

**THE MINUTES OF THE 699TH STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2020
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
ROBERT THOMAS, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:00:00

Mr. Thomas, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and announced the presence of a quorum. The following Commissioners joined him:

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Comment
Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair	X		
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Committee on Historic Designation Chair	X		
Mark Dodds (Division of Housing & Community Development)	X		
Kelly Edwards, MUP	X		
Steven Hartner (Department of Public Property)	X		
Labaron Lenard-Palmer (Dept. of Planning & Development)	X		
Josh Lippert (Department of Licenses & Inspections)	X		
John Mattioni, Esq.	X		
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Architectural Committee Chair	X		
Jessica Sánchez, Esq. (City Council President)	X		
Sara Lepori (Commerce Department)	X		
Betty Turner, MA, Vice Chair	X		
Kimberly Washington, Esq.	X		

Owing to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, all Commissioners, staff, applicants, and public attendees participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner I
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department
Megan Cross Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Joseph Tarsia
Lillian Osei-Boateng
Venise Whitaker
Jennifer Sharp
Michael Phillips
Janet E. Bernstein
Morris Cooperman
Devon Beverly
Thaddeus Squire
Kristen Pomroy
Oscar Beisert
The Templetons
Rachel Kaminski
Tom Beck
Harrison Haas
Jason Greenspon, Esq, Law Department
Christine Dejesus
Charlie Dombrowski
James P. Gallagher
Ronn Ash
Andrew Wade
Phil & Louise Hurtt
Erika Henson
Gene Fiducia
Kevin McMahon
Taylor Allen
Nathan Farris, Esq.
John Scott
Diane Richardson
Bill Ritzler, DVARP
Paul Steinke
Ellie Devyatkin
Steven Peitzman
Caliph Gamble
George Earl Thomas
Janet Bernstein
Kelly Brennan
Arthur Stoppe
Susan Wetherill
Jordan Martin
Ke Feng
Noah Gustkey
Suzanna Barucco
Eliot Duhan
Aly Mifa Solot
JM Duffin
Timothy Kerner
Jeff Wyant
Andrew Miller

Neil Sklaroff, Esq.
Theo Aronson
Steve Beskrone
John Walker
Michael Tarsia
Adam Montalbano
Randal Baron, public
Tayyib Smith
Rep. Jason Dawkins
AJ Sorensen
Hal Schirmer
Rich McKie
Roger S. Tenant Sr.
Jay Farrell
Jack Klotz
Aaron Cohen
Caust Draven
Marc Byers, Motown Records
Chase Galis
Gussie O'Neill
Alex Balloon
Alexandra Fiorentino-Swinton
Michele Gaffney
Mary McGettigan
Allan Slutsky
Susan McAnally
Eva Lew
Nino V. Tinari, Esq.
Max Ochester
Josh Kwedar
Jenny Corbin
David Traub
Robert Gurmankin
Kathy Dowdell
Scott Scuderi
Kristin Aronson
Marie Butler
Peter Bloomfield
Marcia Ruberg
Eugene Desyatnik
Mary Dankanis
David Burkholder, Esq.
Nancy Pontone
Carla Robinson
Barbara Aronson
Gabriel Gottlieb
Jennifer Folks
Tim Herb
Nicholas Baker, Streets Department
Sloane Folks

Blane Stoddart
Heather Brown
Paul Newlin
Alexander Esposito
Sami Jarrah
Dirk Devlin
Donna Sticher
Christopher Strom, Esq.
Anthony Palimore
Theresa Stuhlman
Adam Silverman
Roger S. Tenant Sr.
John Vettese
Evan Solot
Johnnie Parker
Bill Nicoletti
Patrick Grossi
Keith Cramer
Anne Devlin

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, 698TH STATED MEETING, 9 OCTOBER 2020

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:04:50

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners, staff, and members of the public if they had any additions or corrections to the minutes of the preceding meeting of the Historical Commission, the 698th Stated Meeting, held 9 October 2020. No corrections were offered.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to adopt the minutes of the 698th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 9 October 2020. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Minutes, 698th Stated Meeting
MOTION: Adoption of minutes
MOVED BY: Thomas
SECONDED BY: Turner

VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori(Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES

ADDRESS: 801-15 N 4TH ST AND 319 BROWN ST

Name of Resource: St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church, Parish House, and School

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: St. Agnes-St. John Nepomucene Parish/Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Nominator: Northern Liberties Neighbors Association/Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate as historic St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church, rectory, and school at 801-15 N. 4th Street and 319 Brown Street and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. In 1980, owing to declining membership, St. Agnes and St. John Nepomucene, a Slovak parish in South Philadelphia, merged and the church is now called St. Agnes-St. John Nepomucene. The nomination claims that the properties at 801-15 N. 4th Street and 319 Brown Street satisfy Criteria for Designation A and J. The nomination identifies a period of significance running from 1910, when the church construction began, to 1982. The choice of the endpoint in 1982 is not explained in the nomination.

The church building stands at the northeast corner of 4th and Brown Streets. The church building is described as a “basement church.” In fact, the congregation began to construct a large church in 1910, but only completed the foundations and basement level (stone-faced section) before abandoning the plan, presumably for financial reasons, and then temporarily constructing a wood superstructure over the central nave section. The nomination proposes the designation of the temporary church, which still stands today. The nomination incorrectly refers to the church as evidencing the Greek Revival and Egyptian Revival styles; the incomplete building has no real architectural style, but the temporary superstructure may perhaps evidence some aspects of the strain of the Classical Revival style found throughout Eastern Europe.

The rectory stands to the east of the church, at the northwest corner of N. Orianna and Brown Streets. The rectory building was constructed about 1890 as a rowhouse with first-floor commercial space and converted for use as a rectory about 1918.

The school building stands to the east of the church and north of the rectory, facing N. Orianna Street. The school was constructed in 1926. It is three stories in height and housed school facilities on the lower floors and a convent on the upper floor. The school closed in 1969.

The nomination claims that the properties satisfy Criterion J (exemplifies the cultural, political, social, or historical heritage of the community) because they include the oldest remaining purpose-built church for the Slovak community in Philadelphia and the only school built by that community. The nomination claims that the properties satisfy Criterion 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) because this institutional complex grew over time and therefore represents “a thread of the larger development of Philadelphia.”

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff contends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the properties satisfy Criteria for Designation A and J and do not merit designation and listing on the Philadelphia Register. Regarding Criterion A, the fact that the institution expanded its campus over time does not in and of itself indicate any historical significance. If it did, every institution that bought or built a second building would automatically qualify for designation, an untenable assertion. Regarding Criterion J, the nomination presents no evidence that these properties “exemplify” the cultural, political, social, or historical heritage of the Slovak community. The nomination presents a brief, incomplete history of the congregation, but makes no attempt to explain how this group of buildings exemplifies the heritage of the Slovak community. Unlike the case made for the linkage between St. Laurentius Church, the Polish-American community, its identity and heritage when it was nominated, no such case is made in this instance.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted 4 to 1 to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 801-15 N. 4th Street and 319 Brown Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J. Ms. Cooperman dissented.

ACTION: See below.

ADDRESS: 1826 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: Aldine Theatre

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Sam’s Place Realty Associates LP

Nominator: Kevin Block, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1826 Chestnut Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Aldine Theatre, constructed in 1921, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, E, and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the theatre has significant character, interest, or value as one of the last remaining first-run movie palaces in Philadelphia. Under Criterion E, the nomination explains that the Aldine was the work of prominent local builders

William Steele & Sons. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the Aldine represents the commercial development of Chestnut Street in the prestigious Rittenhouse Square neighborhood after the turn of the twentieth century.

Following the submission of the nomination and notification to the property owner, the nominator uncovered additional information not presented in the nomination, which is posted on the Historical Commission's website as additional information.

The Committee on Historic Designation previously reviewed a nomination for the property in March 1986 and recommended against designation owing to the loss of architectural integrity of the interior and the front doors. The Historical Commission adopted the recommendation of the Committee at its April 1986 meeting and declined to designate the property. The staff notes that the interior of the property is not under consideration, and that the Historical Commission routinely designates properties that have alterations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1826 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.

ACTION: See below.

