

**THE MINUTES OF THE 703RD STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 12 MARCH 2021
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		
Sara Lepori (Commerce Department)	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		
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:

Maggy White, Esq., Law Department
Nick Cartolaro
Oliver William Lopresti
Stuart Rosenberg
Brooke Williams
Darwin Beauvais, Esq.
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Gabriel Gottlieb
Aaron Wunsch
Terese Vekteris
David Traub, Save Our Sites
Georgette Bartell
Heather Sheridan
Justin Coleman
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
George Earl Thomas, Ph.D.
Peter Bailey, Pennsylvania School for the Deaf
Irwin Trauss
Mary McGettigan
Matt McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Margaret Manzer
Paul Boni
Greg Smolley
Grace Flisser
Doug Mooney
James Barrett
Michael Skolnick
Marjorie Russell
Adam Kaufman
Allison Weiss
Harrison Haas, Esq.
Oscar Beisert
Aneesha Shabazz
Sue Patterson
Joshua Steckel, ASL Interpreter
Devon Beverly
Molly Ray
Alex Balloon
Jeffrey Tubbs
Sean Whalen
Constance Winters
Meghan Kelly
Steven Peitzman
Terese Vekteris
Peggy Steele
Craig Alston
Michael Alhadad
Amanda Moyer, ASL Interpreter
Neil Sklaroff, Esq.
Judy Robinson

Mae Meler
Aaron Bahney
Eugene Naydovich
J M Duffin
Nancy Pontone
Eugene Desyatnik

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, 702ND STATED MEETING, 12 FEBRUARY 2021

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:06:06

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 702nd Stated Meeting, held 12 February 2021. No corrections were offered.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to adopt the minutes of the 702nd Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 8 January 2021. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Adoption of the Minutes of the 702nd Meeting					
MOTION: Adoption of minutes					
MOVED BY: Thomas					
SECONDED BY: Turner					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 23 FEBRUARY 2021

CONSENT AGENDA

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:06:30

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 recommendations of the Architectural Committee for the applications for 1221-25 N. 4th Street and 1723 Memorial Avenue for the Consent Agenda. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Consent Agenda					
MOTION: Approval					
MOVED BY: Thomas					
SECONDED BY: Turner					
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	13				

THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 26 JANUARY 2021

ADDRESS: 1221-25 N 4TH ST

Proposal: Rehabilitate building; construct addition

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: City of Philadelphia, Department of Public Property

Applicant: Judy Robinson, Continuum Architecture & Design

History: 1895; Engine Company #29; John T. Windrim

Individual Designation: 7/12/1989

District Designation: None

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct an addition at the rear of the former Engine Company #29 building. The three-story brick and brownstone structure was designed by John T. Windrim and has been owned by the City of Philadelphia since its construction in 1895. The building ceased functioning as a firehouse in 1979 and has since been used by the Department of Public Property as storage. The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority recently approved the sale of the property to allow for its development, which includes converting the building to residential use.

This application proposes to rehabilitate the front façade of the historic building, including masonry repairs, cleaning, new windows, and new doors that replicate the appearance of the historic doors. A portion of the rear roof would be demolished to increase the ceiling height at the interior, and a one-story addition would be constructed with a substantial setback from N. 4th Street. Green roofs are proposed for both the existing roof of the historic building and the roof of the one-story addition.

The five-story rear addition would be separated from the existing building by a covered exterior walkway, allowing the rear wall of the historic building to remain intact. Where it fronts Orianna Street, the addition would be clad in a brick veneer with a central copper bay and copper cornice. The ground-story parking area would be screened by greenery at two openings, and a central garage door would allow transparency into the space. The sides and rear of the addition would be clad in charcoal fiber cement siding. The top of the addition would feature a communal roof deck with green space.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct five-story addition with roof deck;
- Demolish rear portion of existing roof and construct one-story addition;
- Install green roofs; and
- Rehabilitate façade.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

- The proposed addition would require minimal alterations to the historic structure. While the rear wall would no longer be visible from Orianna Street, no character-defining features would be lost or obscured.
- The proposed addition is compatible in massing, size, and scale.
- The proposed materials, fenestration patterns, and architectural features, such as the copper cornice and bay, are differentiated from but compatible with the historic building and surrounding context.
- *Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.*
 - The proposed addition would be undertaken in a manner that would have minimal impact on the historic building. The proposed exterior walkway between the historic building and the new addition would allow the rear wall of the historic building to remain intact. The addition's removal in the future would leave the historic property and its environment unimpaired.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9, provided the following:

- the glass railing is changed to a metal or cable railing system;
- the side bays and return of the rear addition adjacent to the Orianna Street façade are clad in brick;
- the copper cornice should be included at the side bays of the addition, and a simpler cornice should be incorporated where siding is currently shown;
- a Hardie panel should be considered instead of clapboard siding;
- consideration should be given to how the existing 4th Street doors will be modified to allow for egress;
- the front façade windows should replicate the historic configurations;
- the southernmost door of the front façade should potentially be paneled rather than flush;
- the location of the mechanical equipment should be identified in plan;
- a base articulation should be added to the first floor of the Orianna Street façade;
- the front portion of the historic roof should not be occupied space; and
- the north elevation should be included in the application to the Historical Commission.

ACTION: See Consent Agenda.

ADDRESS: 1723 MEMORIAL AVE

Proposal: Construct three-story building with pilot house

Review Requested: Review and Comment

Owner: 1213 N 41 LLC

Applicant: Eugene Naydovich, 1213 N 41 LLC

History: Vacant lot

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Parkside Historic District, Non-contributing, 12/11/2009

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

BACKGROUND:

The 1723 Memorial Avenue is a non-contributing vacant lot in the Parkside Historic District. This application proposes to build a three-story building with pilot house on the lot. The Historical Commission has review-and-comment jurisdiction over this application.

SCOPE OF WORK

Construct new three-story multi-family residence.

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 will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - Generally speaking, the design of the proposed new construction project reflects the size, scale, proportion and massing of the architecture of the Parkside Historic District. The proposed materials, however, do not. Vinyl siding or stucco is proposed for the prominent bay window at the front façade, and vinyl windows are proposed throughout. A brick veneer is proposed for the front façade; however, it would be helpful to know if the intent is to match the thin, tan-colored brick that is seen throughout the district. The front windows at the third story are square-topped rather than curved like the majority of the houses on the block, and no decorative brick mold is proposed. The front façade also lacks the circular window at the top which is another design feature seen at most of the other houses in the row.
- *Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a manner such that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*
 - Because this proposed new construction is being considered on a vacant parcel, no historic fabric will be impaired by the project.

STAFF COMMENT: The proposed design is generally compatible with the historic district, but the windows at the front façade should be aluminum-clad or composite rather than vinyl; Hardi-board siding should be used rather than vinyl siding; the brick veneer should match the tan brick seen throughout the district; the windows at the third story should be curved; and decorative brick window surrounds should be added to the design of the front façade, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE COMMENT: The Architectural Committee commented that the proposed new construction will be appropriate within the Parkside Historic District if it reflects

the level of detail shown on the applicant's similar recent project, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10. The applicant should revise the plans to convey the level of detail demonstrated by the photographs of the other project.

ACTION: See Consent Agenda.

ADDRESS: 737 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Construct six-story building with mezzanine and decks

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Sarah Investment LLC

Applicant: Stuart Rosenberg, Stuart G. Rosenberg Architects

History: Vacant lot

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Society Hill Historic District, Non-contributing, 3/10/1999

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

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to construct a five-story, mixed-use building with a mezzanine and roof decks at the site in the Society Hill Historic District where a non-contributing building was recently demolished. The staff of the Historical Commission approved the demolition in October 2019.

The north side of the block, where this site is situated, has an important history as Sansom Row by Benjamin Latrobe, which marks the beginning of rowhouse development in Philadelphia in 1799. Before that time, builders only constructed houses individually or in very small groups. Twelve of the original houses still survive in the row, even if some have been modified. The row now consists entirely of three- and four-story historic buildings clad in red brick, brownstone, stucco, and other masonry.

The Historical Commission has reviewed earlier revisions of this proposed building. At its 8 May 2020 meeting and 14 August 2020, the Historical Commission denied earlier applications to construct a six-story building with a mezzanine and roof decks, stating that the size of the party walls overwhelmed the adjacent buildings, and the setbacks were too minimal.

