

**THE MINUTES OF THE 700TH STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 11 DECEMBER 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		
Donna Carney (Department of Planning & Development)	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		
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:

Laura Keim
Mathew Huffman
Nate Sunderhaus
Michele Racioppi
Randal Baron
Nikki Whitehead
Kelly Wiles
Mary McGettigan
Michael Mattioni, Esq.
Adam Montalbano
Johnny Bay
Mason Carter
Justin Detwiler
Gabriel Gottlieb
Alberto Smeke
Dina Bleckman
Eric Rahe
Deborah Houda
Suzanna Barucco
Venise Whitaker
Greg Peluso
Ivan Krevolin
Mary Dankanis
David Traub, Save Our Sites
Ricki Sablove
Oscar Beisert
Allison Weiss
Michael Phillips, Esq., Obermayer
Dan Ciolino
Jackie Mahan
Liz Mahan
Nancy Pontone
Ben Myers
Kevin Block
Elizabeth Milroy
Gilberto Vilaarroyo
Allee Davis
J. M. Duffin
Harrison Haas, Esq.
Henry Sullivan
Rustin Ohler
Stella Wong
Robert Piasecki
Agnes Cavalcante
Inga Saffron
Cathie Dopkin
Ryan Solimeo
Dennis Pickeral
Kevin McMahon

Gerald Dennis Gill
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
George Poulin
Steven Peitzman
Milton Lau, BLTa
Jay Farrell
Deborah Woodward
Mary Giampietro
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance
Brian McIntyre
David Taranto
Alex Balloon
Matt McClure, Esq. Ballard Spahr
Leo Addimando
Nissa Eisenberg
Ben Leech
Susan Wetherill

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, 699TH STATED MEETING, 13 NOVEMBER 2020

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:05:25

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 699th Stated Meeting, held 13 November 2020. No corrections were offered.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to adopt the minutes of the 699th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 13 November 2020. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Adoption of the Minutes of the 699th Meeting MOTION: Adoption of minutes MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Edwards					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair					X
Washington	X				
Total	12				1

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 27 OCTOBER 2020

CONSENT AGENDA

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:06:10

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 application for 4600 N. 16th Street. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

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

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 4600 N 16TH ST

Proposal: Modify service wing; construct addition
 Review Requested: Final Approval
 Owner: City of Philadelphia
 Applicant: Deborah Woodward, Krieger + Associates Architects
 History: 1723; Stenton Mansion and Log House
 Individual Designation: 6/26/1956
 District Designation: None
 Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to make a series of modifications to the north elevation of the service wing, which includes the c. 1790 kitchen, 1811 greenhouse, 1960s restrooms, and c. 1730 carriage house. The modifications are the result of a decade-long study to explore improvement options to the wing as a means of separating office and visitor spaces, creating accessibility, upgrading restroom facilities, and clarifying visitor circulation. Several options for the new offices and restrooms were considered including adapting the barn and log house, constructing a new stand-alone building, and acquiring offsite space. After much deliberation, the current proposal was deemed the least intrusive and most effective.

The current application follows an in-concept application approved by the Historical Commission at its 11 January 2019 meeting. At the time, the Commission concluded that maximizing the use of the service wing is preferable to building a new structure on the site, though it asked the applicant to minimize the size of the dormers proposed to create additional space on the second floor of the kitchen building. It also requested that a closer study of the service wing space be undertaken.

Like the in-concept application, the current application proposes to separate the administrative and visitor functions by relocating offices to the second story of the kitchen. To accommodate the offices, a 1930s dormer would be removed and replaced with two new shed dormers. The new dormers would feature a series of wood two-over-two double-hung sash windows and would have standing seam metal roofs. The cheek walls would be clad in composite siding. The applicant responded to the concerns raised by the Historical Commission regarding the 2019 in-concept application by presenting two options for the proposed dormers: Option A proposes two dormers similar in size to those proposed in the in-concept application; Option B reduces the width of the dormer closest to the mansion by eliminating one window. Additional studies of the impact of the dormer on the historic fabric have been included.

At the greenhouse portion of the wing, the application proposes to install an accessible visitor entrance that would clarify and demarcate the tour entrance and ticketing area. Owing to the varying floor levels at the interior, the entrance would be elevated several feet and would require new steps and an ADA ramp. A modern glass double-door system would be punched through the existing stucco wall, and a sliding barn door would enclose the door system.

The application further proposes to reconstruct the 1960s bathroom, originally created by infilling the space between the greenhouse and carriage house. The exterior wall would be clad in wood siding above a concrete water table. A new standing seam copper roof would be installed to match the existing metal roof.

The application proposes to create a dedicated program space within the carriage house. A large infilled opening would be reopened in the existing stuccoed wall, and a double door system with sidelights and a transom would be installed. Like the entrance proposed at the greenhouse, this new entrance would be comprised of modern glass doors with two sliding barn doors; however, this entrance would remain at grade. The location and dimensions of the entrance are based on an existing lintel that once defined a historic opening.

A driveway extension is proposed to redirect the flow of traffic to afford visitors views of the front of the mansion when entering the property. Under this plan, the current parking area would be relocated from the north side of the mansion to an area adjacent to the service wing.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Install two shed dormers at service wing;
- Install ADA ramp and glass door system;
- Reconstruct 1960s bathroom addition between greenhouse and carriage house;
- Reopen infilled entryway at carriage house; and
- Relocate existing parking lot to area adjacent to service wing.