ADDRESS: 3701-15 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: International House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: International House

Nominator: University City Historical Society & Docomomo US/Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3701-15 Chestnut Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, H, and J. The nomination argues that the property satisfies Criterion A for its association with the International House organization, the oldest institution of its kind in the United States to support international students. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the building is a significant example of Brutalist architecture. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the architecture firm of Bower & Fradley influenced the architectural development of Philadelphia, contributing designs to the city from the 1960s to the present day. Under Criterion H, the nomination contends that the International House building occupies a unique location in the heart of University City and, together with Criterion J, stands as one of the first high-rises in the neighborhood that was constructed as part of the West Philadelphia Corporation and Redevelopment Authority's efforts for urban renewal.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3701-15 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and J, but not E and H. The influence of Bower & Fradley is limited. For a very large building, it has a limited impact on the streetscape. Owing to its setback and mid-block location, it cannot be considered an established and familiar visual feature like City Hall or the Art Museum.

ACTION: See below.

ADDRESS: 222-48 N BROAD ST

Name of Resource: Hahnemann Hospital

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Broad Street Healthcare Properties LLC

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

OVERVIEW:

This nomination proposes to designate a portion of the property known as 222-48 N. Broad Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination is limited to the boundaries of the Neo-Gothic building constructed in 1928 for Hahnemann Medical College & Hospital. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, F, and J. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Neo-Gothic style, including the main Gothic arch entrance, buttresses, and tracery, as applied to skyscrapers in the 1920s. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination contends that subject building important in exhibiting the heritage of Hahnemann Medical College & Hospital, which opened in 1848 and became a major source of general medicine and surgical care for numerous Philadelphians, particularly the poor and working class people of North Philadelphia, which represents a shift in the cultural, economic, and social mores of the period, when the lower classes would first gain access to healthcare in a modern medical facility. Under Criterion F, the nomination argues that the 1928 Hahnemann Hospital represents both innovation in the design of medical colleges and hospitals in the first and second quarters of the twentieth century and the broader development of modern hospitals in the Philadelphia region, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the larger nation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building, a portion of 222-48 N. Broad Street, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, F, and J.

ACTION: See below.

ADDRESS: 1615 WALNUT ST

Name of Resource: The Clarke & Sarah Merchant House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Honey Nuts LLC

Nominator: Center City Residents' Association

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1615 Walnut Street, located in Center City, as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Historically known as the Clarke and Sarah Merchant House, it was constructed in 1832 with substantial alterations completed in 1892 and 1911.

Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the building is associated with the life of Clarke Merchant, whose career as a manufacturer and merchant of metal and tin-plate architectural and building materials made a significant impact on the built environment of Philadelphia and beyond. The nomination further contends that the building qualifies under Criterion E, owing to the alterations and addition completed in 1892 by prominent Philadelphia architect Addison Hutton. Finally, the nomination asserts that the building is significant under Criterion

J because it is a rare surviving urban mansion on a principal street that was once home to expensive residences but is now lined with purpose-built commercial structures. The period of significance begins in 1892, when the Merchant family purchased the property and engaged architect Addison Hutton, and ends in 1931, when the building was sold out of the Merchant family.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1615 Walnut Street, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.

ACTION: See below.

ADDRESS: 3101 AND 3143 W PASSYUNK AVE

Name of Resource: Point Breeze Gas Works

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 3101: City of Philadelphia Gas Works; 3143: Philadelphia Energy Solutions at notice; PESRM currently

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue and a portion of the property at 3143 W. Passyunk Avenue and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the sixteen identified buildings, sites, and structures, historically known as the Point Breeze Gas Works, satisfy Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J, although some Criteria are not applied to all resources. The site is inaccessible to the general public, so aerial imagery was utilized in the nomination to determine what remains of the complex. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the Point Breeze Gas Works has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development of the City, expanding its complex as the population of the City, and therefore the demand for gas, grew. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues that the majority of the identified resources collectively represent a public works that was executed in the Gothic Revival style between 1851 and 1859 with additions through 1899, with several later resources being designed in the Jacobean Revival style. Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that the earliest buildings of the Point Breeze Gas Works were built under the leadership of designer and engineer John Chapman Cresson. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the Point Breeze Gas Works exemplifies the economic, social, and historical heritage of the community, as one of the largest employers for Philadelphians in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the Historical Commission continue and remand the nomination to allow time for the staff to visit and survey the site, which is publicly inaccessible, and report on its findings to the Committee on Historic Designation.

ACTION: See below.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:05:28

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Thomas presented the continuance requests to the Historical Commission. He asked if any Commissioners, staff, or members of the public had comments on the requests. None were offered.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to grant the continuances of the reviews of the nominations for 801-15 N. 4th Street and 319 Brown Street to the December 2020 Philadelphia Historical Commission meeting; 1826 Chestnut Street, 3701-15 Chestnut Street, and 222-48 N. Broad Street to the December 2020 Committee on Historic Designation meeting; 1615 Walnut Street to the January 2020 Committee on Historic Designation meeting; and 3101 and 3143 W. Passyunk Avenue to the March 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Continuance of reviews of designation matters					
MOTION: Adoption					
MOVED BY: Thomas					
SECONDED BY: Turner					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

CONSENT AGENDA

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:07:20

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners, staff, and public for comments on the Consent Agenda. None were offered.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee for the revised application for 11 Boathouse Row, 125 N. 10th Street, and 271 S. Van Pelt Street. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Consent agenda MOTION: Approval MOVED BY: Thomas SECONDED BY: Turner					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 27 OCTOBER 2020

ADDRESS: 11 BOATHOUSE ROW

Proposal: Remove addition, construct addition

Review Requested: In Concept

Owner: University of Pennsylvania

Applicant: Ke Feng, University of Pennsylvania

History: 1875; College Boat Club of the University of Pennsylvania

Individual Designation: 1/5/1984

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

Opened in 1875 for the College Boat Club of the University of Pennsylvania, 11 Boathouse Row features several building campaigns spanning over a century. The core of the property is the original two-story stone Victorian Gothic boathouse dating to 1875. Additions were made to the east and north sides of the 1875 building in 1920. A second story was added to the southeastern addition around 1930. In 1980, a one-bay wide addition was added to the west side of the building, after being reviewed and approved by the Historical Commission. Plans for the 1920's and 1980's additions are available in the Historical Commission's files.

This application proposes to demolish the 1920's/1930's addition to the east and to construct a new addition in the footprint of the historic addition, but with larger massing. The new addition would be two bays in depth, and feature two cross-gabled portions extending from the roof of the 1875 building and its north-central addition at the north and south, with large dormers with recessed doors to create balconies. The area between the gabled-roof portions of the new addition would feature a steeply-sloped asphalt-shingled mansard with a parapet to conceal rooftop mechanical equipment. The application also proposes to enlarge the south-facing

dormer of the 1980's addition to match the dormer balconies proposed on the new addition to the east, to reconstruct the south-facing balcony on the 1875 building, and to install new windows and doors.

The Architectural Committee reviewed a similar in-concept application in September 2020 and recommended the following:

- The roof height of the proposed addition should be reduced so that the ridge lines of the cross-gables where they intersect the roof of the historic 1875 building are lower.
- The height of the proposed addition along the north elevation should be lower than the south elevation, which should be lower than the 1980's addition to the west.
- The north and south planes of the addition should be pulled back from the central historic portion of the existing historic building.
- The east elevation of the connector between the two gable portions of the addition presents as a blank wall of shingles and should be reduced in scale and better articulated in order to be more compatible with the historic building.
- The proposed dormers are incompatible with the historic building and should be reduced in scale and split into two dormers.
- The proposed dormer balconies compete with the historic balcony of the central 1875 portion of the building.

This revised application takes into consideration some, but not all, of the Architectural Committee's comments. As recommended, the height of the north portion of the addition is reduced, as is the connector between the north and south cross gables. Two sets of windows have been added to the connector roof of the east elevation. The single dormer on the north elevation has been split into two dormers, the dormer eaves lowered, and the detailing modified to appear less contemporary. The height of the south portion of the addition and width of the single dormer window and balcony remain unchanged.

New to this application is a proposal to modify the entrance to the north-central pavilion facing Kelly Drive. The entrance, which is located in the 1920's addition to the 1875 building, historically featured a single, six-panel door flanked by individual six-over-six wood windows, the openings and frames for which still remain. The windows at the second-floor level historically led to a balcony, which has since been removed. The current application proposes to change the door and cut sidelites, and to narrow the flanking windows in the entrance bay.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Demolish eastern additions
- Construct new addition
- Modify dormer on western/1980's addition
- Reconstruct south-facing balcony and install new windows and doors on 1875 building
- Modify entrance of 1920's north-central addition

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

- *Standard 3: Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
 - The proposed modifications to the north-central entrance alter the historic appearance of the 1920's addition to the north. The staff recommends that the northern entrance be restored to its historic appearance including the six-over-six

windows, based on the architectural drawings available in the Historical Commission's files. The current proposal creates a false sense of historical development and does not comply with this Standard.