The current application proposes a building with one fewer floors and greater setbacks than those proposed earlier. The proposed building retains the design of the first four floors, which the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission agreed were satisfactory in terms of massing, materials, and scale for Sansom Row. The façade materials are similar to those proposed in the application that the Historical Commission reviewed at its May and August 2020 meetings. The building would feature red brick at its upper stories and cast stone to imitate limestone at the storefront.

The section above the first four floors, which was the primary focus of discussion during the earlier meeting, is now a single floor topped by a mezzanine with a roof deck. The fifth floor is set back 10 feet from the front facade and the front wall of the mezzanine is set back 24 feet from the front façade. The total height of the building is 65 feet.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct five-story, mixed-use building with commercial ground floor with mezzanine and roof deck.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

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

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The size, scale, proportions, and massing of the proposed new construction is compatible with the surrounding context and the historic district. The core of the new building, its ground level and three upper floors, are in keeping with the historic forms and rhythm of Sansom Row. Although visible, the upper section of one story and mezzanine does not overwhelm the lower section of the building or the adjoining historic row. The proposed new construction satisfies Standard 9.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee failed to offer a recommendation. A motion to deny the application failed by a vote of 3 to 3.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:08:25

RECUSAL:

- Mr. Thomas recused, owing to his firm's involvement with an earlier version of this project.

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the revised application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Stuart Rosenberg represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia, stated his organization has no objection to the revised application.
- Paul Boni, Society Hill Civic Association, contended that the proposal is a six-story building rather than a five-story building. Mr. Boni noted that, if the revised application is approved, the staff should carefully review the details of both visible party walls.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The height of the building has been reduced and setbacks increased from earlier applications.
- The overall articulations and color of the building's materials, including the details of the visible sidewalls, should be carefully reviewed by staff prior to final approval.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The size, scale, proportions, and massing of the proposed new construction is compatible with the surrounding context and the historic district. The core of the new building, its ground level and three upper floors, are in keeping with the historic forms and rhythm of Sansom Row. Although visible, the upper section of one story and

mezzanine does not overwhelm the lower section of the building or the adjoining historic row, therefore the new construction satisfies Standard 9.

ACTION: Ms. Edwards moved to approve the revised application, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 10 to 2.

ITEM: 737 Walnut St MOTION: Approval of revised application MOVED BY: Edwards 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				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)		X			
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	10	2		1	

ADDRESS: 231 MONROE ST

Proposal: Construct exterior stair and roof deck; extend party wall and chimney

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Robert Delaney

Applicant: Jack Burns, Jack Burns Architecture LLC

History: 1860

Individual Designation: 6/24/1958

District Designation: None

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

BACKGROUND:

Located at the northwest corner of Monroe Street and S. American Street, 231 Monroe Street is an individually-designated property in the Queen Village neighborhood. In November 2020, the Department of Licenses and Inspections issued a stop work order for the construction of a roof deck without permits. The partially-completed roof deck differs from the submitted drawings, which are intended as a revised, compromise position. The drawings show a deck set back five feet eight inches from the Monroe Street elevation and six feet eight inches from the American Street elevation, with an angled corner. As built, the deck is set back from the front elevation, but extends the full width of the roof, with no tapered corner. The builder has noted that they cannot put weight on the roof, and would like to keep a structure that extends the full width of the building to be supported by the exterior walls, so the architect has included steel structural supports that would extend to the party walls. The drawings also show that the deck would be

enclosed by a black aluminum railing on the street-facing elevations. An existing chimney would be extended.

The original application proposed access to the deck by a switch-back stair that would be constructed on the existing second-floor roof deck, and included a five-foot high wall clad in Azek siding would be erected along the party wall. Following the Architectural Committee meeting, the applicants lowered the deck structure slightly, replaced the wall with a railing, and changed the switch-back stair to a spiral stair.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct roof deck and stair
- Extend chimney

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

- *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 partially-built deck is highly visible from the public right-of-way. If modified to comply with the submitted drawings, the proposed deck and stair would remain conspicuous from the public right-of-way, and therefore the application fails to satisfy this guideline.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to the Roofs Guideline.

