

Public comment received by the Historical Commission
regarding the nomination of 5139 Wayne Avenue

Kim Chantry

From: awfromhh/aweiss <awfromhh4@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 5, 2020 3:28 PM
To: Jon Farnham; preservation; Randal.Baron@phila.gov; Kim Chantry; Laura Dipasquale; Shannon Garrison; merredith.keller@phila.gov; Allyson Mehley; Megan Schmitt
Subject: 5139 Wayne Ave/Please review and accept

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We hope you and your families are well.

Please be advised we fully support the nomination of 5139 Wayne Ave to the phila register of historic places. It is important to our community and deserves protection. We urge you to review and accept the nomination. Thank you in advance. Stay healthy and safe, Regards -Allison Weiss 215 843 5555 SoLo/Germantown Civic Assoc (RCO)

Kim Chantry

From: Dana Fedeli <nwpresphila@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 5, 2020 4:22 PM
To: preservation
Cc: Kim Chantry; Jon Farnham
Subject: Joseph Pearson House and Studio

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Hello Historical Commission Staff,

I would like to ask for your support in protecting Joseph Pearson House and Studio (built 1857 and Enlarged 1882), located at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown.

A teacher at the Pennsylvania Academy for several decades, Pearson was an important local artist who created his greatest works in this house between ca. 1902-1904 to 1919. Two of Pearson's works are in the permanent Woodmere art collection in Chestnut Hill. Today a zoning demolition permit was issued for the property; however, if the Historical Commission were to send notice on the nomination filed by the Keeping Society on August 31st, the house could still likely be saved.

As a resident of Mt Airy and a business owner in Germantown, I believe this property should be considered immediately and today's demo permit should not be relevant as the nomination was submitted months ago. Please excuse my direct contact, I typically do not directly reach out to specific staff members regarding these matters but am doing so as a singular exception due to this timing issue.

I extend my advanced gratitude for your time and consideration. Please stay safe and be well during these difficult times.

Best,
Dana Fedeli

Kim Chantry

From: Zarah Adams <zadams@germantownfriends.org>
Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 3:35 PM
To: Kim Chantry
Subject: Nominations for Historic Commission

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Greetings!

I hope this message finds you well.

Please be advised we at Germantown Friends School fully support the nomination of 5139 Wayne Avenue and 5200-5208 Wayne Avenue to the Philadelphia register of historic places. It is important to our community and deserves protection. We urge you to review and accept the nomination.

We request your immediate attention to this important matter. Thank you in advance.

Warmly,
Zarah

--

Zarah Adams, Ed.D.
Director, Community Engagement
Germantown Friends School

—

Main: 215.951.2300 | **Direct:** 215.951.2325
zadams@germantownfriends.org | www.germantownfriends.org

Kim Chantry

From: hindsbracy@aol.com
Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 4:15 PM
To: Jon Farnham; preservation; Kim Chantry; Randal.Baron@phila.gov; Laura Dipasquale; Shannon Garrison; merredith.keller@phila.gov; Allyson Mehley; Megan Schmitt
Subject: phc/review nominations 5139 wayne

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Good Afternoon Everyone,

I hope each of you are doing well during this time of uncertainty on many levels.

It is my understanding that a nomination application for historic designation for 5139 Wayne Ave has been sent to you for review and acceptance. I am asking that you would quickly review and designate the property historic. This house is important to the history of Germantown and could be renovated for a single family home.

Yes, I know the seller has suggested the house be demolished but many of us here in the Community really don't want any more of our historic homes torn down. The seller has also suggested that 48 units be built on this parcel of land.

Thank you for your assistance to this matter.

Pamela Bracey

Kim Chantry

From: Melissa D <mldymond@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 2:02 PM
To: Jon Farnham; preservation; Kim Chantry; Randal.Baron@phila.gov; Laura Dipasquale; Shannon Garrison; merredith.keller@phila.gov; Allyson Mehley; Megan Schmitt
Subject: historic nomination 5139 Wayne Avenue 19144

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Hello everyone!
Hope you are well.

I am writing to fully support the nomination of 5139 Wayne Avenue Philadelphia PA 19144

It is an important property in our community and deserves protection.

I urge you to review and accept the nomination. Thank you in advance.

Stay healthy and safe.