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed addition is differentiated from the old, but remains overly large, competing with the historic building in scale, massing, and architectural features. The height of the south portion of the addition should be further reduced and the articulation of the east elevation should be more in keeping with the scale and features of the historic building. The application partially complies with this Standard.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the restoration work to the 1875 building and approval of the proposed addition, provided the height of the southern portion of the addition is reduced, and the east elevation is better articulated, pursuant to Standard 9, with the staff to review details; but denial of the proposed modifications to the northern entrance, pursuant to Standard 3.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the restoration work to the 1875 building and approval of the proposed addition, provided the following, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9:

- The east façade fenestration pattern is revised to create more of an element with a regular rhythm;
- At the north central elevation, the single six-panel door is retained, with the option to replace the tall middle panels with glazing; the flanking window openings are retained and six-over-six windows installed; and the balcony is reconstructed;
- On the south elevation, the ridge line of the new addition to the east is acceptable as proposed, but the balconies should not extend beyond plane of the first-floor wall; and the new dormer should be divided into a tripartite configuration.
- The decorative lights that trace the building are reinstalled.

ACTION: See Consent Agenda

ADDRESS: 125 N 10TH ST

Proposal: Alter entrance

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: PA. Zhang's Associate LLC

Applicant: Anthony Palimore, Anthony Palimore, RA

History: 1967; Chinatown YMCA, Chinese Cultural and Community Center; Yang Chou-Cheng

Individual Designation: 6/14/2013

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

The property at 125 N. 10th Street is a mid-block parcel between Cherry and Arch Streets in the Chinatown neighborhood. Originally constructed about 1831 as Federal-style rowhouse, the building's existing elaborate façade and tile roof were constructed between 1967 and 1971 by

the Chinese Cultural and Community Center. The nomination for the property, which was designated in 2013, identifies the period of significance as 1955- 2006, beginning with the year that the Chinatown YMCA opened on the second floor of the building, prior to the construction of the existing façade. In 1966, T.T. Chang, founder of the Chinatown YMCA, purchased the property and formed the Chinese Cultural and Community Center.

This application proposes to make modifications to the front entrance to provide ADA accessibility to the building, which is currently accessed by a flight of steps that leads to a recessed entrance. The rear of the property is inaccessible. This application proposes to relocate the entry wall and doors approximately 2.5 feet towards the interior to create an ADA-compliant landing. A chair lift would be installed along the concrete steps, and the chair stored at the top of the landing, in the recessed vestibule.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Relocate entry wall and doors
- Install accessible lift

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

- *Code-Required Work— Accessibility: Recommended: Complying with barrier-free access requirements in such a manner that the historic building's character-defining exterior features... are preserved or impacted as little as possible; Installing a lift as inconspicuously as possible when it is necessary to locate it on a primary elevation of the historic building.*
 - While the proposed project shifts the entry wall and creates a larger exterior vestibule, it does not remove or alter the building's distinctive cladding, and maintains the general appearance of the original entry. The physical and visual impacts of the proposed chair lift will be minimal, and there is no alternative location where a lift or ramp could be placed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, pursuant to the Accessibility Guideline.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the chair lift is replaced with an inclined platform lift and the decorative ceiling is extended to fill the enlarged vestibule, with the staff to review details, pursuant to the Accessibility Guideline.

ACTION: See Consent Agenda

ADDRESS: 214-20 VINE ST

Proposal: Construct six-story multi-family building on parking lots

Review Requested: Review and Comment

Owner: Vine St Living LLC

Applicant: Adam Montalbano, Moto Designshop Inc

History: Parking lot

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Non-contributing, 12/12/2003

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This Review and Comment application proposes to construct a six-story multi-family apartment building on several vacant, undeveloped parcels that currently function as a parking lot within the Old City Historic District. The properties at 214, 216, 218, and 220 Vine Street are currently enclosed by a non-historic fence and gate.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct six-story multi-family apartment building with roof deck and pilot houses.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Historical Commission has review-and-comment jurisdiction over this site. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The building's design does not relate to the context of the Old City Historic District. While brick is an appropriate material for the district, the proposed building would be clad in dark gray brick rather than the red brick found on the district's earliest buildings to the more recent industrial structures.
 - The building's design elements, such as its undulating façade, rhythm and height of the fenestration, and incorporation of balconies, do not reference the district's architecture. While the design is differentiated from the historic fabric, it fails to achieve compatibility with the district's historic buildings. The proposed building does not comply with this standard.
- *Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a manner such that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*
 - As the lots are currently vacant, there would be no adverse impact on the surrounding buildings or on the historic district if this property were to be removed in the future.

STAFF COMMENT: The proposed new construction is not compatible with the historic district and does not satisfy Standard 9.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:08:58

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Adam Montalbano represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia stated that he has heard from neighbors who have expressed concern over the building's design and the brick color. The building, he continued, reminds him of the defensive architecture in newly revitalized neighborhoods in the 1970s and 1980s that look like they were built to resist attack. He asked that the neighbor's concerns be taken into account and that modifications be made.
- Robert Gurmankin, president of Franklin Bridge North Neighbors Association, commented that he is hopeful the developers will change the brick to a color that better fits into the neighborhood. He suggested that the architecture has Brutalist qualities and would potentially be more appropriate elsewhere in the city, but not in the Old City Historic District. He asked that in addition to the brick, the applicant rethink some other aspects of the building's design.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The application was not revised between the Architectural Committee meeting and the Historical Commission review, though new renderings were submitted for clarity.
- The Architectural Committee found the scale and size of the ground story to be problematic and recommended that height be added and the windows be enlarged.
- The application proposes a dark maroon and gray brick; however, the brick may be changed to a red color that would be more compatible with other buildings in the district.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- While the massing is consistent with the Old City Historic District, the fenestration pattern, dark masonry color, and the design of the façade are not compatible with the district's architecture or character. The proposed design does not satisfy Standard 9.
- Though the ground story is intended to support a residential rather than commercial use, the scale is incompatible with the building and larger windows should be incorporated.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION COMMENT: The Historical Commission commented that the application for the property at 214-20 Vine Street is not compatible with the Old City Historic District and does not satisfy Standard 9.

ADDRESS: 271 S VAN PELT ST, UNIT # 2

Proposal: Construct addition and roof deck

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: John A. Cunningham

Applicant: Timothy Kerner, Terra Studio LLC

History: 1870; Stucco and parking added, 1970

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

The building at 271 S. Van Pelt Street is an Italianate carriage house constructed about 1870. This application proposes to construct a third-story addition and a roof deck. In 2012, the Historical Commission approved a similar scope of work for this same owner; however, that project was never built.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct a third-story addition
- Construct roof deck

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The addition is set back from the street and would be minimally visible from the right-of-way. The exterior walls of the new addition will be finished with stucco to be compatible with the existing structure.
 - A wooden trellis is proposed and would be attached to the new addition.
 - A stainless steel railing is proposed to enclose the roof deck which is differentiated from the decorative iron work on the front façade of the original structure.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval pursuant to Standard 9.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the proposal as presented, but approval if the heights of the third-story addition and the green roof are reduced to make them inconspicuous from the public right-of-way, the wood pergola is stained, and the finish of the railing is not shiny, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

ACTION: See Consent Agenda

ADDRESS: 2215 LOCUST ST

Proposal: Construct roof deck with pilot house; replace side and rear windows; install siding on rear bay

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Thomas Jay Rush and Meriam Zandi

Applicant: Jeffrey Wyant, Wyant Architecture LLC

History: 1872

Individual Designation: None

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

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

2215 Locust Street is a three-story residential building constructed in 1872 and is contributing to the Rittenhouse Fidler Historic District. This application for final approval proposes to construct a roof deck and pilot house, as well as to rehabilitate the rear of building. The property is located mid-block and the back of building is not visible from the public right-of-way. Although a fire lane runs behind property, it is a private, locked alley for residents only.

