

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**3 MARCH 2021, 9:30 A.M.  
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM  
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:00:00**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair	X		
Suzanna Barucco	X		
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.	X		
Bruce Lavery	X		
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.	X		

\* Owing to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, all Committee members, staff, 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 Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Eileen Lafferty  
Lisa Kahuila  
Michael McGettigan  
Dennis Barnebey  
Sean Whalen, Esq., Vintage Law  
Lisa Sutcliffe  
R. Mizioroko  
D. Kasdekert  
Lorraine Rocci  
Josie Egrich  
Christine Ford  
Jeremy Grey, Hilco  
Janette Davis Gass  
Gina Batavick

Mary Giampieyro  
Robert M. Mandeville  
Bridget Deacon  
Zoraida Pinero  
Harrison Haas, Esq., Cozen O'Connor  
Steven Peitzman  
Garth Herrick  
Kevin Block  
Donna Rilling  
Liz Mahan  
Hadji Maloumian  
George Earl Thomas, CivicVisions  
Raquel Guzmán  
Mary McGettigan  
Aaron Wunsch  
J. M. Duffin  
Kathleen Walsh  
Ann-Marie Nacchio  
Neil Sklaroff, Esq., Dilworth Law  
Gerry Dever  
M. Murphy  
Ashley McCarrie  
C. Dombrowski  
Heather Little  
Krystal Whalin  
Annie Brown Simon  
JoAnne Hill  
Suzanne Edinger  
Mary C. Tracy  
Christina Kurz  
Jana Monaco, Virginia State Ambassador  
Jasmine E. Sessoms, Hilco  
Michael Adler  
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance  
Cathie Dopkin  
Vivian Brady Jones  
Steve Clement  
Tom Wakeley  
Jennifer Robinson, Preservation Alliance  
Nick Kraus, Heritage Consulting Group  
Adrian Trevisan  
Jennifer Harrell  
Kim Owczarski  
Loretta Nass  
Rich Leimbach  
Salina Gary  
Irene Hannan  
Jeffrey Ogren, Esq., Bochetto and Lentz  
Dan Ciolino  
Kathleen Walsh  
Seth Shapiro, PGW

Irene Tori  
Pamela Johnson  
Chris Strom, Esq., Eckert Seamans  
Jeremy Montgomery  
Dennis Boylan  
Russell Fulton  
Margaret Manzer  
Denise Baron  
Kim Kimrey  
Libbie Hawes  
Joanne Abel  
Georgine Fronczak  
Allison Weiss, SoLo Germantown  
Dina Bleckman, Ballard Spahr  
Dorothy Burton  
Maryann Fox  
Ben Derby  
Matt McClure, Ballard Spahr  
Abraham Silber  
Donah Beale  
Joe Walsh  
Margaret Holley  
Nancy Pontone  
Matt Stafford  
Lisa Mallon  
Sarah Antonelli  
Holly Scally  
Jennifer Carulli  
Jay Farrell  
Stephen Varenhorst  
Lisa Camps  
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society  
Ari Barkan  
T. Gordon  
Jessica McLaughlin  
Kim Kadelski  
David Traub  
Victoria Kimbrell  
Nelly Rosario  
Tammy Felder  
Nathan Farris, Esq., Ballard Spahr  
Brian McGuire, PGW  
Paige Neill  
Kristen MacPherson  
Nan Gallagher  
David Gest, Esq., Ballard Spahr  
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance  
Jennifer Manning Bytof  
Kathleen Melvin  
Susan Wetherill  
Alex Balloon

Lori Salganicoff, Chestnut Hill Conservancy  
Martina Porter  
Fran Hicks  
Maggie O'Brien  
Jan Vacca, Harman Group  
Christine Crutchley  
Margie Weidenmiller  
Hal Schirmer  
Celeste Morello

## **CONTINUANCE REQUESTS**

### **ADDRESS: 1826 CHESTNUT ST**

Name of Resource: Aldine Theatre

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Sam's Place Realty Associates LP

Nominator: Kevin Block, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov)

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

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

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

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

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:08:20

#### **PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Mr. Lavery moved to recommend that the nomination for 1826 Chestnut Street be continued to the June 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting. Ms. Barucco seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 1826 Chestnut St</b>					
<b>MOTION: Continue to June 2021 CHD</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Lavery</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Barucco</b>					
<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

**ADDRESS: 1615 WALNUT ST**

Name of Resource: The Clarke & Sarah Merchant House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Honey Nuts LLC

Nominator: Center City Residents' Association

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

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

Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the building is associated with the life of Clarke Merchant, whose career as a manufacturer and merchant of metal and tin-plate architectural and building materials made a significant impact on the built environment of Philadelphia and beyond. The nomination further contends that the building qualifies under Criterion E, owing to the alterations and addition completed in 1892 by prominent Philadelphia architect Addison Hutton. Finally, the nomination asserts that the building is significant under Criterion J because it is a rare surviving urban mansion on a principal street that was once home to expensive residences but is now lined with purpose-built commercial structures.

The period of significance begins in 1892, when the Merchant family purchased the property and engaged architect Addison Hutton, and ends in 1931, when the building was sold out of the Merchant family.

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

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:08:20

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Nathan Farris represented the property owner. He explained they are requesting a continuance to the April meeting because they are in active negotiations with the nominator for a facade easement in lieu of designation and require more time to wrap up the negotiations.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Mr. Lavery moved to recommend that the nomination for 1615 Walnut Street be continued to the April 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting. Ms. Barucco seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 1615 Walnut St continuance request</b>					
<b>MOTION: Continue to April 2021 CHD</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Lavery</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Barucco</b>					
<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen					X
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	4				1

**ADDRESS: 8835 GERMANTOWN AVE**

Name of Resource: Julia Hebard Marsden House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Chestnut Hill Hospital LLC

Nominator: Chestnut Hill Conservancy

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, [meredith.keller@phila.gov](mailto:meredith.keller@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the former Julia Hebard Marsden house and stable, two buildings on the Chestnut Hill Hospital campus, at 8835 Germantown Avenue and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the buildings satisfy Criteria for Designation C, D, E, and J.

Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues that the house and stable are highly representative examples of the Colonial Revival “country houses” that appeared in Chestnut Hill following the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that the buildings were designed by the nationally significant and Philadelphia-born architect Charles Barton Keen. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the residence and stable contributed to the neighborhood’s status as an elite residential enclave at the turn of the twentieth century.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the former residence and stable at 8835 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, E, and J.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:08:20

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner.
- Lori Salganicoff of the Chestnut Hill Conservancy represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Barucco asked Mr. Farnham if the staff can provide any details on the request to continue to July rather than April.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that he met with the CEO of Chestnut Hill Hospital and an individual responsible for government relations. He added that the hospital administration is unfamiliar with the designation process and was surprised by the Historical Commission's notice letter. Mr. Farnham stated that the CEO acknowledged that there is uncertainty regarding Tower Health's future and that the hospital would like to obtain some expert advice and potentially hire a preservation consultant. The CEO, Mr. Farnham continued, indicated that it would take some time to get approval for that process, given the organization's uncertainty.
- Mr. Farnham asked to offer some clarification on the continuance request process. He noted that when a request is made by the property owner, the property is treated by the Historical Commission as though it is designated until the Commission reaches a decision. He elaborated that if a matter is continued several months, it remains under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction with the maximum amount of protection the Commission can offer so a property is not at risk. He added that the Historical Commission's jurisdiction when a property is designated or pending designation is limited to the review of building permit applications. He clarified that the Historical Commission has no authority over the use or ownership of a property and in no way would participate in whether or not a school should or should not close. Its sole authority, he continued, would be to review building permit applications for that property. He commented that the Historical Commission maintains control over the exterior appearance of a property for the public's appreciation. He then added that the Committee on Historic Designation's recommendations are advisory to the full Historical Commission and are non-binding. He elaborated that the full Historical Commission will make the final decision on each matter.
- Ms. Cooperman asked Mr. Farnham to clarify the administrative approval of continuance requests.
  - Mr. Farnham stated that at the moment the historic preservation ordinance and the Rules & Regulations do not provide the Historical Commission with guidance in terms of granting continuances for nominations and other matters. He explained that there is a desire to move the continuance requests to the administrative level so that the Committee can focus its time and expertise on the review of nominations. In the future, he continued, he expects an amendment to the Rules & Regulations removing reasonable requests for continuances from public review and allowing them to be granted administratively by the staff.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Ms. Salganicoff stated the building is part of the Chestnut Hill Hospital, now owned by Tower Health, and that there has been discussion of adaptively reusing the building. She asked that the continuance period be as short as possible, because ownership may change.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Ms. Barucco moved to recommend that the review of the nomination for 8835 Germantown Avenue be continued to the July 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting. Ms. Milroy seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 8835 Germantown Ave continuance request</b>					
<b>MOTION: Continue to July 2021 CHD</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Milroy</b>					
<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen					X
Bruce Laverty	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	4				1

**ADDRESS: 319 N 19TH ST AND 312 N 18TH ST**

Name of Resource: John W. Hallahan Girls' Catholic High School

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the properties at 319 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 312 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, now collectively known as John W. Hallahan Girls' Catholic High School, as historic and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Located in the Logan Square neighborhood, the school's buildings were constructed in 1911 and 1914. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that John W. Hallahan Girls' Catholic High School represents the first Catholic girls' high school in the United States and played an important part in the development of the city's educational system in response to the demands of an industrializing economy. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the building at 319 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street was designed by one of Philadelphia's leading architects of ecclesiastical buildings, the firm of Ballinger & Perrot. The firm designed numerous Roman Catholic and Methodist Episcopalian churches and parish schools, influencing the development of the city. The period of significance begins in 1911, the year the school began construction, and ends in 2021, when the school is scheduled to close as announced by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in November 2020.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 319 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 312 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, satisfies Criterion A, and 319 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street satisfies Criterion E.