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 shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
 - The proposed alterations to the north wall of the service wing will be done sensitively and, where possible, impact areas that have been previously modified. The new entryway at the carriage house would reopen a larger infilled opening that was

enclosed in 1923-24. While the construction of the eastern dormer would remove historic fabric, the construction of the western dormer would enlarge an existing, non-original dormer. The reconstruction of the bathroom addition would remove non-original material dating to the 1960s, though the installation of the accessible entrance would require the creation of a new opening in the greenhouse wall. The work largely complies with this standard.

- *Standard 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*
 - The proposed dormers would cause a loss of portions of seven rafters and some roofing, though the majority of the modified rafters and roofing would remain intact. The installation of the ADA entrance would cause some loss of historic material; however, little to no historic material or distinctive features would be lost due to the installation of the entryway at the carriage house or the reconstruction of the bathroom addition. Additionally, the service wing's south elevation, including the roof slope, would remain unaltered. All distinctive features, finishes, and craftsmanship that characterize the property would be preserved at this location. The proposed work largely complies 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 alterations would cause the loss of some material at the sloped roof of the kitchen and the stuccoed greenhouse wall; however, the additions and alterations would be differentiated from the old and would be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the service wing. They would also have minimal impact on the mansion and the larger site. The proposed work largely complies with this standard.
- *Accessibility Guideline: Recommended: Providing barrier-free access that promotes independence for the disabled person to the highest degree practicable, while preserving significant historic features.*
 - This application proposes to construct an ADA ramp and entrance at the stuccoed wall of the greenhouse, providing barrier-free access for visitors. While it would cause the loss of some historic masonry, it would not impact any character-defining features of the building or site.
- *Roofs Guideline | Recommended: Designing rooftop additions, elevator or stair towers, decks or terraces, dormers, or skylights when required by a new or continuing use so that they are inconspicuous and minimally visible on the site and from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining historic features.*
 - The application proposes to construct two dormers on the north slope of the kitchen roof. One of the dormers would be constructed in place of an existing, non-original dormer. Located on the north wall of the service wing, the dormers would be visible from the future visitor parking lot. The dormers would be inconspicuous from the main viewsheds of the mansion, and would not be visible from the significant courtyard space. The work complies with this standard.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of Option B, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, 9, the Accessibility and Roofs Guidelines, and the Historical Commission's 11 January 2019 approval of an in-concept application, with the staff to review details, provided wood siding is used at the dormer cheek walls and six-over-six or one-over-one double-hung sash windows are installed at the proposed dormers.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of Option B, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 5, 9, the Accessibility and Roofs Guidelines, and the Historical Commission's 11 January 2019 approval, provided the following:

- wood siding is installed at the proposed dormers;
- six-over-six double-hung sash windows with simulated divided lights are installed at the proposed dormers; and
- the use of a 1:20 ramp without railings is studied.

ACTION: See Consent Agenda

ADDRESS: 140 N 2ND ST

Proposal: Demolish rear ell; construct three-story rear addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Birdnest Group

Applicant: Adam Montalbano, Moto Design Shop

History: 1845

Individual Designation: 12/31/1984

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Contributing, 12/12/2003

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish the rear ell of this contributing, Greek Revival building with Renaissance Revival storefront and cornice. The applicant argues that the condition of the existing rear ell is not sound enough to carry the weight of an addition, and therefore must be demolished. The applicant is proposing a three-story rear addition.

The area of the building that is proposed for demolition is not visible from any right-of-way, and therefore the public's understanding of the subject property would not be impacted by demolition of the rear ell and construction of a new rear addition.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Demolish rear ell
- Construct three-story rear addition

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.*
 - Standard 9 prohibits the destruction of historic materials that characterize properties. Owing to its condition and its lack of visibility from any public-right-of-way, the rear ell in question does not characterize this property. The public's understanding of the historic building would not be impacted by the implementation of this proposal.
- *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.*

- No alterations are proposed to the front façade of this building, and therefore the historic characteristics of the property that are visible from the public right-of-way will not be changed.
- The original roofline and dormer windows at the front and rear of the main block will not be altered.
- Considered from the public's perspective, the removal and replacement of the rear ell will not alter the essential form and integrity of the historic building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval in concept of a rear addition, with the applicant to study the need to demolish the entire rear ell, and to provide further details about the design of the addition, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:08:13

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Montalbano explained that the original proposal intended to demolish the three rear additions behind the main block of the house. He is now presenting a revised plan that would only involve the demolition of the one-story addition and a section of the two-story addition. He stated that the revisions were based on the comments from the Architectural Committee as well as a follow-up visit to the site with the property owner and an engineer.
- Mr. Montalbano pointed out a downspout and a change in the appearance of the brick that indicates the area at the rear he is proposing to demolish was a later addition. He noted that these additions did not have basements nor proper footings.
- Mr. Montalbano explained that the intent is to match the roofline of the addition's third story with the roofline of the existing staircase. The proposed addition would not be visible from any public right-of-way.
- Mr. McCoubrey thanked the applicant for taking the Architectural Committee's comments into consideration. He stated that the applicant did a terrific job of retaining the original stair and much of the original masonry of the two-story addition. Mr. McCoubrey confirmed that the proposed work would not be visible from a public right-of-way.
- Mr. Farnham clarified that although Mr. Montalbano stated that he was seeking an in-concept review, the application was for a final review, and that perhaps Mr. Montalbano meant that he would work with staff to finalize certain lower-level details. Mr. Thomas agreed that it appears that the application reflected the level of a final review and asked if there were any objections. Mr. McCoubrey responded that he had no objections and that the staff could always refer the application back to the Architectural Committee if it appeared necessary.
- Mr. Thomas asked if the applicant was still investigating ways to support the upper floors.
 - Mr. Montalbano confirmed that they are still investigating this aspect of the project with the engineer. He confirmed that they would work out these details