SCOPE OF WORK

- Construct pilot house and roof deck.
- Extend chimney height.
- Re-clad rear double bay window at the back wall on rear ell.
- Create new window openings on rear ell.
- Close select window openings and infill with brick.
- Create new door opening from existing window on rear wall of main block. Construct stairs from new doorway to back breezeway.
- Replace windows and door.
- No work to front façade.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
 - The project does not propose changes in materials, spaces, or spatial relationships that characterize the historic property.
 - All changes proposed will not visible from the public right-of-way and do not alter the public's perception of the building's or district's historic character.
- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The addition of the roof deck and pilot house will not destroy character defining materials. The design differentiates it from from the historic building but maintains compatibility with its massing, size, scale, and architectural features.
- *Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment will be unimpaired.*

- The addition of the roof deck and pilot house are reversible, and the essential form and integrity of the historic property is preserved.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with the staff to review details and a mock-up of the deck railing, pursuant to Standards 2, 9, and 10 and the Roof Guidelines.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted 4 to 2 to recommend approval of the deck and pilot house with a setback of the deck determined by mock-up and the skylight removed from the pilot house, but denial of the window changes at the rear, pursuant to Standards 2, 9, and 10, and Roof Guidelines. Messrs. McCoubrey and Cluver dissented, asserting that the property owner should be permitted to make minor changes at the rear, which is not visible from the public right-of-way.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:24:26

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Jeffrey Wyant represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The revised application addressed several of the Architectural Committee's concerns.
- All changes proposed will not be visible from the public right-of-way.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The project does not propose changes in materials, spaces, or spatial relationships that characterize the historic property. All changes proposed will not be visible from the public right-of-way and do not alter the public's perception of the building or historic district, satisfying Standard 2.
- The addition of the roof deck and pilot house will not destroy character-defining materials. The design differentiates it from the historic building but maintains compatibility with its massing, size, scale, and architectural features, satisfying Standard 9.
- The addition of the roof deck and pilot house are reversible, and the essential form and integrity of the historic property will be preserved, satisfying Standard 10.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, pursuant to Standards 2, 9, and 10. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 2215 Locust St MOTION: Approval MOVED BY: McCoubrey SECONDED BY: Edwards					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION, 21 OCTOBER 2020

ADDRESS: 210-12 N 12TH ST

Name of Resource: Sigma Sound Studios

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 210 N 12th St Investment, 212 N 12th St Investment

Nominator: Benjamin Leech, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 210-12 N. 12th Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Sigma Sound Studios satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the property has significant character, interest, and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, and Nation, as the home to Sigma Sound Studios, one of the most influential recording studios in America in the late twentieth century, and the birthplace of “The Sound of Philadelphia” or “Philly Soul,” a popular musical genre that fused soul, gospel, rhythm and blues, jazz, funk, and classical music. Additionally under Criterion A, the property is significant for its association with persons significant in the past, including both local and international music producers and recording artists. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the property exemplifies the cultural, economic, social and historical heritage of the community, standing as a remnant of the neighborhood’s once-abundant stock of film exchanges, record labels, and other entertainment industry service buildings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 210-12 N. 12th Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 210-12 N. 12th Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:31:05

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney Nino Tinari represented the property owner.
- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia represented the nominator.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Tinari stated that he and his client have great respect for Sigma Sound Studios. He explained that a zoning permit had been previously issued for construction of a condominium tower, but owing to this designation, his client will do everything in his power to accommodate the concerns of the Historical Commission to preserve the historically significant part of the property. He stated that his client still desires to develop the remaining portions of the property in the means approved by the zoning board, and will present plans for such a development at the appropriate time.
 - Mr. Thomas responded with other examples where facades have been preserved, including the Royal Theater development and the Rittenhouse Club at 18th and Walnut Streets. He stated that designation does not preclude a sensitive development that preserves the important elements of the building.
- Mr. Grossi summarized the significance of Sigma Sound Studios and the outpouring of support for the nomination. He noted that designation does not preclude future development, but it is a separate process from what is currently being reviewed. He thanked Max Ochester of Brewerytown Beats, Ben Leech, and former employees of Sigma Sound Studios for their participation in the nomination process.
- Mr. Tinari did not dispute the significance of Sigma Sound Studios, but questioned the timing of the nomination in relation to the zoning permit issuance, given that Sigma's significance has been known for many years.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Max Ochester of Brewerytown Beats spoke in support of the designation.
- Alexander Esposito spoke in support of the designation.
- Alexandra Fiorentino-Swinton, student, spoke in support of the designation.
- Evan Solot, musician and member of MFSB, spoke in support of the designation.
- Tayyib Smith, entrepreneur, spoke in support of the designation.
- Oscar Beisert spoke in support of the designation.
- Marc Byers, General Manager of Motown Records, spoke in support of the designation.
- Venise Whitaker spoke in support of the designation.
- James P. Gallagher, former Sigma Engineer, spoke in support of the designation.
- Jack Klotz, Associate Professor at Klein College of Media and Communication at Temple University and former Sigma employee, spoke in support of the designation.
- Allan Slutsky, musician and producer of the documentary *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, spoke in support of the designation.

- Jim Duffin spoke in support of the designation.
- Andrew Miller spoke in support of the designation.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- Numerous letters of support from former Sigma employees and others in the music industry were received regarding this nomination.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The property has significant character, interest, and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, and Nation, as the home to Sigma Sound Studios, one of the most influential recording studios in America in the late twentieth century; the property is significant for its association with persons significant in the past, including both local and international music producers and recording artists, satisfying Criterion A.
- The property exemplifies the cultural, economic, social and historical heritage of the community, standing as a remnant of the neighborhood's once-abundant stock of film exchanges, record labels, and other entertainment industry service buildings, satisfying Criterion J.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the property at 210-12 N. 12th Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 210-12 N. 12th St.					
MOTION: Designate, Criteria A and J					
MOVED BY: Cooperman					
SECONDED BY: Edwards					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

ADDRESS: 5848 CITY AVE

Name of Resource: The Chestnuts

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia

Nominator: Overbrook Farms Club and Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5848 City Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building and its landscape satisfy Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that the property is representative of the development of country estates in Philadelphia. It further elaborates under Criterion A on the significance of several former residents, including David Scull, Jr., a Quaker merchant and philanthropist, and Charles P. Vaughan, an industrialist and philanthropist. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the property's landscape represents the Picturesque style of landscape architecture and gardening. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that Eugène Achilles Baumann, the individual responsible for the property's significant landscape design, stood as an important Alsatian-American botanist, landscape gardener, and nurseryman. The nomination further argues under Criterion E that the property's original buildings are significant as works of prominent architect Addison Hutton and that Cherry Cottage and later alterations to the original buildings are significant as works of prominent architect William Lightfoot Price.

The historic preservation ordinance authorizes the Historical Commission to protect sites through the review of building permit applications. If the site is designated, the Historical Commission would enjoy regulatory authority over large-scale alterations to the grounds, but it would not regulate the planting, trimming, or removal of individual bushes and trees or other small-scale lawn and arboreal maintenance work.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5848 City Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5848 City Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J, and that the period of significance extend from 1865 to 1965, and that the chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building be considered contributing.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:17:14

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Oscar Beisert and Thaddeus Squire represented the nominator.
- No one represented the property owner at the meeting. However, the owner, Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia, submitted a written statement prior to the meeting opposing the designation of the property.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The site was historically owned by prominent Quaker families, and it became home to the Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia in the twentieth century, when they came to the area from Mexico.
- The nomination's period of significance extends from 1865 to 1940 and does not include the period of ownership under the Sisters of the Visitation.
- The nomination features a rare original landscape plan to show the intent of the design, which was created by landscape gardener Eugène Achilles Baumann. The general design of the landscape remains intact.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- While the Quaker context and history of the property is significant and well argued in the nomination, the site's later history that includes the occupancy by the Sisters of the Visitation is equally significant and should be represented in the designation. The history of the site's ownership and its relationship to the surrounding context satisfies Criteria A and J.
- The site represents a designed Picturesque landscape that is rare in Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion D.
- Though schematic, the original landscape plan shows the general location of pathways, open space, and groupings of plantings. While it does not provide a plant inventory, it is significant in showing design intent and was created by significant landscape gardener Eugène Achilles Baumann. The nomination satisfies Criterion E.
- The property's original buildings were designed by prominent architect Addison Hutton, and later buildings, such as Cherry Cottage, and alterations were designed by William Lightfoot Price. The nomination further satisfies Criterion E.
- The period of significance should be extended to 1965 to include the structures erected by the Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia, including the chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building, which should be listed as contributing buildings.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to find the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5848 City Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J, and to define the period of significance from 1865 to 1965, and to classify the chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building as contributing. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 5848 CITY AVE**MOTION: Designate, Criteria A, D, E, and J, with conditions****MOVED BY: Cooperman****SECONDED BY: Turner**

VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

ADDRESS: 1401 E SUSQUEHANNA AVE

Name of Resource: The Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows & Single Women; The Penn Home

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1401 E. Susquehanna Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the complex, which resulted from multiple building campaigns dating from the eighteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries, is significant under Criteria for Designation A and J. The nomination explains that the Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women purchased the eighteenth-century country seat of the Austin family at what is now Susquehanna Avenue and Belgrade Street in 1858. The asylum expanded upon the original building through the acquisition of neighboring parcels and the construction of numerous additions and modifications over the next century, and provided services to neighborhood women, and eventually men, until its closure in 2020. The nomination contends that the Penn Asylum, also known as the Penn Home, represents the development of early geriatric care, nursing homes, and social services in mid-nineteenth-century Philadelphia. Established to provide nonsectarian living accommodations for elderly widowed and single women of limited means in the Fishtown and larger Kensington neighborhood, satisfying Criterion J, the founding and physical development of the Penn Widows' Asylum is representative of developments in the broader economic, social, and political culture, as well as the organizational and physical development patterns in the city state, and nation, satisfying Criterion A.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1401 E. Susquehanna Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, J, and I, and that the period of significance be understood to cover likely remnants of an eighteenth-century building and its grounds, which may not be visible today from the exterior.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:28:33

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nominator.
- No one represented the property owner.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- John Scott spoke in support of the nomination.
- Venise Whitaker spoke in support of the nomination.
- Kristen Pomroy spoke in support of the nomination.
- David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, spoke in support of the nomination.
- Andrew Miller spoke in support of the nomination.
- Susan McAnally spoke in support of the nomination.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women, which purchased the property in 1858 and expanded upon it numerous times, is representative of the development of early geriatric care and social services in mid-nineteenth-century Philadelphia.
- It is unlikely that the portion of the property identified as “Resource 1: Mansion House,” as a whole dates to 1769, but rather that the eighteenth-century country seat of the West family may be a component of the Mansion House shown in the 1850s painting in the nomination, and whose form is still visible today.
- The period of significance begins in 1769, which is the earliest documented date of potential occupation of the property.
- Below-ground resources dating from the eighteenth-century onward may be present in the courtyard, including artifact deposits and structural remnants.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.
- Although not explicitly addressed in the nomination, the documentation in the nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion for Designation I.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the property at 1401 E. Susquehanna Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, J, and I, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, with a period of significance understood to cover the likely remnants of an eighteenth-century building and its grounds, which may not be visible today from the exterior. Mr. Lenard-Palmer seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 1401 E Susquehanna Ave nomination MOTION: Designate; Criteria A, J, and I MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Lenard-Palmer					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

ADDRESS: 5900 GERMANTOWN AVE

Name of Resource: Vacant Lot

Proposed Action: Rescind Individual Designation

Property Owner: Scuderi RE 5900-02 Germantown Ave LLC

Nominator: Augusta M. O'Neil, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP

Individual Designation: 2/25/1964

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application requests the rescission of the individual designation of the property at 5900 Germantown Avenue. The property was individually designated on 25 February 1964. At the time of designation, two early nineteenth-century houses stood on the site. The property now known as 5900 Germantown Avenue has been divided into two properties known as 5900 and 5902 Germantown at times, with one house on each lot, and then consolidated back into one property. The property is currently a vacant lot.

In July 2020, the property owner, who acquired the property in April of that year, submitted an application to the Historical Commission proposing to construct a mixed-use building on the vacant lot. During its review, the Architectural Committee questioned whether the designated houses had been demolished legally. For this reason, the applicant withdrew the application and sought to clarify the circumstances of the demolition.

Since the Architectural Committee meeting, the staff, with the assistance of the Department of Licenses & Inspections (L&I), discovered that L&I cited the houses as Imminently Dangerous on 24 January 1992, demolished them in the winter or spring of 1992, and then billed the owner for the cost of the demolition on 4 May 1992. The houses were demolished legally by L&I, albeit without the Historical Commission's approval, because they posed a threat to public safety.

Section 5.14.b.1 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations authorizes the Commission to remove entries from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places when the qualities that caused the original entry on the Register have been lost or destroyed. In this case, the buildings were designated for their architectural qualities. Those qualities were lost with the demolition. There is no longer a basis for the designation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the Historical Commission rescind the individual designation of 5900 Germantown Avenue and remove it from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, pursuant to Section 5.14.b.1 of the Commission's Rules & Regulations, because the qualities that caused its original entry have been destroyed.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend approval of the rescission of the individual designation of 5900-02 Germantown Avenue, pursuant to Section 5.14.b.1 of the Commission's Rules & Regulations, because the qualities that caused its original entry have been destroyed.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:55:38

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the rescission request to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney Gussie O'Neill represented the rescission request.
- The property owner, Scott Scuderi, was also in attendance.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. O'Neill explained that her client had only purchased the property in April 2020. He purchased it as a vacant lot, which was how it was marketed. Ms. O'Neill stated that there had been at least three previous owners who had also purchased the property as a vacant lot.
- Ms. O'Neill informed the members of the Historical Commission that research showed that the designated property had been demolished twenty-eight years ago, and that her client obviously had not had anything to do with it.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the Committee on Historic Designation made their recommendation to approve the rescission request "with prejudice" and said that they did not feel that they had any alternative but to endorse the application since the reason for the designation was no longer there.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society of Philadelphia objected to the rescission.
- Jim Duffin objected to the rescission.
- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia urged the Historical Commission to retain its jurisdiction over the property and deny the rescission request.
- Steven Peitzman objected to the rescission.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites objected to the rescission.
- Venice Whitaker objected to the rescission.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The Historical Commission designated the property at 5900-02 Germantown Avenue because of the architectural qualities of the buildings on the site.
- The buildings were demolished legally upon the order of the Department of Licenses & Inspections, owing to their dangerous conditions.
- There is no legal basis for the Historical Commission to maintain jurisdiction over this property because the buildings, which led to its designation, were legally demolished about 28 years ago.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The individual designation of 5900-02 Germantown Avenue should be rescinded, pursuant to Section 5.14.b.1 of the Commission's Rules & Regulations, because the qualities that caused its original entry have been destroyed.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to approve the rescission of the individual designation of 5900 Germantown Avenue. Ms. Sanchez seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 12 to 1.

ITEM: 5900 Germantown Avenue MOTION: Approve rescission MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Sanchez					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair		X			
Washington	X				
Total	12	1			

ADDRESS: ORIANNA ST. S 600 BLOCK

Name of Resource: Orianna Street, S 600 block between Bainbridge St and South St

Proposed Action: Rescission of block from Historic Street Paving Thematic District

Inventory Property Owner: City of Philadelphia Streets Department

Applicant: John Bang, owner of 623-625 S. Orianna St

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This request proposes to remove the 600 block of S. Orianna Street from the inventory of the Historic Street Paving Thematic District. The block has been included in the district since 1999. The request was submitted by the owner of a property that abuts the block.

In 1998, the Historical Commission designated the Historic Street Paving Thematic District, a collection of several hundred blocks of streets in the city that retain their historic street paving materials. In 1999, the Commission amended the district, adding a few streets that had been initially overlooked. The designation covers the cartway itself, but not the curbs or sidewalks. The historic preservation ordinance authorizes the Historical Commission to review building permit applications issued by the Department of Licenses & Inspections, but not streets permits for work within the right-of-way, which are issued by the Streets Department of the City of Philadelphia. Therefore, with regard to historic streets, the Historical Commission acts in an advisory capacity, providing advice to the Streets Department about the appropriateness of alterations to historic cartways. Per an informal agreement, the Streets Department consults with the Historical Commission whenever it undertakes work to historic streets or reviews applications from third parties for work to historic streets. The Streets Department should be commended for its stewardship of historic streets, which it undertakes voluntarily at great expense.