**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:08:20**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner. Attorney Tony Forte, acting on behalf of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, submitted a written request approximately one week prior to the meeting requesting a continuance to the October 2021 CHD meeting.
- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Barucco said that she agreed with the public comments and that continuing the review of the nomination does seem excessive. She added that she is not opposed to continuing the nomination review until October 2021 but finds it disingenuous that the Archdiocese claims they are not familiar with the Historical Commission's process.
- Mr. Farnham said the attorney communicated that the owner wanted to get to the end of the school year before considering this matter and planned to engage preservation consultants to better understand the building and the implications of the designation.
- Mr. Grossi said they have no objection to the continuance as they know the property will remain under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission during the continuance period. He noted that a continuance to October 2021 is an abnormally long request and that if the Committee decided on a shorter continuance they would agree. Mr. Grossi pointed out the robust support for the nomination not just from alumni but also from many people whose lives have been touched by the property.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Michael Adler, attorney representing Friends of Hallahan Inc, a non-profit organization founded by the graduates of John W. Hallahan Catholic Girls High School. He stated there is great support for the nomination as shown in the 490 pages of public comment posted on the Historical Commission web site. Mr. Adler noted that in general, the organization has no objection to a continuance, but that continuance should be no longer than 60 days.
- Joanne Able, alumna, spoke in opposition to an extensive continuance.
- Eileen Lafferty, alumna, spoke in opposition to an extensive continuance.
- Jenna Monaco, alumna, spoke in opposition to an extensive continuance.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Ms. Barucco moved to recommend that the nomination for 319 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 312 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Street be continued to the October 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting. Ms. Milroy seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

**ITEM: 319 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 312 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Street continuance request**

**MOTION: Continue to October 2021 CHD**

**MOVED BY: Barucco**

**SECONDED BY: Milroy**

VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen					X
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	4				1

## **NOMINATION REVIEWS**

### **ADDRESS: 5200-08 WAYNE AVE**

Name of Resource: Second Empire twin and stable

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Sunday Breakfast Association

Nominator: SoLo Germantown Civic Association RCO

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, [megan.schmitt@phila.gov](mailto:megan.schmitt@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5200-08 Wayne Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the Second Empire twin and rear stable satisfy Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the twin reflects the environment in an era characterized by the Second Empire style. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the twin embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Second Empire style. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the stable is the work of William L. Price, a distinguished Quaker architect whose work significantly impacted and influenced the built environment of the City of Philadelphia and beyond. The stable was associated with a house that stood at 5208 Wayne Avenue, which was demolished in 1965 to create a parking lot for the funeral parlor operating out of 5200-02 Wayne Avenue.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:36:39**

### **PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Reverend Jeremy Montgomery represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Cooperman asked if a representative of ownership was in attendance.
  - Reverend Montgomery introduced himself as the President and CEO of the Sunday Breakfast Association, the owner of the subject property since 1993. He said that the organization did not have any reason to contest the designation of the subject property and that they appreciated the work of the Committee on Historic Designation. Reverend Montgomery explained that their organization dated back to 1878 and was founded by several prominent Philadelphians. He

stated that he did not see how the designation would interfere with their current use of the property. However, future alterations such as ADA accessibility were likely and they looked forward to working with staff on such projects at the appropriate time. Reverend Montgomery added that, owing to the mission to help the homeless, he hoped that the Historical Commission could work with the organization's modest means.

- Mr. Beisert stated that he was available if there were any questions about the nomination and thanked the Sunday Breakfast Association for the work they do throughout the city.
- Ms. Millroy commented that she was very familiar with this property and had enjoyed reading the nomination. She asked why one nomination was considering two separate structures that had two distinct histories.
  - Ms. Cooperman responded that the structures currently occupied the same parcel.
- Ms. Millroy said that she assumed that the properties were consolidated when the house was still being used as a funeral parlor, and that the Sunday Breakfast Association acquired it after this.
  - Mr. Farnham replied that this was also his understanding.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Allison Weiss of SoLo Germantown Civic Association spoke in support of the nomination.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The dwelling structure at 5202 Wayne Avenue was constructed in 1870.
- The stable structure at 5208 Wayne Avenue was constructed in 1902.
- The two structures had historically been two separate properties with different construction histories. However, the parcels were consolidated during the 1960s by a previous owner.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The dwelling structure reflects the distinguishing characteristics of the Second Empire style in an era characterized by that architectural style, satisfying Criteria C and D.
- The stable was designed by William L. Price, a distinguished Quaker architect, satisfying Criterion E.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Ms. Milroy moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5200-08 Wayne Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. Mr. Laverty seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 5200-08 Wayne Ave</b> <b>MOTION: Designate; Criteria C, D, E</b> <b>MOVED BY: Milroy</b> <b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b>					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

**ADDRESS: 5151 GERMANTOWN AVE**

Name of Resource: The Major Philip R. Freas House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 5147-51 Germantown Ave LLC

Nominator: SoLo/Germantown Civic Association

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, [megan.schmitt@phila.gov](mailto:megan.schmitt@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the building at 5151 Germantown Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

The nomination argues that the building is a representative dwelling of the eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early twentieth-century development of Germantown, therefore satisfying Criterion A. Under Criterion A the nomination also suggests that the building is significant as the former dwelling of the prominent journalist, publisher, writer, and newspaperman Major Philip Rapine Freas. He occupied the subject building from around 1830 to 1884, during which time the house was associated with the publication of the *Germantown Telegraph*, the first English-language newspaper in Germantown.

The nomination contends that the building exemplifies the commercial, economic, and political heritage of Germantown Avenue and Germantown, as it evolved from a German village in Philadelphia County to a lush residential suburb and on to a dense residential neighborhood in the consolidated City of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion J.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the building at 5151 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:46:18

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

## DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Schmitt informed the members of the Committee on Historic Designation that the staff had not been contacted by any representative of the property owner after sending the required notice that the building was under consideration for designation.
- Mr. Beisert commented that their research showed that the original building had a much earlier date of construction than had been previously known. He noted that researching the history of Mr. Freas and the *Germantown Telegraph* had been a very interesting process.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that it was her opinion, based on her previous experience with other similar sites, that this parcel could have archaeological potential. She acknowledged it was unfortunate that the archaeologist position on the Committee on Historic Designation was currently vacant because no one else was qualified to make such a determination.
- Mr. Cohen asked Ms. Cooperman if she thought there was enough evidence to support the addition of Criterion I.
  - Ms. Cooperman responded that she did not feel comfortable making that recommendation because she did not have the expertise to do so.
- Ms. Barucco suggested that Ms. Cooperman knew much more about archaeological potential than she was recognizing. She noted that Figure 47 in the nomination was a view of the rear of the subject property with unimproved land, causing her to agree that the archaeological potential near the property could be high. Ms. Barucco added that she found the significance of the *Germantown Telegraph* to be overwhelming and more convincing than the architectural significance of the building. She acknowledged that the building still retains its form such as the roofline with the brackets and the extension at the rear, both of which contribute to the public's understanding of it architecturally, but owing to the significance of Freas and the *Germantown Telegraph*, the Period of Significance should reflect this part of the building's history as well.
- Ms. Milroy said that the nomination provided a very thorough history of the ownership of the property. However, she did not find any physical evidence of the eighteenth-century building, though it is implied in the deed research. She also commented that though the nomination suggests that the original fenestration remains, to her the window openings looked diminished in size from how they would have been historically. Ms. Milroy agreed with Ms. Barucco that though original architectural elements remained, the more compelling significance of the property was its association with Freas and the *Germantown Telegraph*.
- Ms. Schmitt informed the members of the Committee on Historic Designation that the staff had not been contacted by any representative of the property owner after sending the required notice that the building was under consideration for designation. Ms. Milroy suggested that nominators acknowledge when archaeological potential may apply to a property when they write nominations because it must be addressed.
  - Ms. Cooperman agreed with Ms. Milroy's remark about archaeological potential.
- Mr. Cohen asked whether there was much of the subject property left that had not been covered with buildings over the years. He stated that he believed that an archaeologist would identify the property as having archaeological potential and that he was in support of adding Criterion I.
  - Ms. Cooperman and Ms. Barucco observed that the side yard appears to have survived unimproved.
- Mr. Beisert remarked that, although he normally did not support the addition of Criterion I to a review when archaeological potential was not addressed in the

nomination, in this case would not oppose it because of the thorough documentation provided about the site's early history.