Melissa Dymond
503 West Hansberry St
570-881-4784
mldymond@gmail.com

Joseph Pearson house

melonb4u@aol.com <melonb4u@aol.com>

Thu 11/5/2020 5:18 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Mr Farnham,

I have been advised that you are on the Historical Commision and I am thus writing to ask that you please work to halt the demolition of the Pearson house. Joseph Pearson was an important member of the Bucks County Impressionist movement which is esteemed in the art world and an important movement born and bred in Philadelphia. It would be a shame and regretted by future generations of art lovers if this home was destroyed. His work hangs in museums and homes throughout the tri-state area. Thank you for your help in saving this house,
Mary-Helen Boothby

Sent from my iPhone

Preserve 5139 Wayne Ave, Germantown

Tina LeCoff <tinalecoff@gmail.com>

Thu 11/5/2020 5:53 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Dr. Farnham,

As a 29 year resident of Germantown and a career advocate of preservation of Philadelphia history, I request that the Commision, and the Architecture Committee, deny the proposal to demolish this building. Its association with artist Joseph Pearson is of great interest to the long time cultural history of Germantown.

Thank you for considering its preservation, rather than demolition.

Sincerely,

Tina LeCoff, ASLA

Pearson House - 5139 Wayne Ave

Sue Patterson <suepatterson1@gmail.com>

Thu 11/5/2020 4:41 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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We would like to ask for your support in protecting Joseph Pearson House and Studio (Built 1857 and Enlarged 1882) at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown. A teacher at the Pennsylvania Academy for several decades, Pearson was an important local artist who created his greatest works in this house between ca.1902-04 to 1919. Today a zoning demolition permit was issued for the property; however, if the historical commission were to send notice on the nomination filed by the Keeping Society on August 31, the house could still likely be saved.

Thank you -

Sue Patterson

Former Chair, Penn Knox Neighborhood Association

Joseph Pearson House - 5139 Wayne Avenue

jpmpwl@aol.com <jpmpwl@aol.com>

Thu 11/5/2020 5:23 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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

November 5, 2020

Jon Farnham
Historical Commission Director
City of Philadelphia

Dear Mr. Farnham:

I am writing to express my concern about news I have heard regarding the potential demolition of the Joseph Pearson House at 5139 Wayne Avenue in Germantown.

For a number of years I served on the board of directors of the Germantown Historical Society. As such, I am acutely aware of the historical preservation successes of the Germantown community and the many instances where buildings of significance were lost. As I expect you know, Joseph Pearson and his wife Alice Kent Stoddard, two artist of national significance, made 5139 Wayne Avenue their home. Many of their acclaimed works were also created there. Have survived since 1857, through the heyday of Germantown, its decline, and into a new era of investment, it would be large civic error to allow the house to be lost now. I hope the City and the Historical Commission will provide every possible protection to ensure its survival. Doing so will strengthen Gemantown, and also Philadelphia's reputation as a place where history, and the artists who contribute to our culture, are respected and honored.

Thank you for your review. I hope you will reach out to me if you have any questions about my email. I can be reached at jpmpwl@aol.com or by phone at 215 350-5417

Best regards,

Patrick Moran
6609 Lincoln Drive
Philadelphia, PA 19119

Joseph Pearson home...Wayne Ave

Louise D'Alessandro <louise@elfantwissahickon.com>

Thu 11/5/2020 4:25 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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I support saving The Pearson Home.

Louise DAlessandro

215 852 9312

Amazing artist!!

Protect 5139 Wayne Ave from demolition

Angela Steele <juststeele@gmail.com>

Fri 11/6/2020 12:39 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Mr. Farnham,

I write to request your urgent attention to the protection of the Joseph Pearson House and Studio at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown (19144).

I understand that a demolition permit has been issued for the property and strongly ask that you refuse this permit to raze an historic property in my neighborhood.

Southwest Germantown has seen an unprecedented level of development in recent months, and there are many vacant and unbuilt properties, which can be used for new housing construction. It is not necessary to tear down this home.