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

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:29:05

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the revised application to the Historical Commission.
- No one represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Steven Peitzman encouraged the Historical Commission to deny the application.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The proposed roof deck, structural supports, and stair would be highly visible and conspicuous from the public right-of-way.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The proposed roof deck will not be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and therefore fails to satisfy Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to deny the application, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline. Mr. Lippert seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 231 Monroe St MOTION: Denial MOVED BY: McCoubrey SECONDED BY: Lippert					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

ADDRESS: 1505 SPRING GARDEN ST

Proposal: Construct additions

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Linggan Realty 89

Applicant: Adam Zangrilli, Zangrilli Design

History: 1859; storefront, new brickwork, stucco and cornice, 1923

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Spring Garden Historic District, Contributing, 10/11/2000

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

BACKGROUND:

The building at 1505 Spring Garden Street is a three-story building with a two-story rear ell. This application proposes to construct an addition so that the rear ell and most of the main block rise four stories in height. The addition is set back nine feet from the front façade, where a deck is proposed. Several other buildings on this row have full three-story rear ells, but only one has a fourth story, which is the property next door with the mansard addition, constructed about 1885. The only work to the front façade called out in the application is the replacement of the non-historic storefront windows and door, for which the staff can work with the applicant on the details.

SCOPE OF WORK

- Construct third and fourth floor 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 will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the*

property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

- As proposed, the new addition is not compatible with the size, scale, and massing of the row.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial as proposed, but approval of a rear addition with reduced or eliminated massing on the main block, pursuant to Standard 9.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial as proposed, but approval of a rear addition with no massing or deck on the main block, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:35:20

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the revised application to the Historical Commission and outlined the change in setback from nine to 18 feet and removal of the deck.
- No one represented the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The roof structure and rear wall of the third floor are proposed for demolition, but the retention of the rear wall would be preferable.
- The revised roof addition is likely inconspicuous from the public right-of-way.
- The applicant did not attend either meeting where the project was reviewed.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The amount of demolition proposed may not satisfy historic preservation standards and should be reconsidered.
- The revised setback of the roof addition, and the removal of the deck, may allow for it to be compatible with the scale and massing of the row, pursuant to Standard 9.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to remand the revised application to the Architectural Committee for review at its 23 March 2021 meeting. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 1505 Spring Garden St MOTION: Remand revised application to Architectural Committee MOVED BY: McCoubrey 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				
Lepori (Commerce)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

OLD BUSINESS

ADDRESS: 156 W SCHOOL HOUSE LN

Name of Resource: Boxwood

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Teen Challenge Training Center Inc.

Nominator: Penn Knox Neighborhood Association

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 156 W. School House Lane and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues that Boxwood reflects the Colonial Revival style of architecture as applied to upper-class suburban residences in late nineteenth-century Philadelphia. The nomination further argues that the “cottage-stable” at the rear of the property represents Gothic Revival cottage motifs popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Under Criterion D, the nomination asserts that Boxwood was designed by Mantle Fielding, a prolific and significant architect who influenced the built environment in Northwest Philadelphia at the turn of the twentieth century.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 156 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. However, the staff asserts that the so-called “cottage-stable” at the rear of the property does not reflect the Gothic Revival style and, therefore, does not satisfy Criteria C and D as presented in the nomination. While the building has a cross gable, a typical feature of the Gothic Revival, it does not have any other features characteristic of the style. The building may have served as a barn, potentially for an earlier residence predating Boxwood, and was later updated with a cross gable. The staff recommends that the so-called “cottage-stable” contributes to the site’s

historical significance but does not exhibit sufficient character-defining features to be considered reflective of or exemplary of the Gothic Revival style.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 156 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation B, C, D, E, I, and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:41:55