- Mr. Duffin said that plans of the subject building existed and there was evidence on them that suggested the possibility of an earlier structure.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Allison Weiss of SoLo Germantown Civic Association spoke in support of the nomination.
- Jim Duffin spoke in support of the nomination.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The original structure at 5151 Germantown Avenue was constructed ca. 1723 and evolved over time to reflect what the public sees today.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property is significant owing to its association with Major Philip Rapine Freas, a prominent journalist and publisher responsible for the *Germantown Telegraph*, Germantown's first English-language publication, satisfying Criterion A.
- Documentation shows the property may possess archaeological potential owing to its continuous history as the site of a dwelling as far back as 1723, satisfying Criterion I.
- The subject property exemplifies the commercial, economic, and political heritage of Germantown, in particular owing to Freas' contributions through the *Germantown Telegraph*.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Ms. Barucco moved to recommend that the property at 5151 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, I, and J, with a period of significance of 1726-1885. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 5151 Germantown Ave</b>					
<b>MOTION: Designate; Criteria A, I, J</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Cohen</b>					
<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

**ADDRESS: 1106-14 SPRING GARDEN ST**

Name of Resource: Woodward-Wanger Company

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Stella and Nga Wong, Mapleville, LLC

Nominator: Callowhill Neighborhood Association

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, [jon.farnham@phila.govv](mailto:jon.farnham@phila.govv)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street. The Historical Commission previously designated the property in March 2018. In 2020, the property owners asked the Historical Commission to rescind the designation and then remand the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation for a new review because they had not been sufficiently notified of the consideration of the nomination in 2018 and, therefore, did not have an opportunity to participate in the deliberations. At its December 2020 meeting, the Historical Commission granted the request, rescinding the designation and directing the Committee on Historic Designation to review the nomination again.

The property at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street includes a remnant of a building that stands along Spring Garden Street and vacant land at the rear. Several redevelopment projects have been contemplated for the site in the last decade and one was initiated but then abandoned. Numerous zoning permits as well as building and demolition permits for redevelopment were issued from 2013 to 2017. In 2015 or 2016, the rear half of the building was demolished, but work then stopped and the permits expired. The remaining portion of the building is a shell. It is open but boarded at the rear, where the back half was demolished. It has no interior partitions or finishes.

The nomination argues that the surviving section of the former Woodward-Wanger Co. or Lawsonia Building, constructed in 1929 as a warehouse and office building, is significant under Criterion for Designation D as a distinctive example of the Colonial Revival Style. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that the surviving section of the building reflects the environment of commercial and light industrial buildings in the Colonial Revival style. The Colonial Revival features are limited to the Spring Garden or front façade.

The property owner has submitted reports from a structural engineer and preservation consultant. The structural engineering report demonstrates that the front façade is failing because of a faulty foundation and cannot be reused, but would have to be rebuilt to be incorporated into a new development.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff initially recommended that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1106-14 Spring Garden Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D and that the front façade to a depth of five feet, which is the character-defining feature, should be preserved. After reviewing the structural engineering report that indicates that the front façade cannot be salvaged, but would need to be rebuilt if reused, the staff revises its recommendation and recommends against designation, owing to the building's condition and limited architectural significance.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 01:14:20

**RECUSAL:**

- Mr. Reuter stated that he will not have any involvement in this case because he represented an adjacent property owner while in private practice. Attorney Maggie

White will attend the Historical Commission meeting to provide legal advice if needed.

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorneys Matt McClure and Dina Bleckman, structural engineer Jan Vacca, and consultant George Thomas represented the property owner.
- No one represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. McClure introduced himself and his team. He stated that the Historical Commission may regulate prospectively. Retrospective regulation is unconstitutional, violates due process, and would be an ex post facto law, a law that retroactively changes the legal consequences of actions that were committed, or relationships that existed, before the enactment of the law. An attempt to regulate a building that is in the middle of a demolition process, albeit one that is stalled, is well outside a government's ability to regulate. An attempt to regulate a partially demolished building is implicitly retrospective and therefore unconstitutional.
- Mr. McClure stated that the back half of the building in question has been demolished. There is no rear or south wall. All of the interior partitions have been removed. There are no MEP systems. Moreover, as the structural engineer will testify, the front façade is structurally unsound and any reuse of it would require its deconstruction and reconstruction. The surviving building is not fit for human inhabitation. It does not satisfy the definition of a building in the preservation ordinance. At the Committee on Historic Designation's first review of this nomination, Committee member Janet Klein asked several questions about the condition of the building and its eligibility for designation that went unanswered. Today, because the property owner received notice, those questions can be answered.
- Ms. Vacca introduced herself and presented her qualifications as a structural engineer. Her report was displayed for all attendees to see. She explained that the site was originally occupied by six rowhouses. They were demolished and the building in question was constructed directly on their rubblestone foundations. The east and west party walls of the old rowhouses were left in place. The steel structure for the new building was not attached to the old party walls. She stated that the back half of the building was demolished in 2016. Part of the ground floor of the building was also demolished. The building is unusable in its current state. The front foundation is in poor condition and cannot be reused. The rear of the building was removed and the resulting opening was covered in plywood. The building does not connect to the side party walls left from the old rowhouses. Part of the eastern party wall stands unsupported. There has been water infiltration into the brick of the front façade. The lintels over the basement windows are rust-jacked. It has pushed the brick above out and has moved the window frames. The brick panels have been pushed out over the windows. The façade would need to be deconstructed and reconstructed to be reused. It cannot be used in its current condition. The foundation also needs to be rebuilt. The party walls should be removed.
- Ms. Cooperman interrupted Mr. McClure and Ms. Vacca and asked them to explain how their presentation addressed the Criteria for Designation in the preservation ordinance.



- Mr. McClure stated that whether the structure is a building in the eyes of the ordinance and whether the Historical Commission has the power to designate it are entirely relevant.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the Committee members have no way of determining whether Ms. Vacca's information is accurate. She also noted that her report is not signed and she may not be the author. She stated that the Historical Commission can and has designated ruins. She asked Mr. McClure to move on and stop taking up the Committee's time with this sort of testimony.
- Ms. Vacca stated that she prepared the report and would gladly sign and seal it if required.
- Mr. McClure stated that the Commission may have designated ruins in the past, but that designation may not have been legal. Also, the owner may have failed to object.
- Ms. Barucco asked Mr. McClure how long his client has owned the building.
  - Mr. McClure responded that his client purchased it about 2013, prior to the start of the demolition.
- Mr. Thomas introduced himself and presented his report. He stated that the nomination "is deeply flawed in multiple dimensions," as the Committee pointed out during its first review. He stated that Criterion C is intended for historic districts, and this area will never be a historic district, owing to demolitions, new construction, and infrastructure. The property is surrounded by new construction. The examples of the Colonial Revival style in the nomination are not well chosen and work against the argument. The property does not satisfy Criterion D. Most of the examples in the nomination are not Colonial Revival. The definition in the nomination is not sophisticated or subtle. Mr. Thomas presented some examples that he contended were truly Colonial Revival. He objected to the "Bird Guide" approach to identifying style that was used in the nomination. Simply because a building includes some features that are used in Colonial Revival buildings does not mean that the building itself is Colonial Revival. He stated that most of the features of the building identified as Colonial Revival are not of that style. He concluded that the building does not have distinguishing features of the Colonial Revival style. He stated that the nomination includes many mistakes. For example, the nomination claims that the cornice is stone, but it is not; it is copper. The cornices has no dentils or modillions. The windows are commercial style metal windows at the second floor. Flemish bond does not make a building Colonial Revival. The building is being demolished and is in very poor condition. The brick is cracked. The sills have moved.
  - Ms. Cooperman interrupted and asked Mr. Thomas to avoid commenting on the condition of the building.
- Mr. Thomas showed a photograph of the deteriorated foundation and stated that this is a building that was built on the cheap. The building was constructed on rowhouse foundations, which were not adequate. The building is severely deteriorated. The building does not satisfy Criteria D and D and should not be designated.
- Mr. McClure stated that the staff has clearly recommended that this property should not be designated. The report by Mr. Thomas points out errors and inaccuracies in the report. Mr. McClure asked the Committee to recommend against designation. He noted that the property has been rezoned since the demolition was undertaken and the property owner intends to complete the demolition and redevelop the site for residential use. He stated that a building cannot suffer from demolition by neglect under the preservation ordinance until it is designated. All of the work to date including the demolition has been undertaken with valid permits from the City.