Should you have any questions or if I may assist in any other way, please do not hesitate to reach me by email or by phone at (908) 938-6153

Many thanks,
Angela Steele

169 W Hansberry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144

I urge you to stop the demolition order for 5139 Wayne Avenue

karel kilimnik <kkilimnik39@gmail.com>

Fri 11/6/2020 12:14 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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

Dear Mr. Farnham,

I write to request your urgent attention to the protection of the Joseph Pearson House and Studio at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown (19144). I understand that a demolition permit has been issued for the property and strongly ask that you refuse this permit to raze an historic property in my neighborhood. I have lived in SW Germantown for decades. Now there is a rush to both demolish and build new construction. This is totally changing the historical and cultural nature of our cherished neighborhood. There is no need to tear down this building. We are witnessing the destruction of many historic buildings. Ugly boxes are being constructed with no regard to our community. You can help stop this demolition by removing the demolition order. I strongly urge you to do so. What is torn down can never be replaced. Do not contribute to the destruction of our neighborhood!

Here's a bit of its history - The Joseph Pearson House and Studio at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown was built in 1857 and enlarged in 1882. Mr. Pearson was an important local artist and instructor at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts for several decades, and he created his greatest works in this house in the time between 1902-04 to 1919.

Sincerely,
Karel Kilimnik
4913 Morris street
Phila Pa 19144

Protect 5139 Wayne Ave from demolition

Jen Lav <jenlaverty@gmail.com>

Fri 11/6/2020 11:07 AM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Mr. Farnham,

I write to request your urgent attention to the protection of the Joseph Pearson House and Studio at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown (19144).

I understand that a demolition permit has been issued for the property and strongly ask that you refuse this permit to raze an historic property in my neighborhood.

Southwest Germantown has seen an unprecedented level of development in recent months, and there are many vacant and unbuilt properties, which can be used for new housing construction. It is not necessary to tear down this home.

Should you have any questions or if I may assist in any other way, please do not hesitate to reach me by email or by phone at (215) 756-6591.

Many thanks,
Jennifer Laverty

5043 Pulaski Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19144

5139 Wayne Avenue


Barbara Dowdall <gtnbassoon@aol.com>

Sat 11/7/2020 8:32 AM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Mr. Farnham:

As a lifelong resident of Southwest Germantown (except for 13 years in West Central Germantown), I strongly urge you to help preserve 5139 Wayne Avenue for both our community's 300+ years of history and our architectural/aesthetic .

Barbara McDowell Dowdall
5031 Schuyler St
1982-present

Previously 6134 Wayne Ave (Tulpehocken Apartment Coop)
1969-1982

574 W Clapier St
1947-1969

Sent from my iPhone

Protect 5139 Wayne Ave from demolition

eagreen2@gmail.com <eagreen2@gmail.com>

Mon 11/9/2020 12:49 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Mr. Farnham,

I write to request your urgent attention to the protection of the Joseph Pearson House and Studio at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown (19144).

I understand that a demolition permit has been issued for the property and strongly ask that you refuse this permit to raze an historic property in my neighborhood.

Southwest Germantown has seen an unprecedented level of development in recent months, and there are many vacant and unbuilt properties, which can be used for new housing construction. It is not necessary to tear down this home.

Should you have any questions or if I may assist in any other way, please do not hesitate to reach me by email or by phone at (716)499.9635.

Many thanks,
Elizabeth Green

5225 Knox St.
Philadelphia, PA 19144

5139 Wayne Ave.

Katie Wynne <kmcmanuswynne@gmail.com>

Wed 11/11/2020 6:07 AM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Mr. Farnham,

I write to request your urgent attention to the protection of the Joseph Pearson House and Studio at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown (19144).

I understand that a demolition permit has been issued for the property and strongly ask that you refuse this permit to raze an historic property in my neighborhood.

Southwest Germantown has seen an unprecedented level of development in recent months, and there are many vacant and unbuilt properties, which can be used for new housing construction. It is not necessary to tear down this home. Rather, we should work to preserve the history and beauty that makes Germantown noteworthy.

As a neighbor and resident of Germantown I strongly object to this permit being issued.

Many thanks,

Katie Wynne

Sent from my iPhone

5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown

Kevin Snyder <kevin@ksproserv.com>

Wed 11/11/2020 9:09 AM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Mr. Farnham,

I write to request your assistance in preventing the demolition of the Joseph Pearson House and Studio at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown (19144).

I understand that a demolition permit has been issued for the property and I ask that you intervene to save this historic property.

Southwest Germantown has seen a great deal of development in recent months, and there are many vacant and unbuilt properties, which can be used for new housing construction. It is not necessary to tear down this home.