The applicant claims that the subject block has lost its integrity, owing to its severely deteriorated conditions, and is requesting that the block be removed from the District inventory so that the Streets Department can repair and repave it with a non-historic paving material. The Streets Department has indicated that this block is not on its priority list for either reconstruction or major rehabilitation at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial of the removal of the 600 block of S. Orianna Street from the Historic Street Paving Thematic District, pursuant to Section 5.14 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations. While the paving is in need of repair, the qualities that led to its designation have not been lost or destroyed.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend denial of the request to rescind the 600 block of S. Orianna Street from the Historic Street Paving Thematic District.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:20:05

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the rescission request to the Historical Commission.
- No one represented the rescission request.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites objected to the rescission request.
- Janet Bernstein objected to the rescission request, noting that there were many streets throughout Philadelphia in significantly worse condition than the subject block.
- Nicholas Baker of the Streets Department said that the department was aware of the required repairs in particular at the southern end of the subject block. He said that the Streets Department considered the northern half of the block to be in good condition, which is the primary reason the block has not been identified as a priority for reconstruction. Mr. Baker reiterated that the designated status of the block in no way prevented the Streets Department from making necessary repairs and he thanked the Historical Commission for its cooperation with all matters related to the district.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The designation of the block in no way prevents the Streets Department from making the necessary repairs.
- The rescission request was motivated by the concern of some neighbors about the condition of the street, more so than a fundamental issue with the designation.
- Philadelphia's historic streets contributed significantly to the public's understanding of the city's history.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- While the paving is in need of repair, the qualities that led to its designation have not been lost or destroyed, therefore there was no basis for the rescission.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to deny the request to rescind the 600 block of S. Orianna Street from the Historic Street Paving Thematic District. Mr. Lippert seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: S. Orianna Street, 600 block					
MOTION: Denial of rescission request					
MOVED BY: Cooperman					
SECONDED BY: Lippert					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL HARDSHIP, 27 OCTOBER 2020

ADDRESS: 5129-35 FRANKFORD AVE

Proposal: Demolish building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Rite Aid of Pennsylvania

Applicant: Ronald Patterson, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP

History: 1955; Penn Fruit; George Neff, architect

Individual Designation: 11/10/2016

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to demolish the purpose-built Penn Fruit supermarket building at 5129-35 Frankford Avenue. It claims that the building cannot be feasibly reused, that requiring its preservation would impose a financial hardship on the property owner. The financial hardship application will be reviewed by the Architectural Committee and Committee on Financial Hardship as well as the Historical Commission. The building is a large, single-story purpose-built supermarket constructed in 1955. It is 37,666 square feet in size. The last supermarket tenant, occupying approximately 80 percent of the rentable space, closed its doors in 2016. The space has been vacant and the signature storefront system has been entirely covered behind a security system of panels since that time. The Historical Commission designated the property as historic on 10 November 2016 with a vote of 7 to 5, finding that it satisfied Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J. The nomination argued that the arched-roof supermarket, constructed in 1955, possessed significant character, interest, and value as part of the development of Philadelphia in the postwar era, exemplified the legacy of the Penn Fruit Company as a major innovator in the supermarket industry; reflected the environment of the postwar era characterized by the popularity of exaggerated modernism; and embodied the distinguishing characteristics of the supermarket as a building type uniquely emblematic of this era and style. The owner of the property, Rite Aid of Pennsylvania, objected to the designation in 2016, presenting an engineer's report claiming that the building was poorly designed and constructed and was in very poor condition, beyond repair.

Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance prohibits the Historical Commission from approving the complete demolition of a historic building unless the Historical Commission finds that issuance of the building permit is necessary in the public interest, or unless the Historical Commission finds that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted. In order to show that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted in order to justify a demolition, the owner must demonstrate that the sale of the property is impracticable, that commercial rental cannot provide a reasonable rate of return, and that other potential uses of the property are foreclosed. This application claims that the condition of the building and the cost to repair it prohibit a sale or reuse of the building. This application also makes an argument for allowing demolition in the public interest, with a claim that the continued designation of the property will thwart the revitalization of the Frankford Avenue corridor.

The application includes a cover letter from attorney Ronald J. Patterson that explains that Rite Aid of Pennsylvania, the owner of the property, seeks a finding of financial hardship owing to three main reasons: 1) the building's essential features have reached a point of imminent and complete failure, making preservation infeasible; 2) Rite Aid has lost and

continues to lose substantial money by keeping the property within its real estate portfolio; and 3) reuse of the existing building does not present the highest and best use, and an alternative design for the site would positively impact the community. The cover letter concludes that:

“the present conditions of the building make preservation both impracticable and economically infeasible, and being required to repair the building would work a hardship on Rite Aid as the owner. Moreover, the continued designation of the Property would directly contradict the sound goals and recommendations that the Planning Commission has established for this corridor, and would thwart redevelopment efforts encouraged by the neighborhood impacted by the Property’s continued designation. For all these reasons, we respectfully request that the Commission exercise its discretion and grant Rite Aid’s application for financial hardship.”

The application includes an affidavit from Paul F. Newlin III, the Director of Real Estate Operations at Rite Aid Corporation. The affidavit states that the property has not been listed for sale, and no offers for purchase have been received. It also states that no reuse of the property is contemplated because the cost to rehabilitate the property is prohibitive. Exhibit “E” offers a construction budget estimate from 2018 of \$3,792,344 for a building rehabilitation and fit out, including site improvement, exterior construction, ceiling work, flooring, roofing, electrical, plumbing, and associated costs. An appraisal report prepared in 2016 at Exhibit “B” indicates that the property is valued at \$1.5 million with the current leases, and \$1.6 million with the best possible leases. Exhibit “A” documents a 24-month expense to Rite Aid of \$211,599.84 to keep the property in its real estate portfolio. The 2016 appraisal report which concluded that, although there are positive aspects of the market area and site, including excellent transit access to major job centers and good commercial exposure with three street frontages, the market for commercial uses was weak due to low incomes, declining rental rates, and negative absorption. The application includes two engineer’s reports, at Exhibits “C” and “D,” one from the time of historic designation, and the other from June 2020, that conclude that the condition of the property has only worsened from the extremely poor condition that it was in at the time of designation. The application includes a report from a land planning consultant at Exhibit “F” that opines that the current building and historic designation restricts the potential for vertical mix-use development and prohibits the optimal use of the site for financial and community benefit. This report suggests that a conceptual plan for maximum potential use of the site would include a supermarket, but also additional ground-floor retail, with four stories of multi-family units above. The application also includes several letters of support from community organizations for approval of the hardship application.

The cover letter provided in the application includes mention of a request for rescission of the historic designation as an alternative, but no arguments are made in the application to support this request. Therefore, the staff recommends that consideration of a rescission is not part of this application.

After reviewing the initial application described above, the staff recommended to the applicant that they provide a discounted cash flow analysis of a project to rehabilitate the historic building for commercial use that is based on a ten-year pro forma and predicts yearly cash flows and a net present value. Such an analysis would demonstrate whether or not the sale of the property is impracticable, that commercial rental cannot provide a reasonable rate of return, and that other potential uses of the property are foreclosed. The applicant provided this analysis, which is included at the end of the application. The analysis predicts negative cash flows every year and a present value for the project of negative \$5,028,291 in its current condition, negative \$3,836,470 with a retail tenant, and negative \$1,078,565 if sold today for market value. The

conclusion drawn from the analysis is that only a redevelopment of the site would prevent a substantial financial loss.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that:

- The complete demolition of the designated resource triggers the demolition prohibition in Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. For the Historical Commission to approve the complete demolition, the applicant must demonstrate that the demolition is necessary in the public interest or that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.
- The implicit necessary in the public interest argument in the application should be rejected because, while the demolition and redevelopment that might bring economic revitalization to the area may be in the public interest, no argument is made that the demolition is *necessary* in the public interest, i.e. that the demolition is the *only* means to achieve an overriding public interest.
- The implicit rescission request in the application should be rejected because no argument regarding the satisfaction of the rescission criteria set forth in Section 5.14.b of the Rules & Regulations has been proffered.
- The assertion that the demolition should be approved to allow the property to be put to its highest and best use should be rejected. The Historical Commission may constitutionally regulate a property to the extent that it cannot be put to its highest and best use, provided that property remains able to furnish a reasonable rate of return. The measure in this case is reasonable rate of return, not highest and best use.
- The construction cost estimate relative to the appraised value indicates that it is unlikely the building can be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.
- The construction cost estimate relative to the appraised value indicates that it is likely that a sale of the building is impracticable without a substantial financial loss.
- The condition of the building was very poor at the time of designation. The condition is reportedly worse today. If the financial hardship case is proven, it will negate any claims of demolition by neglect because a property owner cannot be compelled to invest in a property that cannot provide a reasonable rate of return.
- The financial analysis demonstrates that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.
- The Historical Commission may approve the application, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL HARDSHIP RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Financial Hardship voted to recommend approval, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:30:45

RECUSAL:

- Mr. McCoubrey recused from the review of the application.