with the staff, noting that any proposed solution would occur at the interior of the structure.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The applicant had reassessed the condition of the second and third story additions and determined that more historic fabric could be retained than initially thought;
- The roofline of the proposed addition would not extend higher than the roof where the original stair is located;
- The proposed addition would not be visible from any public right-of-way.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- Owing to the revisions to the amount of demolition proposed to historic fabric, and that the addition would not be visible from any public right-of-way, the revised proposal satisfies Standards 9 and 10.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 140 N 2nd St					
MOTION: Approval of revised application					
MOVED BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Mattioni					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	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: 1505 N 16TH ST, AKA 1504 N SYDENHAM ST

Proposal: Construct three-story building on subdivided parcel

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Brian McIntyre

Applicant: Brett Harman, Harman Deutsch Ohler

History: 1880; Robert Dornan House

Individual Designation: 7/1/1982

District Designation: None

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

BACKGROUND:

A five-story brick townhouse constructed in 1880 and historically known as the Robert Dornan House stands at the property at 1505 N. 16th Street. The designated property extends the full width of the block from N. 16th Street to N. Sydenham Street and includes some open land along Sydenham Street. The current owner subdivided the property in April 2020 and is proposing new construction of a three-story residential building on the open, subdivided parcel along N. Sydenham Street. The new building would be clad in brick, vinyl, and metal panel and would be set back at the rear from the historic building by approximately 20 feet. In addition to the front façade along N. Sydenham Street, the new building will also be visible from Jefferson and N. 16th Streets.

Pursuant to Section 5.15 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations, all of the new addresses created from subdividing a designated property are automatically placed on the Register. The project on the subdivided piece of land is subject to full jurisdiction, not review and comment, which is limited to lots in historic districts that were vacant at the time the district was designated. This site is individually designated, not in a district, and also was not vacant at the time of designation.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct a three-story residential building.

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, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed new construction is not compatible with the historic building in materials, features, size, scale, and proportion. While the proposed brick on the façade is compatible, the vinyl siding and metal panels are not. The size, pattern, and detailing of the window and door openings more accurately reflect nearby new construction rather than the historic building on the designated property.
- *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 new construction will not physically connect with the historic building and could be removed in the future without disturbance; therefore the application satisfies Standard 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:22:43

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the revised application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Rustin Ohler represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. McCoubrey suggested that the front door could be improved with glazing, and expressed concern about the suitability of the triple window on the first floor. He stated that the revised application generally addresses the Architectural Committee's concerns.
- Mr. Thomas suggested that the size and shape of the front door is more appropriate for a rear door, and the first floor picture window is more suitable for a suburban or ranch house. He recommended glazing on the front door and four vertical windows rather than a picture window.
- Mr. Lippert agreed with the previous comments and stated that the window was out of proportion with the overall front façade.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Randal Baron commented that the revised design is an improvement over the original submission. He provided recommendations to improve the front façade's compatibility with the character of the historic property.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The revised application responds to comments from the Architectural Committee.
- The revised design is improved from the original submission, and overall is compatible with the historic property.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The revised design can be approved, with revisions to the front door and window details, for better compatibility with the property's historic character.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, provided glazing is added to the entrance door, the picture window is reconsidered, and a base and lintels are considered for the front façade, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9. Mr. Hartner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 1505 N 16th St, aka 1504 N Sydenham St MOTION: Approval of revised application, with conditions MOVED BY: McCoubrey SECONDED BY: Hartner					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair					X
Washington	X				
Total	12				1

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION, 3 DECEMBER 2020

ADDRESS: 3701-15 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: International House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: CSC Coliving

Nominator: University City Historical Society

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 architecture firm 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.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3701-15 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, H, and J. Ms. Milroy seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:38:10

RECUSAL:

- Ms. Cooperman recused from the review, owing to her involvement in one of the organizations that nominated the property.
- Ms. Edwards recused, owing to her husband's role as a consultant for the property owner.