Many thanks,

Kevin Snyder
508 W Clapier St.
Philadelphia, PA 19144

November 11, 2020

Jon Farnham
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch St., 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Mr. Farnham:

I write to you today to seek your urgent assistance in stopping the demolition of the Joseph T. Pearson house, located at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown (19144).

The quality of life in Southwest Germantown is worth more than the value of its land, and as resident of 5160 Henley Street for more than 20 years and as such an adjacent neighbor of 5139 Wayne, I can without reservation and emphatically attest that the demolition of the historic Joseph Pearson House will significantly and irreparably damage the integrity of my community and compromise the value and quality of life for my neighbors and myself.

I understand that the property was purchased in March of this year and almost immediately listed for resale as a construction-ready parcel, approved for more than 40 apartment units. In addition to disfiguring the charm of the neighborhood through the removal of one of its most elegant facades, this change will negatively alter the walkability of Wayne Avenue and add congestion to Henley Street, which it cannot sustain.

The Pearson home itself has graced our neighborhood for well over a century, and while it does require rehabilitation to return to use, it is in no way dangerous or otherwise unwelcome. The architectural detail of the home represents a level of craftsmanship unique to the past, informing and inspiring all who look upon them. With repair, the Pearson home could support one or more families within its current zoning and continue to contribute to this picturesque, low- to moderate-income residential neighborhood and business corridor, which its current owners (investors) have likely never visited. Removing a physical testament to the rich history and cultural heritage of Germantown serves no one. Once these homes are gone, they cannot be replaced, and children and adults in Southwest Germantown deserve to walk in the steps of history and to look upon its face every bit as much as children and adults in any other neighborhood in this city.

On a personal level, my own home life in Germantown cannot be separated from the Joseph T. Pearson, which like his great painting, has always existed "Over The Hedge." The Pearson House helps tell the story of my life and my community, existing across different periods of time, encompassing many different generations of people, and demonstrating a rich history and resilience in the face of substantial change. The Pearson House is an integral part of the built environment along Wayne Avenue, providing spatial and aesthetic balance to the denser row and twin homes on Henley Street and acting as part of Germantown's proud architectural legacy, shared by all regardless of race, income, or social status. Living alongside the historic structures of Southwest Germantown has provided me with a pride of place and a feeling of ownership in the community and its long history, and preservation of the Pearson House will contribute to stabilizing our close and connected neighborhood, which is working through years of disinvestment and into a shining new future. Removal of this building will slow revitalization of the Wayne Avenue business district by breaking up the streetscape and making the area less likely to support the desirable businesses that will improve life for area residents.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Clayton Holomon
5160 Henley St.
Philadelphia, PA 19144

support for nomination of Joseph Pearson House

Robert G. Smith <rob@retina.anatomy.upenn.edu>

Tue 11/17/2020 4:25 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Mr. Farnham,

I support protecting the Joseph Pearson House and Studio (Built 1857 and Enlarged 1882) at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown. Pearson was an important local artist who created his greatest works in this house between ca.1902-04 to 1919. I hope that the Historical Commission can send notice on the nomination filed by the Keeping Society on August 31, to save the house.

Sincerely,

Robert Smith

Robert G. Smith
Research Associate Professor
Department of Neuroscience
University of Pennsylvania

Fw: Preservation of Joseph Pearson House

preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Wed 12/16/2020 9:43 AM

To: Allyson Mehley <Allyson.Mehley@Phila.gov>

From: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 9:14 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Fw: Preservation of Joseph Pearson House

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
Working Remotely

From: Emily Busch <birdiebuschmusic@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 11:11 AM
To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>
Subject: Preservation of Joseph Pearson House

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Dear Jon Farnham,

I am in support of protecting the Joseph Pearson House and Studio (Built 1857 and Enlarged 1882) at 5139 Wayne Ave. in Germantown. As a resident of Germantown I believe it is now a more crucial time than ever to ensure that Germantown and its rich history and architecture is not destroyed for the sake of money hungry developers building throwaway architecture to line their pockets. This structure is unique, historic, thoughtfully built, and contributes to the neighborhood's built environment and story in a way that what would replace it cannot. PLEASE hear the residents of this neighborhood's voices and do not allow the demolition to proceed. Sincerely,
Birdie Busch