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Attorney Darwin Beauvais, Sue Patterson and Maggie Manzer of the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association, and Oscar Beisert represented the nominator. Mr. Beauvais explained why the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association submitted the nomination and supported designation. Ms. Patterson and Ms. Manzer explained the reasons behind the association's nomination of the property and why it advocated for designation.
- Attorneys Matt McClure and Devon Beverly, Peter Bailey, the Head of School at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, architect Greg Smolley, and consultant George Thomas represented the property owner and opposed the property's designation. Mr. McClure represented the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf and explained why it is opposed to the designation of the property. Mr. Bailey explained that the school needs to redevelop the property to improve its campus and make it safer for the students. A designation will prevent the redevelopment. Mr. Smolley explained why the house cannot be adaptively reused for deaf students and how adding the property to the campus would allow the school to redesign the traffic flow on the campus and improve safety on the campus. Mr. Thomas provided an analysis of the architectural and historical claims in the nomination and concluded that the nomination does not make a case for designation.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia supported the nomination.
- Neighbor Irwin Trauss supported the nomination.
- Jim Duffin supported the nomination.
- Neighbor Georgette Bartell supported the nomination.
- Aaron Wunsch supported the nomination.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination.
- Allison Weiss of So/Lo Germantown Civic Association supported the nomination.
- Doug Mooney offered to answer any questions related to archaeology.
- Grace Flisser, recording secretary for the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association, supported the nomination.
- Steven Peitzman supported the nomination.
- Neighbor Aaron Bahney stated that he supports the school mission, but does not want to see the building at 156 W. School House Lane demolished.
- Ms. Patterson, who spoke as a nominator, also spoke as a member of the public in favor of the designation of the property.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- Notice of the nomination was mailed on 7 February 2019 when the property was owned by Teen Challenge Training Center Inc. The property was subsequently sold to the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, the main campus of which is adjacent to 156 W. School House Lane.
- The school does not have immediate plans for the property but opposes designation with a claim that declining to designate would support the school's mission and benefit the public's interest.
- The nomination contends that the building was designed in the 1890s in the Colonial Revival style by architect Mantle Fielding.
- The 1890s-designed building was an adaptation of an earlier brick building on the site.
- A building at the adjacent School for the Deaf served as a field hospital during the Revolutionary War, and the main British encampment was formed in close proximity to 156 W. School House Lane.
- The rear carriage house, or "cottage-stable," does not exhibit sufficient character-defining features to be considered reflective of or exemplary of the Gothic Revival style.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The rear carriage house, or "cottage-stable," does not exhibit sufficient character-defining features to be considered reflective of or exemplary of the Gothic Revival style.
- The property is located in an area directly impacted by the Battle of Germantown, satisfying Criterion B.
- The building reflects the Colonial Revival style of architecture, satisfying Criterion C.
- The building embodies characteristics of the Colonial Revival style of architecture, satisfying Criterion D.
- Architect Mantle Fielding was an influential architect, satisfying Criterion E.
- The site is likely to yield archaeological artifacts related to the Battle of Germantown, satisfying Criterion I.
- The building is emblematic of the suburban landscape of Germantown, satisfying Criterion J.
- The two-story projection off the rear of the house with the second-floor walkway connecting it to the house is not historically significant.
- The cottage-stable does not exemplify the Gothic Revival style and fails to satisfy Criterion D as argued in the nomination. The structure is considered non-contributing.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the property at 156 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation B, C, D, E, I, and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Lippert seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 11 to 2. Ms. Lepori and Mr. Mattioni dissented.

ITEM: 156 W School House Ln MOTION: Designate under Criteria B, C, D, E, I, and J MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Lippert					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Carney (DPD)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Dodds (DHCD)	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lepori (Commerce)		X			
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Mattioni		X			
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	11	2			

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT REGULATION FOR CONTINUANCES

OVERVIEW: At the September 2020 meeting, the Historical Commission directed the staff to provide the Historical Commission with draft regulations delegating authority to the staff to postpone the reviews of some types of nominations. The staff presented the draft regulations at the Historical Commission's November 2020 meeting, but the length of the meeting precluded any substantive discussion. Subsequent meetings have likewise proved too lengthy to allow for methodical consideration. The agenda for the March 2021 meeting is considerably shorter than those for recent meetings and will allow for a consideration of a proposed amendment to the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations.

To overcome some of the burden of managing continuance requests for nominations, especially as the numbers of requests have grown considerably during the COVID pandemic, the staff suggests that the Historical Commission adopt regulations delegating the authority to grant some reasonable requests to postpone reviews to the staff. Moving some continuance requests offline, outside of the public meetings of the Historical Commission and Committee on Historic Designation, would not only save time during the meetings for more pressing matters and reduce time spent by the staff on clerical work related to administering the requests, but would also remove some uncertainty for all involved and open up space at meetings to consider additional nominations. Because the Historical Commission's jurisdiction persists throughout the postponement when the property owner makes the request, the postponement poses no risks to historic resources; the Commission has the same authority over the property during an owner-requested postponement as it would have if the property were designated. At the Historical Commission's direction, the staff and attorney drafted proposed regulations delegating some requests to postpone reviews of nominations to the staff. The proposed regulations are attached, and are an updated version of those offered last November. The staff is asking the Historical Commission to adopt them as an amendment to the Rules & Regulations at its March 2021 meeting.