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Developer Leo Addimando represented the property owner.
- Nominator George Poulin represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Poulin stated that the building is a unique structure. It is defined by its cast-in-place concrete construction. It is a Brutalist building and one of the best in the city. Its exterior reflects the activities within. It is a good example of the Philadelphia School of architecture. He stated that it satisfies several Criteria for Designation and should be designated.
- Mr. Mattioni stated that the building leaves him "cold." He stated that the name Brutalism is well deserved. He stated that it reminds him of buildings he has seen in Moscow. He questioned the value of mandating its preservation.
 - Mr. Thomas responded that this nomination proposes designation for social reasons as well as architectural reasons. He also noted that some historic buildings relate to difficult yet historically significant points in history and deserve designation even if they are not attractive, even if they are brutal.
- Mr. Addimando noted that he has requested approval in concept of two additions to International House. He observed that most of his comments relate to the application rather than the nomination. He stated that he and his partners have worked for 18 months to purchase the property. He thanked all involved with the nomination for their patience during the due diligence period. He strongly objected to Inga Saffron's allegation in the *Inquirer* that he was trying to bully the Historical Commission with regard to the nomination and application. He opined that she, not he, is the bully. Mr. Addimando stated that he has approached this project with the belief that this building should be saved. He stated that he and his partners have worked diligently to understand the complex and idiosyncratic building and how to rehabilitate it. He stated that the building and accessibility codes, the pandemic, and the changing housing market have all impacted the planned redevelopment of this building. He stated that to justify an investment in this building, they must add a tower at the rear and a retail space at the front. He stated that they took great pains to minimize the impacts of the additions on the historic building. He stated that they must object strenuously to any designation if the additions are not approved. He stated that the plaza has been romanticized, but it is not an attractive spot and has not been used in at least a decade. He stated that they have carefully designed the retail addition to protect and preserve the architecture. He also noted that the primary orientation of

the building has shifted with the conversion of 37th Street to a plaza. Mr. Addimondo stated that his partnership will not oppose the designation if the two additions are approved, but will oppose it if they are not. Because the redevelopment of the property does not make economic sense without the additions, he stated that he will be forced to submit a financial hardship application for the demolition of the building if the in-concept application is not approved. He stated that he will continue to work to try to find ways to preserve some of the open plaza, even if the application is approved. He stated that he has 15 years of experience breathing life into older buildings and has never resorted to a hardship application. He concluded that he would like to save the building, but it will require some compromises.

- Mr. Lippert asked about the roof on the proposed front addition.
 - Mr. Addimondo replied that it would be a green roof.
- Mr. Mattioni asked if the Historical Commission should exclude the plaza from the designation. He also asked if they should set parameters on any front addition.
 - Mr. Farnham stated that the Commission has three alternatives if it chooses to designate in a way that would allow the additions. First, it could redraw the boundary to exclude the plaza and the rear auditorium. Second, it could find that the plaza and auditorium are not character-defining features. Third, it could designate as proposed because such a designation would not preclude an approval of the additions.
- Mr. Poulin stated that he has met with Mr. Addimondo to discuss the proposed additions. He stated that he and his co-nominator are not willing to amend their nomination. He stated that modifications to this building are inevitable, but he asserted that the plaza is a character-defining feature. "This is not one of those bad plazas." He asked the Historical Commission to find a compromise solution.
- Mr. Lippert stated that the plaza is a character-defining feature.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance stated that his organization supports the nomination and the Criteria for Designation it cites. He stated that Mr. Addimondo served on the board of the Preservation Alliance and has a long track record of saving historic buildings. He stated that International House is an important organization and its role in the neighborhood was significant. The building is indicative of its moment in time. He stated that Bower & Fradley is an important architectural firm and the building is an established and familiar visual feature in the neighborhood.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination.
- Alex Balloon stated that he supports the nomination, but argued that the plaza should not be considered historically significant and should be permitted to be altered. He stated that the plaza is a failure, like many Brutalist plazas, and should not be preserved.
- Steven Peitzman supported the nomination.
- Oscar Beisert stated that the Keeping Society supports the nomination. He stated that he appreciates the fact that the owner of this property is seeking a compromise that will allow for both preservation and development. He advocated for compromise.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission concluded 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.
- The property satisfies Criterion D because the building is a significant example of Brutalist architecture.
- The property satisfies Criterion E because architectural firm Bower & Fradley influenced the architectural development of Philadelphia.
- The property satisfies Criterion H because the International House building occupies a unique location in the heart of University City.
- The property satisfies Criterion J because the International House building 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.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3701-15 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, H, and J and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Carney seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 9 to 0, with one abstention and two recusals.

ITEM: 3701-15 Chestnut St					
MOTION: Designate, Criteria A, D, E, H, and J					
MOVED BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Carney					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)	X				
Cooperman				X	
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards				X	
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni			X		
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair					X
Washington	X				
Total	9		1	2	1

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 27 OCTOBER 2020

ADDRESS: 3701-15 CHESTNUT ST

Proposal: Construct additions

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: CSC Coliving

Applicant: Leo Addimando, Alterra Property Group

History: 1970; International House; Bower & Fradley, architects

Individual Designation: pending

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This in-concept application seeks the Historical Commission's opinion on the construction of two additions to the building known as International House at 3701-15 Chestnut Street.

International House is not yet designated as historic, but has been nominated. The Committee on Historic Designation will review the nomination on 3 December 2020. The nomination proposes that International House 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 architecture firm Bower & Fradley influenced the architectural development of Philadelphia. Under Criterion H, the nomination contends that the International House building is a prominent visual feature in the heart of University City. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that International House stands as one of the first high-rises constructed as part of the West Philadelphia Corporation and Redevelopment Authority's urban renewal efforts. The nomination is provided with the application and includes numerous current photographs of the property.