- Mr. Cohen stated that the building is Colonial Revival in style, with an industrial aesthetic. He suggested that the company used Colonial Revival to brand it as a good civic participant. He stated that he cannot disambiguate Criteria C and D.
- Mr. Lavery stated that this building shows industrial Philadelphia reacting to the Sesquicentennial. He compared it to the Atwater Kent factory. Mr. Lavery stated that he did not understand the Committee's role, given that it had addressed this nomination once previously.
  - Mr. Farnham stated that the Historical Commission tossed out the earlier review by the Committee on Historic Designation because the owner had not been invited to participate in the deliberations and the discussion did not take into account any information the owner might have provided. The Historical Commission has asked the Committee to undertake an entirely new review of the nomination with the owner's participation and any information that the owner might wish to provide.
- Mr. Lavery asked the staff if the Department of Licenses and Inspections has issued Unsafe or Imminently Dangerous violations to the property.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that he is unaware of any violations for dangerous conditions.
- Mr. Farnham explained that the staff initially recommended that the building satisfied Criteria C and D because the front façade does exhibit characteristics of the Colonial Revival style, but the staff is recommending against designation because the building is a remnant which could not be used for any purpose in its current condition. He noted, however, that the recommendation against designation is directed more at the Historical Commission than the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Mr. McClure stated that he is not arguing that the building is Imminently Dangerous. He stated that he is arguing that the front façade must be rebuilt.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that she had no reason to doubt Ms. Vacca's credentials, but asserted that structural integrity and condition were outside of the Committee on Historic Designation's purview. She stated that "it is not part of our business."
- Ms. Cooperman stated that field guides to architecture are incomplete. Architects are free to select their details, unlike the birds in the analogy offered by Mr. Thomas. She stated that the Colonial Revival is about references and allusions, not precise reproduction.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- David Traub of Save Our Sites stated that this building is "distinguished and unique" and "has a very handsome façade." He advocated for the preservation of the façade and said that the fact that the building has been demolished behind the façade is an advantage for the developer.

#### **COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The front façade at the 1106-14 Spring Garden Street is an example of the Colonial Revival style of architecture, even if it includes elements like industrial windows not found on Colonial buildings.
- Matters such as the structural integrity and physical condition of the building as well as the legality or constitutionality of designating a partially demolished building or a remnant of a building are outside of the purview of the Committee on Historic Designation.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property at 1106-14 Spring Garden Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1106-14 Spring Garden Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. Ms. Milroy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

<b>ITEM: 1106-14 Spring Garden St</b>					
<b>MOTION: Designate; Criteria C &amp; D</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Milroy</b>					
<b>VOTE</b>					
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recuse</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

**ADDRESS: 3101 W PASSYUNK AVE**

Name of Resource: Point Breeze Gas Works

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Gas Works

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes the designation of the property at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. A related nomination proposes the designation of a portion of the property at 3143 W. Passyunk Avenue. The nominations for the two properties are identical, except for the two-page nomination form. This nomination contends that the Point Breeze Gas Works satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J, although some Criteria are not applied to all resources listed in the nomination. The site is inaccessible to the general public and subject to significant safety and security restrictions; therefore, aerial imagery was utilized to identify and catalog the resources. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination contends that the Point Breeze Gas Works, which expanded as the city's population grew, was one of the city's largest employers in the mid-to-late nineteenth century and is one of the oldest surviving gasworks. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues that many of the structures embody characteristics of the Gothic Revival style. It also notes that later structures were designed in the Jacobean Revival style. Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that the earliest buildings of the Point Breeze Gas Works were built under the leadership of John Chapman Cresson, an influential figure.

At the property at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue, the nomination proposes the following numbered structures as contributing to the historical significance:

- 1, 2, and 5 - purifying houses, which date to the 1850s with later additions;
- 3 - remnants of a wall of a coal house;
- 6 and 7 - shops, which date to 1859;

- 8 - locomotive shop, which dates to 1859 and had a second floor added; and,
- 9a and 9b - office and garage, which date to the early twentieth century.

The site is very large and most of the land is vacant. Most of the buildings associated with the historic gasworks have been demolished. The site is currently used by the Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW) for the storage and distribution of liquefied natural gas. Access to the site is strictly controlled and visitors are not permitted. Persons with business at the site must be accompanied by PGW staff and wear protective gear including flame-retardant suits. The nominated buildings are primarily unused or used for storage.

PGW objects to the nomination and has retained an attorney and preservation consultant to represent its interests before the Historical Commission. The preservation consultant has submitted a report refuting the claims of the nomination. The report concludes that the gasworks does not merit designation because:

- this gasworks was not the city's primary gasworks;
- the Gothic Revival architectural style is not a legitimate basis for designation because the choice of the style was inappropriate for an industrial complex;
- the buildings have been altered many times and have lost integrity;
- this gasworks was not significant in the city's history or in the history of gas technology;
- John Chapman Cresson was not an influential designer and may not have been a designer or engineer at all;
- the site does not exemplify any aspect of any community, but is an abandoned industrial area cut off from the rest of the city; and,
- the site is inaccessible, poses safety hazards, and is subject to myriad safety and security restrictions.

The staff had planned to visit the site with PGW staff on 25 February 2021 and then report on its findings to the Committee on Historic Designation, but was compelled to cancel the site visit because the safety risks at the site were deemed unacceptably high for City staff.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff initially offered a compromise recommendation that sought to protect the most important buildings from demolition while limiting the impact on PGW, but, in light of the Mayor's letter, the staff must recognize the significant safety and security concerns associated with the site and recommend against any designation.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 02:17:40

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Christopher Strom and consultant George Thomas represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Farnham explained that Mayor Jim Kenney submitted a letter to the Historical Commission the day before the meeting, opposing this designation for many reasons, but primarily owing to safety and security reasons. The staff had initially offered a compromise recommendation that sought to protect the most important buildings from demolition while limiting the impact on the Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW), but in light of the Mayor's letter, the staff must recognize the significant

safety and security concerns associated with the site and must recommend against any designation.

- Mr. Beisert directed the Committee's attention to photographs in the nomination. He suggested that PGW should work with the Commission's staff to protect the most significant resources on the site, specifically the purifying houses. He summarized the Criteria for Significance outlined in the nomination. He strongly opposed the assertion made by the property owner's preservation consultant that the Gothic Revival was the wrong style choice for the Gas Works buildings. He stated that many Gas Works are closed to the public, and some are toxic, and some are visible to the public while others are not, but other municipalities have managed to preserve the historic structures. He suggested that PGW, with its vast resources, can retain "a few stone sheds" that relate to Philadelphia's legacy.
- Mr. Strom asked that the Committee recommend against the designation of the property. He stated that the nominator did not follow proper procedures when submitting the nomination because one nomination was submitted for both 3101 and 3143 W. Passyunk Avenue despite the parcels being separate and under different ownership. He stated that the nomination fails to completely and accurately describe the property, its use and occupancy, and condition and materials, because the nominator could not gain access to the site, and so the nomination relies on aerial imagery. The nominator could not gain access to the site because it is an operating liquid natural gas processing, storage, and distribution facility, which has been designated by the Department of Homeland Security as critical infrastructure. The site is subject to stringent security and safety protocols. The Commission staff was forced to reject an offer to visit the property, owing to the security and safety protocols in place. This property will not be made accessible to the public, owing to the ongoing operations. There is no public benefit to be gained by designating this property, owing to its inaccessibility to the public. Designation of the property would bring undesired increased attention to the site, increasing costs to PGW which get passed on to the public as PGW customers, and would interfere with PGW's ability to operate the property in an efficient manner and incorporate new innovations. Mr. Strom concluded that the property does not warrant designation, because the majority of the structures from the period of significance have been demolished, and those that remain have been altered to the extent that they no longer retain integrity.
- Mr. Strom introduced Mr. Thomas and reviewed his credentials.
  - Ms. Barucco asked for procedural guidance, stating that the Committee meetings are not a court of law and are being taken over by attorneys and direct examination.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that the Rules and Regulations do not provide much guidance, and so it is up to the Chair as to how the meetings are run. In order to create a record that is defensible in court, it is recommended that the Committee grant significant latitude to the property owner, because it is the property owner who has the primary interest in the property.
  - Ms. Cooperman agreed that the Committee meetings are not a court of law, but also agreed that records are being created on both sides. She asked for brevity.
- Mr. Thomas provided expert testimony. He stated that he reviewed the physical fabric and the historical records, and looked at the accuracy of the nomination to build a case that explains how the building complex corresponds to, or differs from, what the nomination presents. He researched the history of the Gas Works and the Gothic Revival style. He concluded that the property does not satisfy the Criteria for Designation specified in the nomination.