--

emilybirdiebusch.com

5139 Wayne Avenue Needs to be Preserved not demolished

karel kilimnik <kkilimnik39@gmail.com>

Wed 12/23/2020 3:07 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; Kim Chantry <Kim.Chantry@Phila.gov>; Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>; Shannon Garrison <Shannon.Garrison@Phila.gov>; Meredith Keller <Meredith.Keller@Phila.gov>; Allyson Mehley <Allyson.Mehley@Phila.gov>; Megan Schmitt <Megan.Schmitt@Phila.gov>

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I fully support the nomination of 5139 Wayne Ave to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It is important to our community and deserves the recognition and protection accorded to properties listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We have the opportunity now to recognize this important property. We must seize it so it can serve and continue to educate future generations by its presence. Pearson remains an important Pennsylvania impressionist painter, he was part of the local Germantown art community. I/we urge you to accept this nomination. If we do not save our historical buildings now then they are lost forever. Please do the right thing and protect this historical building. Save it from the wrecking ball and developers. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,
Karel Kilimnik
4913 Morris
19144

Protection and support of 5139 Wayne Avenue-The Pearson House

Paula Paul <pauladance@aol.com>

Wed 12/23/2020 6:37 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>; Kim Chantry <Kim.Chantry@Phila.gov>; Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>; Shannon Garrison <Shannon.Garrison@Phila.gov>; Meredith Keller <Meredith.Keller@Phila.gov>; Allyson Mehley <Allyson.Mehley@Phila.gov>; Megan Schmitt <Megan.Schmitt@Phila.gov>

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Dear Members of the Commission,

What a wonderful role you play in our city. Thank you so much for doing all that you can to preserve properties so meaningful to our communities and so easily lost to development and time.

I'm writing to strongly encourage you to support the nomination of 5139 Wayne Ave to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

It is important to our community and deserves the recognition and protection accorded to properties listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

We must seize this opportunity to preserve this still lovely property so it can serve and continue to educate future generations by its presence and remain a significant link to our earlier history.

Pearson remains an important Pennsylvania impressionist painter, he was part of the local Germantown art community and a point of pride for all of us.

I urge you to accept this nomination.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,
Paula J. Paul
5917 Pulaski Avenue
19144

Michael Simone
25 W Manheim Street
Philadelphia Pa 19144
Msimone825@hotmail.com
215.495.7191

Philadelphia Historical Commission

To Whom it May Concern:

Please note my name is Michael Simone my family has been rooted in Germantown for more than one-hundred and fifty years. I fully support the nomination of 5139 Wayne Avenue to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. As a lifelong resident I have taken an interest in the many notable residents of Germantown. Mr. Pearson and his talent as an impressionist artist has helped through his painting's to document in both the Germantown and communities of Philadelphia as well as Pennsylvania, the very fabric of life as it was in Germantown's past. It is important to our community and deserves the recognition and protection accorded to properties listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We have the opportunity now to recognize this important property. We must seize it so it can serve and continue to educate future generations by its presence. Pearson remains an important Pennsylvania impressionist painter, he was part of the local Germantown art community. I/we urge you to accept this nomination. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Michael Simone

SoLo/Germantown Civic Association (RCO)

Southwest Central Lower Germantown
CLEAN GREEN SAFE

Wayne Ave Merchant Association (WAM)

Registered Community Organization (RCO)

A Weiss BC Organizer 215 843 5555 awfromhh4@gmail.com

Jan. 17, 2021

Philadelphia Historical Commission

1515 Arch St.

Phila., PA 191

Attn: Jon Farnham, Executive Director Jon.Farnham@phila.gov

Re: Support 5139 Wayne Ave. Joseph T. Pearson House

Dear Dr. Jon Farnham:

We fully support the nomination of 5139 Wayne Ave., the Joseph T. Pearson House to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It is important to our community. It has remained mostly as it was for well over 100 years. It has been an important part of the historic character of Wayne Ave. for generations. Important not only for its wonderful architectural features, character and enduring presence but for its importance to the local Germantown art community history.

Joseph T. Pearson was a teacher at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He was an award winning painter who lived and painted in this his home/studio at the time 5139 Wayne Ave. The painting of his twin girls won numerous awards locally and beyond was painted there. Pearson remains an important Pennsylvania impressionist painter. His paintings on display nearby at Woodmere and Michener Art Museums.