International House Philadelphia, the non-profit organization that constructed the building in 1970 and managed it as a residence and support hub for international students for 50 years, recently sold the property, attributing the closure to a competitive residential market and the economic challenges of the outdated building. CSC Coliving, a real estate firm from New York that specializes in this type of building, purchased the property and is partnering with local developer Alterra Properties to rehabilitate it.

In the application and in conversations with the staff, the applicant has asserted that the profitable redevelopment of the building is extremely difficult, owing to the idiosyncratic, rigid nature of the structure, which was erected for communal living. The reinforced concrete structure does not allow easy modifications to the plan of single-room units with shared kitchen, bathroom, and living areas. Such a configuration is especially problematic at a time of viral pandemic. The ownership partners have indicated that unless the Historical Commission allows options for significant additions to the structure at the time of designation, they will have no choice but to pursue a financial hardship application claiming that the adaptive reuse of the building in its current configuration is not feasible.

The in-concept application proposes the addition of two masses to the building. At the south or Chestnut Street section of the property, a one-story structure for retail space would be erected on the plaza. At the north, along Ludlow Street, part of the original structure would be removed

and a tower would be constructed for additional living units. The nomination describes the open area along Chestnut Street as a “landscaped plaza in a series of terraces.” The plaza is enclosed at the south and east by a concrete wall that would be retained and used as the base for the new addition. No decisions have been made regarding the exterior design and materials for the addition, but two possible designs are presented. The application requests a decision on the massing alone. The nomination describes the rear portion of the structure to be removed and replaced as “support and utility areas, as well as a parking garage, much of which is housed in secondary, yet connected, concrete structures of similar poured-in-place construction.” The nomination is not entirely correct. The main space in the rear structure is an auditorium. The rear structure would be replaced with a 16-story addition that would include living units, retail space, and utilities shared by both buildings. For example, the addition would provide additional elevators, which cannot be added to the original building, owing to restrictions imposed by the concrete structure. Again, no decisions have been made regarding the exterior design and materials for the addition, but two possible designs are presented. The application requests a decision on the massing alone. A subsequent review for final approval would propose the exterior design and materials for the additions.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct addition at front plaza;
- Remove rear structure and construct tower.

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 shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
- *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.*
- *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 would be unimpaired.*
 - If the plaza is character-defining, infilling it with a structure would not satisfy Standard 2. However, the infill structure would be differentiated from and compatible with the massing and size of the historic building and would be reversible, satisfying Standards 9 and 10. If the rear structure is not considered character-defining, removing and replacing it with a differentiated yet compatible tower addition would satisfy Standards 2, 9, and 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff advocates for the compromise position proposed by the application and recommends approval in concept because it will promote the preservation of the main slab of the building, the primary expression of International House Philadelphia and its Brutalist architecture, while allowing for a feasible redevelopment of the idiosyncratic, inflexible building. Strict adherence to the Standards in this case will likely lead to a financial hardship application and the eventual loss of the entire building.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the concept of the massing of the rear tower addition, but denial of the concept of the massing of the front retail addition, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:37:53

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Developer Leo Addimando represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Addimando stated that the building presents a host of challenges. He noted that the elevators stop at every other floor and a few steps above and below the floors, creating difficult accessibility problems. The bathrooms are shared, which does not work during a pandemic and in the current real estate market. He explained that they plan to add a tower at the rear and a one-story commercial addition at the front. The numerous grade changes at the sidewalk, in the plaza, and in the building make the design very difficult. He stated that they need a minimum of 15,000 sf of retail space all on one elevation to make the project viable. The interior first floor is not at the grade of the plaza or street. Commercial tenants demand 15,000 sf at the grade of the street, which is not possible without building in the plaza. He emphasized again that the project does not work without the retail space. Mr. Addimando noted that the main residential entrance would be located on the walkway.
- Mr. McCoubrey stated that the Architectural Committee did not object to the tower but did object to the infill of the plaza. He stated that the infill lacked transparency and occupied the entirety of the plaza. He suggested reducing the size of the addition at the plaza to leave some portions of the plaza open so that viewers can see how the building touches the ground. The Architectural Committee would like to see additional design options that leave part of the terrace open, but the Committee did not object to building on part of the terrace.
 - Mr. Addimando stated that the original walls as well as the trees on the terrace block more of the views of the building than the addition would. He stated that his team has studied the addition at the terrace including options to build on a portion of the terrace, but have not solved the design problem. He stated that he appears before the Historical Commission today after studying the problem very carefully, including restudying it after the Architectural Committee meeting. He stated that they have concluded that the proposed plan with 15,000 sf of retail space is the minimum that will allow the project to be economically viable. He stated that he prefers not to cover the entire plaza and vowed to continue to explore design options that would not cover the plaza, but he asked the Commission to approve this design in concept.
- Ms. Cooperman reminded everyone that the Historical Commission must apply the Secretary of the Interior's Standards when reviewing applications.
- Mr. Mattioni stated that the original wall along Chestnut Street blocks views of the building.
 - Mr. Lippert and Ms. Cooperman disagreed.
 - Mr. McCoubrey stated that the plaza is a character-defining feature.
 - Ms. Cooperman stated that the front of the building should remain legible from the street.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance stated that the plaza is a character-defining feature and objected to building on all of it. He stated that Alliance does not object to the tower. The retail addition would overwhelm the plaza. The addition should be limited to the western end of the plaza.
- George Poulin stated that he represents the University City Historical Society, which nominated the property with DOCOMOMO. He stated that the plaza is a character-defining feature of the property. He asked the Historical Commission to consider all options, not just the one presented. He also suggested that the Commission look more closely at the economic viability of various schemes and not rely on the developer's assertions. He suggested some options. He did not object to the proposed tower at the rear.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites opposed the construction on the front plaza because it would overwhelm the historic building behind it. He stated that his organization does not oppose the rear tower. Mr. Traub suggested that the elimination of the retail space and the loading area would allow the tower to be expanded to the west, thereby offsetting the financial loss of the retail space.
 - Mr. Addimando responded that the economics of the retail space and tower are entirely separate. Expanding the tower is not possible, and, if it were, it would not offset the financial loss of the elimination of the retail space. Expanding the tower would result in it moving to a different class of construction, which would be much more expensive. Mr. Addimando rejected Mr. Traub's suggestion as infeasible.
 - Mr. Traub began to debate Mr. Addimando. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Mattioni stopped the questioning, telling Mr. Traub that he could not cross-examine the applicant. He was welcome to comment, but not question the applicant.
- Mason Carter objected to the proposal to infill the entire plaza. He contended that the developer has a "dollars and cents" perspective and "is only in it for the money."
- Gabriel Gottlieb stated that the plaza is an unwelcoming relic. He stated that it is "defensive" and "fortress-like." The plaza "isolates" the building and should be redeveloped. He stated that developing a retail space where the plaza is located "would fix a previous mistake."
- Alex Balloon stated that Brutalist plazas like this one are failed spaces and should be redeveloped. They are too hot in the summer, too cold in the winter, and too windy. They do not work as public spaces. He urged flexibility when reviewing this application and asked the Historical Commission to allow the applicant to correct the failed design. The plaza was a "design mistake."
- Steven Peitzman stated that he had nothing to say.
- Allee Davis of DOCOMOMO stated that she agrees with the comments of the University City Historical Society and Preservation Alliance. She stated that the plaza is a character-defining feature. She stated that the existing wall along Chestnut Street does allow views into the plaza at spots. She objected to the proposed retail addition. She stated that her organization does not want any changes made to the building.
- Steven Peitzman stated that a CVS or a Wawa store at this property would be a "blemish."