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the application to the Historical Commission.

- Attorney Gussie O'Neill and land planner Nancy Templeton represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas explained that the historic preservation ordinance requires the Historical Commission to determine whether a building can be reasonably adapted for a new use when it is undertaking a financial hardship analysis. Requiring a property owner to construct an entirely new building or make a very large addition to an existing building in order to subsidize a historic building is not a reasonable adaptation. The Committee on Financial Hardship acknowledged that the Historical Commission cannot compel a property owner to construct a large building to subsidize a historic building to overcome a financial hardship, which is part of the reason it reached the recommendation that it did.
- Ms. O'Neill explained that Rite Aid purchased the property in 2007 with the intention of demolishing the building and constructing a new pharmacy, but, owing to the economic collapse in 2008, Rite Aid decided to keep it as a supermarket for the community until they had a plan for what to do with the property. The property was designated as historic in 2016, which passed by a narrow vote of 7 to 5. At the time of designation, there was a tenant in the building who went into bankruptcy despite Rite Aid offering a reduced rent. That was the last major tenant. The community has been left without a grocery store. The application has received overwhelming support from community stakeholders so that the area can move forward. SEPTA has recently provided a letter of support. The security panels were put in place at the request of the community because the property was attracting those impacted by the opioid epidemic. Rite Aid is willing to redevelop the site in a way that will work for the community, but the historic designation is standing in the way. The pro forma shows that rehabilitating the building and renting to a new grocery store tenant is not financially feasible. A supplemental pro forma also shows that even with the inclusion of historic tax credits, it still results in a substantial financial loss.
- Ms. Templeton provided her professional opinion regarding the planning implications and community impacts of the existence of the building on the site. She opined that the historic designation and the presence of the building hinders the ability to develop the site to its fullest potential as a transit-oriented development, specifically regarding maximizing density and mix of uses of commercial and residential. Transit-oriented development is also a primary goal of the neighborhood as stated in the City Planning Commission's Lower Northeast District Plan and by the Frankford Community Development Corporation and SEPTA. It is a very high-profile corner and is highly suitable for transit-oriented development. The scale and single-use of the building does not lend itself to transit-oriented development, which requires higher density and a mix of uses to be impactful. The building as-is does not provide a community benefit.
- Ms. Cooperman suggested that recordation of the building would be appropriate. The history of the building is already well-documented in the nomination, but recordation according to Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Standards would be appropriate. The photography should be done according to National Register Standards which includes digital photography. It should include documentation of the interior and exterior to the extent that it is physically safe to do so.
 - Mr. Thomas agreed that the building should be recorded according to HABS Standards but with digital photography per National Register Standards, and the documentation should be made available online.

- Ms. Washington commented that one flaw of the designation process is not looking at the hardship on the surrounding community. She noted that the Frankford Community Development Corporation's office building has been restored, and that the CDC could play a role in storing and displaying some of the documentation in its storefront windows.
- Ms. O'Neill asked what would be required of Rite Aid as the property owner.
 - Ms. Cooperman responded that her motion will include a requirement of recordation of the building's interior and exterior by a qualified professional, and Rite Aid as the owner would need to engage that professional and allow access to the building.
- Mr. Farnham explained that Section 14-1005(6)(c) of the Philadelphia Code states that in cases where the Historical Commission agrees to the demolition of a historic building, the Historical Commission may require that the historic building be recorded, at the owner's expense, according to the documentation standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) for deposit with the Historical Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Paul Steinke, representing the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and also the nominator for the property in 2016, commented that the Alliance has changed its position and has withdrawn its opposition to the application, owing to the recommendation of the Committee on Financial Hardship and also the lack of interest in the Frankford community in seeing the building preserved and restored. He explained that the Alliance believed it had community support for the designation in 2016, but the closure of the supermarket later that year resulted in a loss of community support for the designation. He commented that this is a case of demolition by neglect. He explained that the Alliance authored nominations for several mid-century modern buildings. He asked that the building be properly documented and photographed according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for historic documentation prior to demolition.
- Phillip Robinson, Frankford resident, supported the application.
- Bill Ritzler, Vice President of the Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers, took no position on the existing historic designation but supported the location for a district health center and a transit-oriented development, and actions that are necessary to achieve this goal. He commented that he personally believes the application does demonstrate a financial hardship.
- Ellie Devyatkin, Commercial Corridor Manager for the Frankford Community Development Corporation, supported the application.
- Blane Stoddart, of construction project management company BFW Group, supported the application.
- Janet Bernstein, Constituent Services Advisor for State Representative Joseph Hohenstein of the 177th District, supported the application.
- Sloane Folks, Frankford resident, supported the application.
- Jim Duffin commented that the Commission should vote based on financial hardship criteria instead of public interest arguments that have been made.
- Marie Butler, Frankford resident, supported the application and reiterated the need for a new supermarket at this location.
- John Walker, Captain of the 15th Police District, supported the application and explained that this site is a high-crime area that will benefit from redevelopment.

- Venise Whitaker grew up in Frankford and commented on the issue of this area being a food desert that needs developers who are willing to work with the community.
- Oscar Beisert commented that the property owner should fund nominations to designate other Frankford properties as historic.
- Jennifer Folks, Frankford resident, supported the application.
- Roger Tenant Sr., President of the Frankford Community Development Corporation Board and Frankford resident, supported the application.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The complete demolition of the designated resource triggers the demolition prohibition in Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance. For the Historical Commission to approve the complete demolition, the applicant must demonstrate that the demolition is necessary in the public interest or that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.
- The implicit necessary in the public interest argument in the application should be rejected because, while the demolition and redevelopment that might bring economic revitalization to the area may be in the public interest, no argument is made that the demolition is necessary in the public interest, i.e. that the demolition is the only means to achieve an overriding public interest.
- The implicit rescission request in the application should be rejected because no argument regarding the satisfaction of the rescission criteria set forth in Section 5.14.b of the Rules & Regulations has been proffered.
- The condition of the building was very poor at the time of designation.
- The construction costs and retail rental rate estimates are accurate and therefore the retail rental pro forma indicates that the building cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.
- Potential buyers have made offers for the property, but all offers assumed the demolition of the building. No offers for the property proposed the retention and rehabilitation of the building. The application shows that a market-rate sale of the building would result in a significant financial loss for the owner. The application demonstrates that a sale of the building is impracticable.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The building at 5129-35 Frankford Avenue cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted; the sale of the property is impracticable; rental cannot provide a reasonable rate of return; and other potential uses of the property are foreclosed; pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the Philadelphia Code.
- In cases where the Historical Commission agrees to the demolition of a historic building, the Historical Commission may require that the historic building be recorded, at the owner's expense, according to the documentation standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) for deposit with the Historical Commission, pursuant to Section 14-1005(6)(c) of the Philadelphia Code.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to approve the application, pursuant to Sections 14-1005(6)(c and d) of the Philadelphia Code, provided the building is recorded according to the documentation standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey and Engineering Record, excepting that the photographs are taken by a qualified professional in digital format according

to National Register Standards, for deposit with the Historical Commission, with copies offered to the Frankford Community Development Corporation, Frankford Historical Society, and one additional institution. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 5129-35 Frankford Ave. MOTION: Approval with conditions MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Turner					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey				X	
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	12			1	

OLD BUSINESS

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

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.

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.

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney David Burkholder and consultant George Thomas represented the property owner, Andrew Wade.
- Alex Balloon of the Tacony Community Development Corporation represented the nominator.