5139 Wayne Ave., the Joseph T. Pearson House deserves the recognition and protection accorded to properties listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We have the opportunity now to recognize this important property. We must seize it so it can serve and continue to educate future generations by its presence. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Allison Weiss
BC Organizer

cc: preservation <preservation@phila.gov>, Kim Chantry <Kim.Chantry@phila.gov>,
Laura.dipasquale laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, Shannon Garrison <Shannon.Garrison@phila.gov>,
Meredith Keller meredith.keller@phila.gov, Allyson Mehley allyson.mehley@phila.gov, Megan
Schmitt megan.schmitt@phila.gov

Tuesday,
19 January 2021

Jon Farnham
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
13th Floor
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: Joseph T. Pearson, Jr., House,
5139 Wayne Avenue, Germantown,
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Dear Dr. Farnham,

I write on behalf of Historic Germantown, a partnership of eighteen historic houses, sites, and museums in Northwest Philadelphia – “the German Township” – that have come together into one organization to protect, preserve, and share some of Philadelphia’s prized historical assets. At the regular December meeting of the Board of Directors of Historic Germantown, the Board voted to support the nomination of the Joseph T. Thurman, Jr., House at 5139 Wayne Avenue in Germantown for inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Board agrees with the twin merits of the Pearson House as set forth by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia in its nomination: a) this historic resource is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; and b) this historic resource exemplifies the cultural, economic, and historical heritage of the early twentieth-century community of Germantown.

Joseph Thurman Pearson, Jr. (1876 – 1951) was born and raised in Germantown and 5139 Wayne Avenue was his childhood home. His father was typical of the new men who made Germantown their home in the years after the Civil War, those fortunate men who – for the most part – learned a trade well, established small businesses of their own, and built them up until they provided real prosperity and often, financial independence. Joseph T. Pearson, Sr. (1850 – 1920) was such a man. The older Pearson placed his son in the architectural firm of Wilson Eyre, but Eyre soon recognized the young man’s extraordinary talent as a painter. The younger Pearson turned to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA) in Philadelphia and was educated there. He then traveled to Europe, where he devoted an entire year to meeting with and studying the work of a number of the most distinguished European artists of that era.

Joseph T. Pearson, Jr. returned to the United States in 1902 and married. By this time the Pearson family had moved to a far grander house in Germantown, but still owned the house and property at 5139 Wayne Avenue. The newlywed couple happily made their home there and Pearson entered into the most productive phase of his long career. As the opportunities arose,

he submitted his paintings – primarily landscapes and portraiture – to different exhibitions and they began to win commendations and prizes. Pearson’s career flourished. In September 1909, the Philadelphia newspapers reported that PAFA had “added [Pearson] to the teaching corps,” where he would start as an “assistant instructor in drawing and painting.” This was the beginning of a life-long teaching career at PAFA, one that extended to 1937.

These were also the years in which Pearson received repeated honors from his colleagues and peers in the world of fine art. In the decade between 1908 and 1918, he won a total of four prizes from PAFA, two prizes from the National Academy of Design, and one from the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. A few years later, in 1926, he won the Gold Medal at the U.S. Sesqui-Centennial Exposition, which was held in Philadelphia.

This three-paragraph sketch of Pearson’s first forty-two years is an important part of Historic Germantown’s advocacy for the nomination. As the Pearson House in Germantown is considered for inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, *it is important to note* that the most celebrated work of Pearson’s long career was sketched and painted at his home on Wayne Avenue.

In 1918, Pearson purchased from a very wealthy Philadelphian, William West Frazier, an old farm house and barn with nine acres of land at the intersection of Huntingdon Road and Creek Road, directly on the banks of Pennypack Creek, in what was then Upper Moreland Township, in Montgomery County, about ten miles north / northeast of Germantown (this land may now be within the bounds of the Borough of Bryn Athyn or of Lower Moreland Township; maps are unclear on this point). In 1921, Pearson purchased an additional twenty-two acres of adjoining land. He lived in this bucolic place for the remaining thirty years of his life.

Historic Germantown represents a long tradition – a tradition now more than 120 years old – of valuing historic preservation in northwest Philadelphia (“the German Township”). It is with that vision, purpose, and practical experience in mind, that Historic Germantown recommends the inclusion of the house and lot at 5139 Wayne Avenue for inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Frazier Lloyd
Member, Board of Directors
and
Chair, Collections Committee
Historic Germantown

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