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Addimando showed two alternate designs that his team produced after the Architectural Committee meeting. The designs showed a retail addition covering the western section of the plaza and extending into the existing building. They were

intended to show why limiting the addition to the western section of the plaza was not viable. The two schemes were similar, but one should the ramps, stairs, and escalators into the building on the exterior and the other on the interior. Mr. Addimando explained that the problem is that the elevation of the sidewalk at Chestnut differs from that of the plaza, which differs from that of the interior first-floor of the building. None is at the same elevation. The first-floor level is about six feet above the plaza. Mr. Addimando stated that the two schemes are not viable, but he is showing them to demonstrate that his team did fully investigate them.

- Mr. McCoubrey asked why the retail space cannot be situated at the level of the plaza, obviating the need for the stairs, ramps, and escalators.
- Mr. Addimando responded that the floor plate must be 15,000 sf to satisfy retailers. The plaza addition in this version is about 10,000 sf. Therefore, they need to use an additional 5,000 sf in the existing building, but the floor level is six feet above the plaza. To have the retail space all on one level, they need to situate the floor level in the addition on the plaza six feet above the sidewalk level.
- Ms. Carney cited several retail spaces in Center City with multiple level and asserted that have grade changes within the store should not be problematic.
- Mr. Addimando adamantly disagreed and explained that retailers will not accept store on multiple levels, except in very specific circumstances. He pointed to the Walgreens at Broad and Chestnut, which failed because the retail space was located on multiple levels.
- Mr. Addimando asked the Historical Commission to provide feedback on the full plaza and partial plaza schemes for the retail addition, as well as the rear tower addition.
 - Mr. Thomas stated that the addition covering part of the plaza was a reasonable compromise. He suggested that the developer refine that scheme. He suggested more transparency and some energy-efficiency features.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The rear auditorium section of the building is not a character-defining feature.
- The eastern section of the front plaza, at the opening in the wall along Chestnut Street and the main entrance to the building, is a character-defining feature.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- Removing the rear auditorium section of the building and replacing it with a tower addition of the massing proposed in the application would comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- Constructing a one-story addition on the entire front plaza as proposed in the initial application would not comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, but constructing a retail addition on the western section front plaza as proposed in the supplement to the application would comply with the Standards.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve in concept the proposed tower at the rear and the alternate scheme for a retail addition covering the western section of the plaza, pursuant to Standard 9. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 3701-15 Chestnut St**MOTION: Approval in concept of rear tower and retail space on western section of plaza****MOVED BY: McCoubrey****SECONDED BY: Cooperman**

VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards				X	
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair					X
Washington	X				
Total	11			1	1

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION, 3 DECEMBER 2020**ADDRESS: 1106-14 SPRING GARDEN ST**

Name of Resource: Woodward-Wanger Co.