In summary, the proposed regulations would work as follows:

- The proposed regulations would give the staff the authority to grant proper postponement requests (complete, timely, not too long) from property owners for the reviews of individual nominations for up to 12 months.
- If a postponement request was not proper (incomplete, not timely, too long) or the staff declined to grant the request, it would then be reviewed by the Historical Commission. The first such request would be routed directly to the Historical Commission without review of the nomination by the Committee. For subsequent requests (not proper or staff declined), the Committee would review the nomination, if its review was scheduled for a date prior to the Commission's review of the request, despite the postponement request, so that improper requests did not slow the review process. If the Commission subsequently granted the request and decided that any party had not had an opportunity to participate fully in the Committee's earlier deliberations, it could remand the nomination to the Committee for another review.
- Postponement requests from third parties, and all requests for historic district nomination reviews would not be granted by the staff, but would be considered by the Historical Commission. The Committee would review the nomination, if the review was scheduled for a date prior to the Commission's consideration of the request, despite the postponement request, so that improper requests did not slow the review process. If the Commission subsequently granted the request and decided that any party had not had an opportunity to participate fully in the Committee's earlier deliberations, it could remand the nomination to the Committee for another review.
- The Committee on Historic Designation would no longer consider and make recommendations on continuance requests; adjudicating such requests is arguably outside the Committee's narrow purview of assessing historical significance.
- The staff would report on all postponement requests to the Committee on Historic Designation and the Historical Commission in writing prior to their public meetings. The reports would be available to the public.
- The historic preservation ordinance does not establish time limits for the Historical Commission to complete reviews of nominations, but it does stipulate that any building permit application submitted to the Historical Commission while a property is under consideration for designation is deemed approved if the Commission does not complete the designation process within 90 days of receipt of the application. In other words, the Historical Commission may approve a building permit application for a property under consideration for designation, but it may not deny an application or approve it with conditions unacceptable to property owner while the property is under consideration for designation, unless it completes the designation process and designates the property within 90 days of receipt of the permit application. However, the property owner waives the 90-day time limit to review applications for properties under consideration for designation when the property owner makes the continuance request. The 90-day clock continues to run when a continuance request is granted for anyone but the owner, making such grants ill-advised except in very specific settings.
- Nothing in the proposed regulation would preclude an owner who had been granted a continuance from requesting to be heard sooner if circumstances changed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff suggests that the Historical Commission adopt the regulation as an amendment to the Rules & Regulations, adding it as Section 5.16.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:02:35