- Mr. Thomas began his presentation. He explained that the site is subject to extensive security regulations. He began to discuss critical infrastructure sectors as defined by the Department of Homeland Security.
  - Ms. Cooperman commented that this argument was already made, and asked Mr. Thomas to present information relevant to his areas of expertise.
  - Mr. Thomas responded that he is moving towards it, but that this aspect is critical to the designation of the site, in that the nomination is based on a site that is inaccessible. He outlined the security measures necessary for those who are given permission to access the site. He stated that the site contains various residues from industrial processes that make the site inappropriate for the public. He stated that the nominator was unable to access the site, so the entire nomination is not based on actual visual evidence, but on distant aerial views.
- Mr. Thomas discussed Criterion A and whether or not the property is significant to the region. He argued that the institution began at the initial Gas Works property at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Market Streets, formed in 1834. The primary works was the 23<sup>rd</sup> and Market Streets site, and the Point Breeze Gas Works was secondary. The Point Breeze Gas Works produced less than 20 percent of the gas needs for the City. He compared a 1974 site plan with a 2021 site plan to show the great extent of demolition which has taken place to date.
- Mr. Thomas discussed Criterion C and the claims in the nomination that it is interesting that the Gothic Revival style was chosen for some of the buildings. He stated that the Gothic Revival was a strange choice for this complex, and referred to it as an anomaly.
- Mr. Thomas discussed Criterion D and how the Gothic Revival style did not work for this complex. By the 1890s, almost all of the complex was demolished because it did not work very well, the buildings were of the wrong scale and were inhumane to work in, and what remains are two little clusters of buildings. The Gothic details in historic photographs are gone, because all of those elements got in the way of the work that had to be done. The integrity has been lost. The buildings have been abandoned for many years and have continued to deteriorate.
- Mr. Thomas discussed Criterion E and chief engineer John Chapman Cresson, and Cresson's failures as a designer. Cresson's role with Fairmount Park was managing the initial survey of the park. Cresson's role with the Gas Works was as chief engineer but with no engineering or design training, and several of his structures collapsed or otherwise failed.
  - Ms. Barucco asked if Mr. Thomas was nearing the end of his presentation.
  - Mr. Thomas responded no, and that he is part of creating a record for the property owner.
- Mr. Thomas discussed Criterion J and that the property does not satisfy the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community because of its location in an "empty zone" because of pollution. No workers wanted to live near the plant because of the extent of the pollution, and it was, and remains, isolated from the community.
- Mr. Thomas began to discuss ongoing environmental concerns of the site.
  - Ms. Cooperman stated that this is not part of the Committee's purview and is outside of the area of Mr. Thomas's expertise.
  - Mr. Thomas disagreed, and stated that the environmental concerns are part of the site and are raised by Mr. Beisert's use of examples of repurposed gas works sites elsewhere, including in Seattle where it failed and has to be redesigned because the attempt to cap it did not work.

- Mr. Thomas discussed other claims made in the nomination. He stated that buildings are classified as significant but in reality are highly altered and largely demolished. He explained that the remnants of a coal house wall, described as Gothic Revival in the nomination, are just buttresses that act as support. He showed that the garage building proposed for designation is just a small part of what had been a much larger building which was demolished.
- Mr. Thomas summarized his findings. He stated that the nomination is inadequate, the site is and will remain inaccessible to the public, access should be discouraged not encouraged, this complex was a secondary site, the integrity of the structures that do remain has been lost, Cresson was a failure as a designer, and the site is isolated from the community owing to pollution. He concluded that none of the Criteria for Designation are met.
- Mr. Strom responded to the claim made by Mr. Beisert about PGW's resources. He stated that PGW is a city-owned non-profit that does not have "vast resources" to maintain these buildings. He asked that the Committee recommend against historic designation of the property.
  - Ms. Milroy noted that financial considerations are beyond the Committee's purview.
  - Ms. Cooperman agreed and stated that comments made by Mr. Beisert and by Mr. Strom regarding PGW's finances would not be part of the Committee's considerations.
- Ms. Milroy defended John Chapman Cresson as an ambitious personality in Philadelphia's industrial history as well as Fairmount Park history. She disputed some claims made by Mr. Thomas. She stated that the presentation by Mr. Thomas made a good argument for significance of the site, adding that it being an "empty zone" lends significance to its context within Philadelphia.
- Mr. Cohen noted that this is a complex site with a lot of history. He stated that it is unacceptable to say that the site cannot be regulated because of a lack of access. He agreed with the assertion that accessibility of the site in the future is unknown, and it would be shortsighted to allow demolition of these buildings because the site is not currently accessible to the public. He stated that the architecture of this site is more significant compared to the 23<sup>rd</sup> and Market Streets site. He stated that the use of Gothic Revival was motivated by creating a sense of trust. It was not a misuse, but rather a purposeful use, to say that these people introducing new technologies which seem dangerous will be careful. He opined that it was called Church Row because of the public perception of the place. He discussed the earlier and later Gothic Revival styles seen on several buildings, and the gate that was the public face to the site. He opined on how involved or not involved Cresson was in the actual design of the buildings. He concluded that Cresson shaped the design of the buildings, satisfying Criterion E. He stated that the Gas Works was one of the largest employers in the area for a long time, and is part of the public geography, satisfying Criterion J. He concluded that the nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies the proposed Criteria for Designation.
- Ms. Barucco agreed with Mr. Cohen's comments. She stated that it is important to recognize the significance of infrastructure, though it is easy to overlook.
- Mr. Cohen asked the staff to display each building or structure so that each could be considered.
  - Ms. Chantry displayed a slide for each building or structure proposed for designation.

- Mr. Cohen asked why the staff recommended against designation of Resource 9a, the U.G.I. Office and Dispensary.
- Mr. Chantry responded that the staff focused its recommendation on the designation of the earliest remaining buildings on the site, and Resource 9a was part of a later building campaign.
- Ms. Milroy asked about the potential inclusion of Criterion G, stating that Mr. Thomas's presentation made an interesting argument for looking at the area as a distinctive area.
  - Ms. Cooperman responded that the amount of demolition that has occurred at the site would likely not qualify it for designation under Criterion G.
- Ms. Cooperman commented that the remaining buildings are remarkable survivors of this period and make for a compelling argument for historic designation. She stated that the utilities and services provided by PGW are important but that is not directly related to these buildings, and it is understood that remediation is going to be absolutely essential to any kind of future use at this particular site. She stated that public benefit does not necessarily mean public access. She noted that Mayor Kenny is opposed to historic designation at this site, but stated that the Committee would not be fulfilling its duty and obligations if it did not recommend these remarkable buildings for designation. She suggested that the Committee select certain buildings for designation, rather than designating the entire property.
  - Mr. Lavery agreed, and stated that just because something cannot be seen, it does not mean it is not there and not important. He stated that the Committee has an obligation to provide a recommendation regarding the historical nature of the buildings.
- Mr. Cohen asked to review each building or structure again to determine what the Committee should recommend for designation. He stated that the purifying houses and shops should be included in the recommendation, in addition to Resource 9a, the later U.G.I. Office and Dispensary. He questioned the inclusion of Resource 8, the locomotive house.
  - Ms. Cooperman noted that the building has a substantial addition, but the Historical Commission has designated buildings with additions in the past.
  - Mr. Cohen agreed with the inclusion of Resource 8, the locomotive house. He concluded that Resources 1a, 1b, 1c, 2, 5a, 5b, 6, 7, 8, and 9a should be the resources included in the designation.
- Ms. Barucco noted that the period of significance should be amended if Resource 9a is included, which dates from 1899-1929.
  - Mr. Cohen agreed, suggesting a period of significance of 1855-1929.
- Mr. Farnham reminded the Committee that the staff's former recommendation included these resources, but that in light of the Mayor's recent letter, the staff has a different recommendation which was provided earlier and is a recommendation against designation. In the former recommendation, the staff was recommending that the Commission only review partial and complete demolition permit applications.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Steven Peitzman commented that he disagreed with assertions made by Mr. Thomas.
- Celeste Morello commented that Samuel Merrick, the engineer of the primary gas works site, was significant. She suggested that the buildings be relocated and restored.
- Allison Weiss supported the designation.