Proposed Action: Rescind Designation and then Reconsider Nomination

Property Owner: Mapleville, LLC, Stella and Nga Wong

Applicant: Matt McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr

Individual Designation: 3/9/2018

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This request asks the Historical Commission to rescind the individual designation of the property at 1106-14 Spring Garden Street and then remand the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation for an entirely new review in which the property owner can participate. The rescission request contends that the property owner was not notified of the consideration of the nomination by the Committee on Historic Designation and the Historical Commission that led to the designation on 9 March 2018 and, therefore, did not have an opportunity to participate in reviews. The request asserts that the Historical Commission sent the first and final notice letters for the property owner to the wrong address because the City failed to correctly update its property tax records. The other set of notice letters, those to the property, were sent to a vacant building, where mail could not be received. Documents included with the rescission request seem to indicate that the claim is correct. It appears that the Historical Commission sent the first and final notice letters for the property owner to an outdated address. The owner did not participate in two public meetings at which the nomination was reviewed. The request indicates that the owner did not learn of the designation until 2020, when applying for a permit from the Department of Licenses & Inspections. The staff sought the

advice of the Law Department, which considered various paths for addressing the potential notice problem. The Law Department attorney did not object to this process, proposed by the owner's attorney.

The request asks the Historical Commission to rescind the designation and remand the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation for a new review in which the owner can participate. The matter is listed on the agenda of the meeting of the Committee of Historic Designation on 3 December 2020 as a means to get it before the Historical Commission to consider the rescission request. In that the rescission request raises legal and factual questions only, not architectural or historical questions, the Committee of Historic Designation has no clear role in this matter unless and until the Historical Commission remands the nomination to it for a new review. The Committee is not asked to reconsider the merits of the nomination or offer a recommendation at its 3 December 2020 meeting, but it should provide an opportunity for the applicant to present the request and the public to comment.

Copies of the notice letters and the Historical Commission's minute for 9 March 2018 are included in the applicant's exhibits. The Committee on Historic Designation's minute of 14 February 2018 as well as the nomination are attached as well.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the Historical Commission rescind the individual designation of 9 March 2018 and hold new reviews of the nomination at the meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation on 20 January 2021 and at the meeting of the Historical Commission on 12 February 2021, with the understanding that the property owner will have been given official notice of the new review of the nomination at the time of the rescission and the property therefore remains under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission while the new review of the nomination is pending.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Ms. Milroy moved to offer no recommendation to the Historical Commission on the request proposing the rescission of the designation of 1106-14 Spring Garden Street and the reconsideration of the nomination for 1106-14 Spring Garden Street by the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:43:28

RECUSAL:

- Mr. Reuter recused from the review, owing to his earlier representation of an adjacent property owner who opposed the redevelopment of this site.

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the rescission request to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney Matt McClure represented the request.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. McClure explained that his client was not notified of the consideration of the nomination when it was reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission in 2018. The American legal system is founded on the premise that participants are notified and have an opportunity to "have their day in court." He stated that he will not debate the merits of the nomination today, but simply wants the Historical Commission to rescind the designation and restart the

review of the nomination with his client in attendance. He reviewed the notice letters and tax records for his client and showed that the notice letters were sent to an incorrect address. He stated that the Office of Property Assessment website that provided the address for the notice letters was not updated, despite the fact that the City had the correct address for his client and was sending the tax bills to that correct address. He concluded that his client did not receive any notice of the reviews.

- Ms. Cooperman asked for assurances that the property would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction until the new review of the nomination is completed.
 - Mr. McClure stated that he acknowledges that the jurisdiction over the property would continue until the new review is complete.
 - Mr. Farnham added that he would send new notice letters to the property owner after today's meeting, ensuring that the jurisdiction would continue, even if the property's designation were rescinded today.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The Historical Commission did not adequately notify the property owner of the consideration of the nomination in 2018.
- The property would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction despite a rescission until a new review of the nomination was completed because the property owner would be notified of the Historical Commission's intention to reconsider the nomination at the time of the rescission.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The designation should be rescinded and the nomination reconsidered to give the property owner an opportunity to participate in the deliberations.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to rescind the designation of the property at 1106-14 Spring Garden Street from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, and to remand the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation for a new review at its meeting on 20 January 2021, provided the Historical Commission's jurisdiction over the property does not lapse before the new review is completed. Ms. Washington seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 1106-14 Spring Garden St MOTION: Rescind the designation MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Washington					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	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: 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.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:56:15

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney Michael Phillips represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Beisert stated that the properties were nominated on behalf of the Northern Liberties Neighbors Association. He stated that more than 40 parishioners and near neighbors support the designation. He stated that the church, rectory, and school represent the Slovak heritage in Philadelphia. He asserted that the claim in the staff recommendation that a basement church or incomplete church cannot exemplify the heritage of the community is incorrect. He stated that he would be willing to revise or rewrite the nomination if it is insufficient.