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the proposed regulations to the Historical Commission.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman suggested that the proposed maximum staff-granted continuance of 12 months is too long. She suggested a couple of months as the maximum. She stated that the public should have an opportunity to comment on continuance requests. She stated that the public should have opportunities to comment directly on continuance requests at public meetings. She stated that, on the other hand, reviewing continuance requests has taken up too much time at meetings.
- Mr. Mattioni asked Mr. Farnham why the staff chose 12 months as the maximum.
 - Mr. Farnham explained that recent cases like the one earlier today show that property owners sometimes need as much as one year to prepare for the review of a nomination. Property owners are generally surprised when they receive notice letters announcing that the Historical Commission will consider designating their properties. It can take them some time to react, hire the needed consultants like attorneys and historians, assemble reports, complete planning processes, and undertake other preparatory work. He stated that the owners of more complicated properties take about one year to prepare to fully participate in nomination reviews.
 - Mr. Mattioni observed that the complicated reviews are the exception, not the rule. He added that he has faith in the staff to allow this much discretion.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the staff should report on the continuances that it has granted at the Committee on Historic Designation meetings so that the broadest public is informed.
 - Mr. Farnham stated that the staff would happily report on the continuance grants in any format specified by the Historical Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance stated that continuance requests have become a burden for the Historical Commission and Committee on Historic Designation. He suggested that 12 months is too long and 90 days might be more appropriate. He stated that nominators currently have an opportunity to negotiate with property owners with regard to continuances. He also suggested that allowing owners to request continuances up to 24 hours in advance of a meeting might not provide enough time for the public to plan for participation. He asked how continuances will be communicated to nominators and the public. He suggested seven calendar days.
- Jim Duffin agreed with Mr. Grossi and also stated that benefits would derive from delegating some authority to the staff to grant continuances.
- Steven Peitzman suggested limiting the time for staff-granted continuances to three months. He also suggested extending the advance notice requirement from 24 hours to something longer. Finally, he suggested that the staff only be authorized to grant one continuance.
- Oscar Beisert suggested that a continuance period of 90 to 120 days might be appropriate. He also suggested that the staff notify the nominator of any continuance.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman suggested that 24 hours of notice is not ideal. She stated that the Committee members, nominators, and public need more notice to be prepared. She also suggested reducing the length of continuances to 120 days so that the property owners feel the pressure of the clock and are compelled to engage in conversations with the nominators.
- Ms. Edwards also suggested reducing the maximum length of continuances. She observed that properties sometimes deteriorate during continuances.
- Ms. Carney asked the staff to comment on shortening the continuance length and lengthening the minimum time before meetings for making requests.
 - Mr. Farnham stated that the staff has no objection to lengthening the minimum time before meetings for making requests. He noted that, like all people, property owners procrastinate and often make requests at the last minute. By lengthening the time, a greater percentage of requests will be reviewed by the Historical Commission itself, rather than the staff. However, offsetting that negative, the longer time will allow the Committee members and others to plan better for the meetings. Regarding the maximum length of a continuance, he stated that 12 months would be the maximum, but not the typical. Most property owners request continuances of one or two months, not 12, and the staff would not be obligated to grant every request, but would only have the authority to grant such a request when it was merited. Mr. Farnham noted that he has not experienced property owners attempting to manipulate the system through continuances. They primarily have good reasons for the requests. At worst, they are procrastinating, but they are not trying to manipulate the system and evade designation through continuances. With regard to the concern raised by Ms. Edwards, property owners are bound by the preservation ordinance including the obligation to maintain their properties in good repair from the time of notice, during continuances, so the argument that a property deteriorated during a continuance is not a valid argument and can be disregarded by the Historical Commission. Mr. Farnham stated that he doubts that many property owners would actually request 12-month continuances and the staff would be under no obligation to approve any request if it deemed it unwarranted. He concluded that allowing the staff to approve up to 12 months of continuances would reduce the number of requests forwarded to the Commissioners and the amount of time spent reviewing continuance requests at public meetings.
- Ms. Cooperman suggested six months for a maximum continuance.
- Mr. Mattioni suggested that continuances made at least three days in advance of the public meeting could be approved by the staff.
- Mr. Thomas agreed that three days was acceptable. He noted that the staff would not be compelled to approve all requests. He stated that he trusts the staff to use its judgement and be fair.
- Mr. Sanchez agreed with Mr. Thomas. She stated that she is not concerned that the system will be abused.
- Ms. Turner stated that she agrees as well. She stated that she has faith in the staff. She stated that the Historical Commission could amend its regulation if it determined that the staff was abusing its authority.
- Ms. Cooperman and Mr. McCoubrey stated that everyone would request one year and assume that it would be granted.
- Mr. Reuter stated that property owners typically want nominations resolved as quickly as possible. They do not typically seek to extend the reviews unless they

have good reasons, like preparing responses. He stated that the Historical Commission would place a designation at risk on appeal if it did not give a property owner a full opportunity to prepare. He stated that that is particularly true when the Committee or Historical Commission adds a Criterion for Designation that is not documented in the nomination. In such a case, the Historical Commission should automatically grant a continuance, especially with the addition of Criterion I. Mr. Reuter suggested adopting the regulation as proposed.

- Ms. Cooperman suggested adding a section on emergency requests.
 - Mr. Mattioni replied that such a section was not necessary.

ACTION: Mr. Mattioni moved to the proposed regulations as Section 5.16 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations, with the requirement that timely continuance requests are made at least three business days before the public meeting at which the nomination will be considered, not 24 hours as stipulated in the draft regulations. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

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

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:47:00

ACTION: At 12:47 p.m., Mr. Thomas moved to adjourn. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

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

PLEASE NOTE:

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