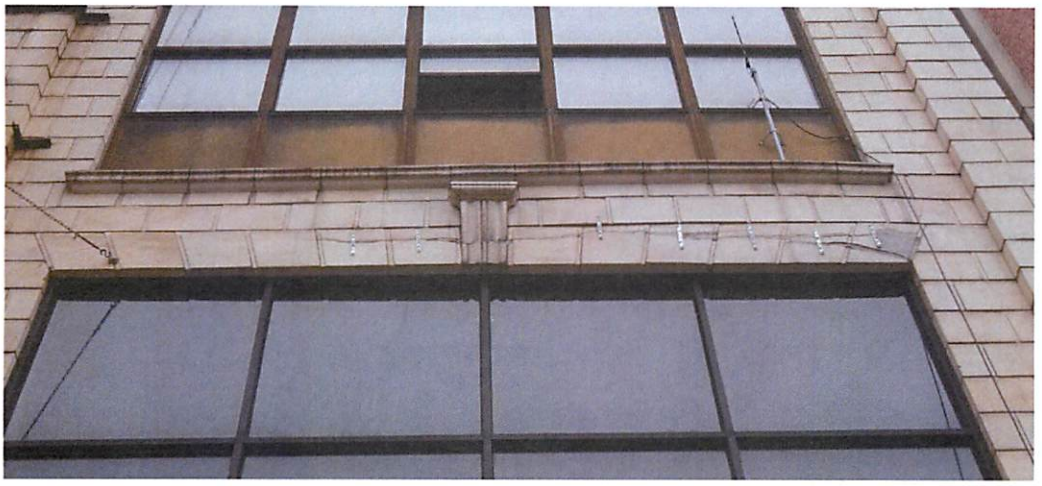

Figure 3: Detail showing the "repair straps" nailed into the terra cotta.
The "waviness" of the sill line is not an optical illusion.

Figure 4: Example of the severely spalled concrete and corroded reinforcing in some bays at the front of the building. Some major bars were painted to stop further corrosion but the missing concrete makes this beam unable to support loads.

Figure 5: West elevation.

5.0 Summary

The east façade can continue to be patched together for a few more years but is nearing the point of rapid deterioration. The blade sign should be serviced or removed as soon as practical. The west façade is in fair condition and with appropriate attention should serve adequately for the foreseeable future.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned if we can be of continued assistance or if we may answer any questions regarding the observations and recommendations.

Very truly yours,

KEAST & HOOD

Frederick C. Baumert

Frederick Baumert, PE