- Ms. Cooperman stated that, when she reviewed the nomination as a member of the Committee on Historic Designation, she did not find that the nomination made a compelling case for the claim that the church complex represented the Slovak community. She stated that her opinion may have changed during the intervening years.
- Mr. Phillips stated that he represents St. Agnes Parish. He stated that Father Dennis Gill was also at the meeting, but may have stepped away to take confession. He stated that he agrees with the staff and asserts that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property fails to satisfy Criteria for Designation A and J. He stated that there are no facts to support the claims of the nomination. He stated that the church was not completed because the Slovak community was split into two factions. He observed that a Slovak church was completed in South Philadelphia, which better represented the community but has since been demolished. He noted several Slovak churches and other buildings in the city that better represent the community. He noted that the church was not nominated by parishioners or the Slovak community, but by Northern Liberties Neighbors Association. He stated that, by the rationale of the nomination, every church is eligible by designation because every church is formed by a community. He stated that the properties do not “exemplify” the Slovak community.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination. He praised the “charming” building. He compared St. Agnes to Brunelleschi’s Renaissance masterpiece San Lorenzo Church in Florence, Italy.
- Jim Duffin of the Keeping Society supported the nomination. He stated that the complex includes two important parts of any Catholic church, a place for the sacraments and a place for education. He noted that basement churches are common in the Catholic religion in Philadelphia.
- Venise Whitaker supported the nomination.
- Mary Dankanis stated that she has been a parishioner of the church for 60 years. She supported the nomination. She stated that Slovaks attend the church.
- Mary Giampietro stated that she has been a parishioner of the church for decades. She stated that the number of parishioners is unimportant. She supported the nomination. She contended that the Archdiocese has not given the parish the support it needs.
- Agnes Cavalcante stated that she is a resident of Philadelphia and supports the nomination. She stated that family members are parishioners.
- Steven Peitzman stated that he supports the nomination. He stated that the building is “quirky” and should be preserved.
- Kelly Wiles stated that she supports the nomination.
- Anna Sabo supported the nomination. She stated that her husband’s family has been associated with the church for years.
- Elizabeth Mann stated that she is a resident of the city. She said that she has been to services at St. Agnes. She supported the nomination.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Phillips stated that simply because a few parishioners have fond memories of their church does not mean that that church exemplifies the heritage of the community as required by Criterion J. If fond memories were sufficient, then every church, meeting hall, and gathering places would be eligible for designation. He

- stated that that is an untenable assertion. He stated that he respects the feelings that the parishioners have for their church, but that does not make it historically significant. He stated that there are no plans to demolish the church. He concluded that the nomination does not prove that the site exemplifies the Slovak community.
- Mr. Farnham stated that the staff recommendation that these properties should not be designated is predicated on policy and not significance. He contended that the nomination does makes a poor argument to support the claim that this complex exemplifies the Slovak community, but stated that the staff's position derives from policy considerations, not historical significance. He stated that it is the staff's position that it would be poor public policy for the Historical Commission to mandate the preservation in perpetuity of a building that was never completed above the basement level. He asserted that reusing an incomplete church building would be very difficult. He stated that he hopes that the current congregation flourishes and remains within the building, but questioned how the building might be reused if the congregation were leave the building. It is a masonry basement with a temporary wood superstructure that was never intended to be permanent. He noted that he is not aware of any plans to close the parish or demolish the building.
 - Ms. Cooperman stated that she the church may not satisfy the Criteria, but the other sections of the complex may be eligible for designation.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The church building was never completed. The basement was constructed and then a temporary superstructure was erected over the basement. A permanent superstructure was never erected. The temporary superstructure has remained in place for more than a century. The church building is incomplete.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- 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." 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. The nomination fails to demonstrate that the properties satisfy Criterion A.
- 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 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 and the Polish-American community for example, no such case is made in this instance. The nomination fails to demonstrate that the properties satisfy Criterion J.

FAILED MOTION: Ms. Edwards moved to find that the properties at 801-15 N. 4th Street and 319 Brown Street satisfy Criterion for Designation J and to designate them as historic, listing them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which failed by a vote of 3 to 4, with 4 abstentions. The Historical Commission declined to designate the property.

ITEM: 801-15 N 4th St and 319 Brown St MOTION: Designate, Criterion J MOVED BY: Edwards SECONDED BY: McCoubrey					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)			X		
Cooperman			X		
Dodds (DHCD)		X			
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)		X			
Lippert (L&I)					X
Mattioni		X			
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)		X			
Lepori (Commerce)			X		
Turner, Vice Chair					X
Washington			X		
Total	3	4	4		2

STATUS UPDATE ON JEWELERS' ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:46:36

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farnham provided a timeline for the review of the historic district and informed the Historical Commission that they need not take any action today.
- Michael Phillips, the attorney representing many of the property owners in the proposed district, provided the Historical Commission with a status update. He stated that his clients would have difficulty participating in a remote meeting. He explained that he has been meeting with the nominator and the Councilman to see if there any ways to preserve the neighborhood while allowing the property owners to use their properties in productive ways. He said that they are actively looking into legislative solutions that might allow for preservation. He said that they hope to continue the discussions over the next several months. He is hoping that they find common ground that will include the Historical Commission. He stated that he would happily provide updates in the future.
- Mr. Mattioni asked if it was realistic to think that a settlement might be achieved.
 - Mr. Phillips stated that he is cautiously optimistic that they will find a compromise.
 - Mr. Mattioni stated that he supports giving the parties more time to try to find a compromise.

- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance confirmed that the characterizations of the discussions are accurate. He stated that Jewelers' Row deserves protection, but acknowledged that the Historical Commission must be mindful of the concerns of property owners. He stated that he too is cautiously optimistic and asked the Historical Commission to allow the discussions to proceed.

ADJOURNMENT

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

ACTION: At 1:57 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				2

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.