DISCUSSION:

- David Burkholder introduced himself, his consultant, and his client and explained that they were there to express their opposition to the designation of 5250 Unruh Avenue. Mr. Burkholder said that he would demonstrate that there was nothing to support the nomination's claim that the site was historic during his presentation.
- Mr. Burkholder shared two definitions of the word "historic" from two different dictionaries and concluded that based on both, it must be proven that his client's property was "famous or important in history" and have "great and lasting importance" in order to justify designation. He informed the members of the Historical Commission that his and Mr. Thomas' presentations would demonstrate why this was not true of the Unruh property.
- Mr. Burkholder argued that not every property warranted designation, and such was the case with the subject property, and he cautioned that this nomination for a less than significant property would dilute the process if it led to a designation. Mr. Burkholder explained that he and Mr. Thomas would present a two-pronged argument, one looking at the nominating petition and the discussion that took place at the Committee on Historic Designation meeting of 5 December 2019, and the other placing the subject property into a larger historical, economic and cultural context.
- Mr. Burkholder referenced a specific court case involving Judge Daniel J. Anders in which the judge asked the counsel for the Philadelphia Historical Commission whether the Criteria for Historic Designation limited properties eligible for designation to those that are "superlative." Mr. Burkholder stated that the attorney for the Historical Commission, Leonard Reuter, could not refute the judge's conclusion. Mr. Burkholder went on to argue that if everything could be considered historically significant, then nothing really was.
- Mr. Burkholder disputed the claim made in the nomination that the subject property was highly visible from several public thoroughfares, citing the use of so many aerial photographs in the nomination as support for his argument.
- Mr. Burkholder stated that although the architect, Walter Harvey Geissinger, was described by a member of the Committee on Historic Designation as "prolific," this word could not be equated with famous or important. Mr. Burkholder also said that Mr. Thomas would expand on the reasons why the nomination's claims of significance based on how the structure was a typical example of an industrial building designed by a highly influential architect were false.
- Mr. Burkholder informed the members of the Historical Commission that he and his clients were concerned that the nomination had been politically motivated after protracted litigation with the City of Philadelphia.
- Mr. Burkholder informed the members of the Historical Commission that Building 8 of the 5250 Unruh Avenue complex had been declared imminently dangerous by the Department of Licenses & Inspections. He said that as recently as earlier in the

week, the City said that it would demolish the structure if the owner did not do so himself.

- Mr. Burkholder claimed that, if approved, the designation would force the owner to self-insure the property at great personal expense. He also stated that the Covid-19 pandemic had greatly impacted his client's business and if the property was designated, his client would be at risk of financial ruin or bankruptcy.
- George Thomas, the owner's preservation consultant, gave an extensive presentation arguing against the nomination's claims of significance under Criteria for Designation E and J. He reiterated Mr. Burkholder's point that, in order to be worthy of designation, the subject property needed to be more than typical.
- Regarding Criterion for Designation J, Mr. George Thomas said that the builder responsible for the structure under consideration needed to be an innovator, not just a common builder to satisfy the criterion.
- Regarding Criterion for Designation E, Mr. George Thomas argued that the subject property failed to serve as a primary example of the Tacony neighborhood and its development.
- Mr. George Thomas said that the nomination itself argued that the builder, Geissinger, was not in fact significant by saying only that he had designed several commercial buildings without even claiming that they were important. Mr. George Thomas went on to say that the fact that so little research had been done on Geissinger was a reflection of his limited influence.
- Mr. George Thomas walked the members of the Historical Commission through the steps a historian would take to determine significant influence, and the reasons why Geissinger did not rise to such a level. Mr. George Thomas also provided the Historical Commission with a list of builders contemporary with Geissinger who he believed were truly significant.
- Mr. George Thomas argued that the nomination's claim that Geissinger was directly connected to the well-known local architecture and engineering firm Ballinger was incorrect.
- Mr. George Thomas questioned how the nominator determined the boundaries for the nomination, noting that it did not encompass the entire site of the historic mill. He also pointed out that the building that was left out of the nomination is the most visible from the public right-of-way. Mr. Thomas asked why this one specific piece of the historic mill complex was being singled out for designation.
- Mr. George Thomas contrasted the subject property with the Disston complex, noting that the Disston name is seen all over Tacony even today. Mr. Thomas said that if there was one site that characterizes the industrial history of Tacony it is the Disston mill site.
- Mr. George Thomas pointed out that historically, the workforce of the nominated property did not come from Tacony the way the Disston factory workers did, and therefore the subject property did not exemplify its context.
- Mr. George Thomas noted that when the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documented Tacony, it was the Disston complex that was recorded rather than the subject property.
- Mr. George Thomas reiterated Mr. Burkholder's point that the nominated building is not visible from the public right-of-way, therefore leaving the property with no street presence.
- Mr. George Thomas ended his presentation by reiterating that the subject property does not meet Criteria for Designation E and J and should not be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

- Andrew Wade, the owner of the property, spoke against the designation. He said that he understood the work the Historical Commission did, in part, thanks to his own involvement on a similar board in his home town. Mr. Wade explained that the remote location of the building is what caused him to purchase it, and he confirmed that the only way to access the property was through the driveway easement he shared with his neighbor.
- Mr. Wade suggested that the nominator submitted this nomination after attending a party for a salvage business that opened next door to his.
- Mr. Wade said that the designation of his property would definitely create a financial hardship for him, explaining that when he is ready to retire in the future, he would be selling the property and the permits to run his business. He added that should the property be designated as historic, he would not be successful in selling it. Mr. Wade expressed concern with how he would be required to replace architectural elements such as doors in a way that would both comply with the Historical Commission's regulations but also guarantee safety.
- Mr. Wade told the members of the Historical Commission that a portion of his property has been declared imminently dangerous by the Department of Licenses and Inspections. He shared that he used to love his building but no longer does because of all of the frustration the City of Philadelphia had caused him. Mr. Wade said that while he would continue to take care of his property, he was looking forward to selling it.
- Mr. Wade confirmed that the information that his attorney and his architectural historian consultant had presented at the meeting was accurate.
- Mr. Mattioni stated that after listening to the discussion and reading the materials provided prior to the meeting, he was convinced that the property did not meet Criteria for Designation E or J. He said that he was not convinced of the significance of the architect as was argued by the nominator and he was troubled by this nomination.
- The nominator, Alex Balloon, spoke in support of the designation. He disagreed with the definition of "exemplify" that was argued by Mr. George Thomas and said that the property was worthy of designation as was demonstrated in the well-researched nomination.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society of Philadelphia spoke in support of the nomination. He disagreed with several points Mr. George Thomas made in his presentation.
- Hal Schirmer spoke in support of designation and said that in the future there would be a publicly accessible trail in front of this property as part of a plan for the Delaware River. Mr. Schirmer made several claims about a lawsuit between the owner and the City and about the owner's purchase of the property.
 - Mr. Burkholder stated that Mr. Schirmer's remarks about a separate legal matter his client was involved in were factually inaccurate. He also clarified that Mr. Schirmer's claim that Mr. Wade had just recently purchased the property for one dollar was also false.
- Venise Whitaker spoke in support of designation.
- Mary McGettigan of West Philadelphians for Progressive Planning and Preservation said that she disagreed with Mr. George Thomas' argument against the significance of the subject property and was in support of designation.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The Tacony Worsted Mills at 5250 Unruh Avenue is a significant industrial complex in the Tacony neighborhood of Northeast Philadelphia.
- The property was designed by architect Walter Harvey Geissinger starting in 1886.

The Historical Commission concluded 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, satisfying Criterion E.
- 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, satisfying Criterion J.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to vote the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5250 Unruh Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J. Mr. Lippert seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7 to 4, and one abstention.

ITEM: 5250 Unruh Ave MOTION: Designate, Criterion E & J MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Lippert					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)		X			
Edwards					X
Hartner (DPP)		X			
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni		X			
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)		X			
Lepori (Commerce)			X		
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	7	4	1		1

DISCUSSION OF CONTINUANCES OF NOMINATION REVIEWS

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 05:25:09

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farnham presented a memorandum on the continuances of nomination reviews to the Historical Commission.
- The Commissioners decided not to discuss the proposed regulation on continuances of nomination reviews, owing to the lateness of the hour.

- The Commissioners directed the staff not to restart the review of the nomination of the Jewelers' Row Historic District at the December 2020 meeting of the Historical Commission, but instead to maintain the status quo, with the review continued to the first in-person meeting of the Commission. The Commissioners requested that Michael Phillips, the attorney representing many of the property owners in the proposed district, provide the Historical Commission with a status update at the December 2020 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 05:31:30

ACTION: At 2:33 p.m., Ms. Cooperman moved to adjourn. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Adjournment MOTION: Adjourn MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Turner					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards					X
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	12				1

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Philadelphia Historical Commission are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the video recording for this meeting. The start time for each agenda item in the recording is noted.
- Application materials and staff overviews are available on the Historical Commission's website, www.phila.gov/historical.