- Donna Rilling commented that because historical documentation of the site was publicly available, there should be no issue with this information being available to the public, and no one knows the future of gas and the future accessibility of this site.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The site is inaccessible to the general public and subject to significant safety and security restrictions.
- The majority of the original buildings and structures have been demolished, but those that remain on the site are proposed for designation in the nomination.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The Point Breeze Gas Works was one of the city's largest employers in the mid-to-late nineteenth century and is one of the oldest surviving gasworks, satisfying Criteria A and J.
- Many of the structures embody characteristics of the Gothic Revival style, satisfying Criteria C and D.
- The earliest buildings of the Point Breeze Gas Works were built under the leadership of John Chapman Cresson, an influential figure, satisfying Criterion E.
- Resource 3, the remnant of one wall of a coal house, fails to satisfy any Criteria for Designation.
- Resource 9b, the remnant of a later U.G.I. garage, fails to satisfy any Criteria for Designation.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J, and to limit the designation to buildings 1a, 1b, 1c, 2, 5a, 5b, 6, 7, 8, and 9a, with a period of significance of 1855-1929. Ms. Barucco seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

<b>ITEM: 3101 W Passyunk Ave</b>					
<b>MOTION: Designate buildings 1a, 1b, 1c, 2, 5a, 5b, 6, 7, 8, 9a; Criteria A, C, D, E, &amp; J</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Barucco</b>					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

**ADDRESS: 3143 W PASSYUNK AVE**

Name of Resource: Point Breeze Gas Works

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Philadelphia Energy Solutions Refinery and Marketing LLC

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes the designation of a portion of the property at 3143 W. Passyunk Avenue. Most of the Point Breeze Gas Works site is located at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue and is proposed for designation in a related nomination. The nominations for the two properties are identical, except for the two-page nomination form. Almost the entirety of the nomination is dedicated to resources at 3101 W. Passyunk, where most of the surviving structures related to the historic gasworks stand, not this property. The nomination for 3143 W. Passyunk Avenue contends that this section of the Point Breeze Gas Works, which it calls the Wharf and which was subdivided off from the main gasworks property, includes four resources: retaining walls (4a), kilns (4b), an access road (4c), and a pump house (4d). The nomination claims that the retaining walls and kilns satisfy Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J, and the pump house and access road satisfy Criteria C and D. The four potential resources are briefly described on pages 23 to 25 of the nomination. The pump house and access road are never mentioned in statement of significance; the kilns and retaining walls are mentioned briefly. The nomination makes only one claim of significance for the so-called Wharf section of the gasworks, that the buttresses of the retaining walls indicate that the walls are Gothic Revival in style. The claim is not credible.

Access to the site is strictly controlled and visitors are not permitted. Aerial imagery was utilized to identify and catalog the resources. The nomination acknowledges that “it is unclear exactly what survives due to the lack of access to the site and limited visibility.”

The property owner objects to the nomination and has retained an attorney and preservation consultant to represent its interests before the Historical Commission. The preservation consultant has submitted a report refuting the claims of the nomination. The report concludes that this section of the gasworks does not merit designation because:

- the property is not publicly accessible;
- most of the historic structures that were on the site have been demolished, leaving the remaining few without context;
- the structures, especially the kilns, are in poor and very poor condition and/or have been altered;
- none of the structures exhibits elements or features of the Gothic Revival style;
- little or no justification for the claims of significance of the structures is offered in the nomination;
- most of the surviving structures on the site were built or significantly altered after John Chapman Cresson’s involvement with the site; and,
- most of the site is open, vacant land or is occupied by non-historic fire department structures and a maze of pipes and other infrastructure.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 3143 W. Passyunk Avenue satisfies any Criteria for Designation. The public cannot access the site. The remaining sections of the kilns are in ruins. Nothing on the site is Gothic Revival in style. The retaining wall and asphalt-paved roadway have been altered. The pump house is a later addition. The site is overrun with modern infrastructure. The site should not be designated.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 04:00:15**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorneys Matt McClure and David Gest and consultant Nick Kraus represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. McClure referenced his letter dated 4 February 2021, which was previously provided to the Committee, and which outlined arguments against designation of this site and why the nomination should be rejected. He claimed that the nomination for 3143 W. Passyunk Avenue is neither correct nor complete. There are less than 10 sentences in the nomination about four alleged historic resources on the property, which include a pump house constructed after the period of John Chapman Cresson, utilitarian retaining walls, rubble related to former kilns, and an asphalt private roadway going through the site. He stated that this nomination needs to stand on its own, and 10 sentences is not enough to designate these four resources. There are no detailed descriptions of the resources as is required. He stated that the report prepared by Heritage Consulting Group agrees with the staff recommendation that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property satisfies any Criteria for Designation. He introduced Nick Kraus of Heritage Consulting Group.
- Mr. Kraus began his presentation. He explained that the specific area of the property proposed for designation is a very small sliver of a larger property, and is not part of the City-owned property at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue, which was just reviewed. He stated that the remaining structures within the subject property do not meet the stated Criteria for Designation. The property does not retain physical integrity from the proposed period of significance. The structures are not publicly accessible nor publicly visible. He displayed a view of the site from the Passyunk Avenue Bridge, the only vantage point from the public view. He noted how the structures are concealed by modern construction, piping, and overgrowth.
- Mr. Kraus described the retaining walls proposed for designation. He stated that they are a utilitarian site feature, of typical construction for retaining walls of the period, and are concealed by refinery piping.
- Mr. Kraus described the lime kilns proposed for designation. He stated that the remains of the lime kilns are not publicly visible, owing to extensive overgrowth, and are significantly deteriorated or collapsed, with trees growing up through the stone. Most of the area where the lime kilns were located is simply paved over with asphalt and no lime kilns remain.
- Mr. Kraus described the access road proposed for designation, which is now a private road paved in asphalt.
- Mr. Kraus described the pump house proposed for designation. He stated that it was constructed over 20 years after Cresson's death and is a non-descript red brick structure that is concealed from public view by new construction and refinery piping.
- Mr. Kraus reviewed the integrity of the site. He stated that the site as a whole retains little physical integrity dating from the proposed period of significance, the proposed resources have no physical connection to the overall Gas Works, and the subject structures do not convey the physical characteristics which defined the Gas Works during the proposed period of significance.

- Mr. Kraus reviewed the Criteria for Designation proposed for the four resources. Under Criterion A, which is proposed for the retaining walls and kilns, Mr. Kraus stated that those resources have no specific character, interest, or connection to the City, Commonwealth, or Nation. They are not recognizable from the nominated period of significance. The retaining walls were constructed after the nominated period of significance. The kilns are rubble which do not convey any historic significance. Under Criteria C and D, which is proposed for the retaining walls, lime kilns, access road, and pump house, Mr. Kraus stated that Criteria C and D are not met for any of the four structures. The nomination contains no discussion or justification for designation specific to these four resources. The structures are not significant as Gothic Revival architecture nor do they embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen. The earlier Gothic pump house was demolished in the 1890s. None have a direct relationship to Cresson. Under Criterion E, which is proposed for the retaining walls and kilns, Mr. Kraus stated that those resources have no direct connection to John C. Cresson. The retaining walls were built after Cresson died, the kilns are utilitarian and have no direction association with Cresson, and the kilns are not Gothic Revival architecture for which Cresson is suggested to be significant. Under Criterion J, which is proposed for the retaining walls and kilns, Mr. Kraus stated that those resources are utilitarian structures that do not exemplify the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community. Retaining walls are ubiquitous through the city and are not distinctive. The lime kilns are rubble remnants void of any greater historical context.
- Mr. McClure summarized the arguments made by Mr. Kraus regarding the property not satisfying any Criteria for Designation. He stated that it does not make sense in the larger scheme of the redevelopment of the site to designate these structures, and asked the Committee to recommend against designation.
- Mr. Cohen noted that the site is visible from the river. He agreed with the arguments made against designation.
  - All other Committee members agreed.
- Ms. Barucco stated that the Historical Commission can designate ruins, but the kilns are too far gone to be able to provide a historic narrative and reason for designation.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The site is inaccessible to the general public, and visibility from the public right-of-way is limited to the Passyunk Avenue Bridge over the Schuylkill River.
- The retaining walls were constructed after the proposed period of significance, are not of the Gothic Revival style, and are a utilitarian site feature found throughout the city.
- The kilns are in a state of ruin and are unable to convey historic significance, have no architectural style, and have no direct connection to Cresson.
- The asphalt-paved access road is private and is void of an architectural style.
- The pump house was constructed 20 years after Cresson's death and is not in the Gothic Revival style.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination fails to demonstrate that the four resources proposed for designation satisfy any Criteria for Designation.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Ms. Barucco moved to recommend that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 3143 W. Passyunk Avenue satisfies any Criteria for Designation, and should not be designated as historic. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 3143 W Passyunk Ave</b>					
<b>MOTION: Nominations fails to demonstrate satisfaction of any Criteria; decline to designate</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b>					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

**ADDRESS: 7631 RIDGE AVE**

Proposed Action: Rescission

Property Owner: Shree Vakratunda LLC

Applicant: Staff of the Historical Commission

District Designation: Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic District, Contributing, 10/12/2018

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, [meredith.keller@phila.gov](mailto:meredith.keller@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This application requests the rescission of the designation of the property at 7631 Ridge Avenue. The property was designated as a contributing resource in the Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic District on 12 October 2018.

On 14 December 2017, City Council passed a bill instituting a demolition moratorium to halt demolitions along a portion of Ridge Avenue. The owner of 7631 Ridge Avenue had filed a demolition permit with the Department of Licenses and Inspections before the moratorium was enacted and was subsequently issued demolition permit #826167 for the complete demolition of the building on the property. Notice of Demolition was posted on the building on 14 November 2017.

While the demolition moratorium was in place, the Historical Commission staff prepared a nomination proposing to designate 188 properties as historic as part of the Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic District. At the time the district nomination and inventory were prepared, a three-story brick Second Empire building stood on the property at 7631 Ridge Avenue. The staff included the property as a contributing resource within the district, despite having knowledge that a demolition permit application preceded the moratorium.

Notice of the district was sent on 9 July 2018, bringing all 188 properties under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction. Prior to that date, however, the owner of 7631 Ridge Avenue had

filed plans for new construction under building permit #956806 with the Department of Licenses and Inspections. That permit was subsequently issued without requiring review by the Historical Commission.

The Second Empire building has since been legally demolished under valid demolition permit #826167, and the owner may act on the new construction permit (#956806) issued on 1 July 2019. Section 5.14.b.1 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations authorizes the Commission to remove entries from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places when the qualities that caused the original entry on the Register have been lost or destroyed. In this case, the building was designated for its architectural qualities. Those qualities were lost with the demolition. There is no longer a basis for the designation.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the Historical Commission rescind the designation of 7631 Ridge Avenue and remove it from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, pursuant to Section 5.14.b.1 of the Commission's Rules & Regulations, because the qualities that caused its original entry have been destroyed.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 04:28:20

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Cooperman asked whether the Historical Commission would have heard from the property owner under these circumstances.
  - Ms. Keller explained that the staff emailed the property owner and that he emailed back to acknowledge that the rescission process was underway, but he did not indicate whether he would attend the meetings.
- Mr. Farnham addressed Mr. Peitzman's question about whether the Historical Commission will retain any jurisdiction over the property by stating that it depends on the decision the Historical Commission makes. At the moment, he continued, the property is designated and the Historical Commission has full jurisdiction. However, he added, if the Commission were to rescind as the staff is recommending, then it would have no jurisdiction. He further noted that Ridge Avenue Roxborough is a thematic historic district rather than a geographically-based district and that the resources are distributed over a five-mile stretch of Ridge Avenue. He argued that there is no context as one would find in a geographically-based historic district, such as Girard Estate where all the buildings were designed in a similar style and constructed at the same time.
- Ms. Milroy stated that she is fascinated by the chronology of events that include the filing of the demolition permit and the establishment of the demolition moratorium, noting that they are only a month apart. She added that she assumes conversations of the moratorium were underway prior to its enactment. She expressed concern over demolition permits being issued so close to a demolition moratorium.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that he did not believe that discussions of a demolition moratorium or historic district prompted demolition permit applications. Rather, he continued, the demolition moratorium and creation of the historic district were in response to a great number of demolitions taking place along Ridge Avenue. He noted that this and several other demolitions were already planned prior to

any announcement of a demolition moratorium or the Historical Commission's intent to consider a district. This property, he continued, for whatever reason, moved slowly through the process, though the property owner obtained a demolition permit legally prior to the passing of the moratorium or the Historical Commission's notice of the district.

- Mr. Reuter stated that because Ridge Avenue Roxborough is a thematic district, any rescission should include the property's removal from the district inventory. He noted that the property should not become non-contributing and should be removed entirely.
- The Committee discussed how to take action.
  - Mr. Cohen suggested that the Committee recommend revising the district inventory to remove the property.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Steven Peitzman asked whether the Historical Commission will retain any jurisdiction over the property, particularly in regard to probable new construction.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- On 14 December 2017, City Council passed a bill instituting a demolition moratorium to halt demolitions along a portion of Ridge Avenue.
- On 9 July 2018, the Historical Commission sent notice to 188 property owners that a Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic District would be considered for designation. At that time, the staff of the Historical Commission identified the property as contributing, owing to the Second Empire building that stood on the lot.
- The owner of 7631 Ridge Avenue filed a demolition permit prior to the passing of the bill and notification from the Historical Commission of the pending district. The permit was subsequently issued. The owner also filed for a building permit for new construction prior to notification of the historic district.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property was demolished under a legal demolition permit, and the owner may act on the legal new construction permit.
- The qualities that caused the property's original entry on the Register have been destroyed, and there is no longer a basis for maintaining the designation.
- The designation of 7631 Ridge Avenue should be rescinded, and the Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic District's inventory should be revised to remove the entry for 7631 Ridge Avenue.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Ms. Barucco moved to recommend that the Historical Commission rescind the designation of 7631 Ridge Avenue and remove it from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, pursuant to Section 5.14.b.1 of the Commission's Rules & Regulations, because the qualities that caused its original entry have been destroyed. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 7631 Ridge Ave</b> <b>MOTION: Rescind designation</b> <b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b> <b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b>					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

**ADDRESS: 5139 WAYNE AVE**

Name of Resource: Joseph T. Pearson House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Wayne Avenue Brothers LP

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia & SoLo/Germantown Civic Association RCO

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, [allyson.mehley@phila.gov](mailto:allyson.mehley@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5139 Wayne Avenue, located in Germantown, as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The building was constructed circa 1852 and was occupied by artist Joseph T. Pearson and his family from 1882 to 1919. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the building is associated Pearson's career as a painter and educator. Under Criterion J, the nomination asserts that the property is emblematic of the social and artistic heritage of Germantown and Philadelphia in the early twentieth century. The period of significance begins in 1882, when the Pearson's father purchased the property and ends in 1919, when Pearson relocated to Bucks County, Pennsylvania and sold the property.

This nomination was reviewed at the 20 January 2021 Committee on Historic Designation. After that review in which the owner did not participate, the staff realized there was a typographical error in the address of the original notice letter to the property owner. The staff contacted the owner who had not received the notice. In light of the mistake, the Law Department directed the Historical Commission to restart the review of the nomination with proper notice to the owner. As a result, the Committee will need to review the nomination again as though it had not been previously reviewed. The 20 January 2021 review and recommendation has been nullified.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5139 Wayne Avenue, satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 04:38:40

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Sean Whalen represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.



## DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Whalen said at this time they will not be objecting or raising issues with the actual nomination or the substance of it. He continued that he did think it important and relevant to bring to the Committee's attention some issues here in which they believe that the Historical Commission has no authority or jurisdiction over pending building permits and a complete demolition of this property. Mr. Whalen stated that the owner purchased the property back in March 2020, and in mid-October 2020 the owner worked with Elizabeth Baldwin, the chief code official at the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I), and other members of L&I to discuss his zoning permit was just about to be issued for the complete demolition property and erection of a new multi-family building. He explained that the owner specifically discussed with Ms. Baldwin the efficacy and properness of proceeding with a building permit in advance of a demolition permit, instead of a demolition permit first, which is obviously the standard practice. Mr. Whalen continued that the reason for this was the impending expiration of the 10-year tax abatement, later continued by City Council by ordinance. He said the owner received a zoning permit on 4 November 2020 for the complete demolition of all improvements on the property and the construction of a four-story multi-family building on the property. He noted that on 9 November 2020 the owner applied for the construction of a four-story building. Mr. Whalen pointed out that it is obviously inherent within any building of a brand-new four-story building on the property is the requirement and understanding for demolition of all the improvements that would be sort of underneath that new building. He continued that several weeks later, on 24 November 2021, the Historical Commission staff deemed a nomination for the property correct and complete and on 20 January 2021 the Historical Commission staff served formal notice to the owner of the nomination. Mr. Whalen stated that while they will not be discussing the actual Criteria for Designation, they did wish to raise the Committee's understanding on its information that the owner has spent in excess of \$200,000 and considerable time and energy toward the redevelopment of the property based on the direction and actions of L&I and the City. He concluded that based on the dates cited and vested rights, they will be proceeding to demolish the building and erect a four-story building over which they do not believe the Historical Commission has jurisdiction. The Commission should reject the nomination proposing designation.
- Ms. Cooperman noted that while they appreciated the explanation by Mr. Whelan, the issues he raised cannot be reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation and instead will need to be addressed by the full Historical Commission and Law Department.
- Mr. Reuter stated that he wanted to clarify one thing because he is concerned it is not clear. He explained that the error with respect to sending the notice has no impact on the vested rights issue that Mr. Whelan raised because the permits he is talking about predate the date of the original notice and the corrected notice. Mr. Reuter said that the typographical mistake that led to the failure of notice is not the cause of the issues Mr. Whelan spoke about. He pointed out that the permit activity Mr. Whelan spoke of predates the original notice letter and given there is no opposition from Mr. Whelan on the merits of the nomination, he noted that the Committee could simply make a motion to adopt their previous recommendation from the 20 January 2021 CHD meeting. Mr. Reuter concluded that he thinks the Committee does need to take public comment.
- Mr. Beisert said he maintains the arguments made in his nomination for the property and hopes the existing building can be incorporated in the future development plan.

- Mr. Cohen said that the addition was a remarkable work on an 1850s house and agreed that it was likely the work of George T. Pearson.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Hal Schirmer encountered technical difficulties while trying to speak over Zoom, so he posted his comment to the Zoom Q&A: “Trying chat - the issue of the zoning permit versus the building permit is jurisdictional- the PHC retains jurisdiction until a building permit is issued.”
- Allison Weiss, SoLo/Germantown Civic Association, spoke in support of the nomination.
- Jim Duffin spoke in support of the nomination. He stated that he hopes that the owner can incorporate the existing building into their development plan and preserve the house. Mr. Duffin said this is an important part of Germantown, specifically this area of Wayne Avenue, and an incredible example of the type of work that was done in Germantown in the 1880s. He noted that although there is no absolute attribution, the addition and other changes were in the style of George T. Pearson.
- Steven Peitzman spoke in support of the nomination. He concurred with Mr. Duffin’s comments and also noted the local importance of artist Joseph T. Pearson.
- The Committee acknowledged the 25 emails received by the staff in favor of the nomination.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The zoning and permit issues raised by the owner are outside of the purview of the Committee and must be considered by the full Historical Commission.
- The addition and other late nineteenth-century changes were likely the work of George T. Pearson.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The building is associated Pearson’s career as a painter and educator, satisfying Criterion A.
- The property is emblematic of the social and artistic heritage of Germantown and Philadelphia in the early twentieth century, satisfying Criterion J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5139 Wayne Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J and should be added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 5139 Wayne Ave</b> <b>MOTION: Designate; Criteria A and J</b> <b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b> <b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b>					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy					X
Total	4				1

**ADDRESS: 401-09 N 65TH ST**

Name of Resource: St. Donato's Roman Catholic Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Nominator: Celeste Morello

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 401-09 N. 65<sup>th</sup> Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that St. Donato's Roman Catholic Church, completed in 1922, satisfies Criteria for Designation A and E. Criterion J is also checked on the nomination form, but is not discussed in the nomination; therefore, the staff assumes that it is checked on the form in error. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that St. Donato's Roman Catholic Church is significant for its association with St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, the first Roman Catholic saint in the United States, whose order focused on ministry to Italians in this West Philadelphia neighborhood, resulting in sufficient funds to finish the construction of the church building. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the church building is the work of Francis Ferdinand Durang, the son of Edwin Durang, whose firm specialized in the ecclesiastical design of Roman Catholic churches, which significantly influenced the architectural development of the City and Commonwealth.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 401-09 N. 65<sup>th</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and E, and that Criterion J should not be included because it is not discussed in the nomination.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 04:56:47

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner. Mr. Farnham noted that the staff provided notice to the property as well as to attorney Michael Phillips, who frequently represents the Archdiocese.
- Celeste Morello represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Morello noted that she intended to address Criterion J, and that it was an error to not explicitly call it out in the statement of significance, but that the discussion of

Criterion J was implied in terms of the discussion of St. Frances Cabrini and the Italian American community.

- Ms. Morello noted that she did not discuss the architectural significance of the property because she does not think it is the primary significance of the property. She opined that what Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini did to get the church started and its construction, existence and connection to the Saint are the primary significance. She noted that it is the only property to have such a direct connection with the St. Frances Cabrini, the first saint in the United States. She noted that she has spoken to the Cabrini nuns and Cabrini University, who are in support of the nomination. She noted that there is a letter in the nomination from the librarian of Cabrini University, who has access to the Cabriniana.
- Ms. Morello explained that the church is also significant to the development of the community, noting that Italians of West Philadelphia had essentially been driven out of Our Lady of the Rosary, and sought to found a new church, but it was difficult until the Saint and her nuns came and helped make it a reality. She explained that St. Frances Cabrini brought some “Fallen Catholics” back to the church, and the area around the church served as Overbrook’s Italian-American enclave until relatively recently.
- Ms. Morello commented that, in defense of the Historical Commission, she filed the nomination in December 2019, so the nomination was not given as much priority as the Hallahan nomination.
- Ms. Cooperman explained that religious significance can be addressed under cultural significance.
- Mr. Cohen thanked Ms. Morello for the nomination, and disagreed with the staff recommendation regarding Criterion J, noting that the nomination features a discussion about the neighborhood and local significance for the Italians who attended services there.
- Mr. Cohen opined that the architectural description should be more detailed.
- Mr. Cohen questioned whether a full church or basement church was there in 1910, noting that the 1911 atlas shows a fairly fleshed out footprint, which is slightly different than the 1927 atlas.
  - Mr. Lavery added that there is a color discrepancy between the two maps as well in terms of what was actually built, noting that brown would usually indicate stone, while red would indicate brick.
  - The Committee members questioned whether the construction began on F. Ferdinand Durang’s design in 1910 or so but then ran out of funds and put construction on hold.
  - Ms. Morello responded that a *Catholic Standards and Times* article from 23 July 1910 with the caption, “Dedication of St. Donato’s Basement Chapel,” shows an illustration of the proposed design by Rowland Boyle.
  - Mr. Cohen questioned whether that the basement church was laid out on Boyle’s design and everything above was Ferdinand Durang’s design.
  - Ms. Morello responded that that appears to be the case.
- Mr. Cohen applauded the nomination for placing the significance of the church in its own time rather than delving into the architectural connection to ancient churches.
- Mr. Lavery agreed, noting that he appreciated the discussion on the history of the proselytizing by the Protestants and conversion of Catholics to Protestantism. He noted that there was a significant effort in the early part of the twentieth century to attract Italian Catholics to Protestantism.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Hal Schirmer supported the nomination and explained that many Catholic immigrants of different nationalities formed territorial and parish churches in Philadelphia, many of which started as basement churches.
  - Ms. Morello questioned Mr. Schirmer's qualifications to speak as an expert on the Catholic church.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- St. Donato's Roman Catholic Church was founded in 1910 to serve the large Italian immigrant population of West Philadelphia, during a time in which there was a significant effort to convert Italian Catholics to Protestantism.
- Construction began in 1910 on a basement chapel designed by Rowland W. Boyle of Edwin F. Durang's architectural firm.
- St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, herself an Italian immigrant, visited the church in 1911 and was integral to the funding and completion of the church.
- The church which was redesigned by F. Ferdinand Durang and completed in 1922.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- St. Donato's Roman Catholic Church is associated with St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, a person significant in the past, satisfying Criterion A.
- The church was designed by F. Ferdinand Durang, whose ecclesiastical work significantly influenced the historical, architectural, and cultural development of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion E.
- St. Donato's Roman Catholic Church is associated with the cultural, social, and historical heritage of the Italian-American community in West Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 401-09 N. 65<sup>th</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 401-09 N 65<sup>th</sup> St</b> <b>MOTION: Designate; A, E, J</b> <b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b> <b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b>					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

**ADDRESS: 222-48 N BROAD ST**

Name of Resource: Hahnemann Hospital

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Broad Street Health Care Properties

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:**

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

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

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

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 05:16:08**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Jeffrey Ogren represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert and Steven Peitzman represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Ogren opposed the nomination. He opined that the designation is not in the best interest of the city, arguing that the building's best use would be to provide health care to the citizens of Philadelphia, and that in order to do so, the building would have to be razed or extensively modernized owing to the costs of rehabilitation. He argued that designation will discourage health care providers and redevelopment of the property, resulting in a loss of potential jobs and employment. He opined that, if designated, the property could become an abandoned eyesore. He asserted that, if not used as a healthcare facility, it might be converted to residential use and the cost to renovate would be great.
- Mr. Peitzman noted that the owners do not dispute the significance of the property and that it would not be the Historical Commission that created an abandoned hospital, but the owner of the building.

- Mr. Ogren responded that he did not suggest that the Historical Commission had anything to do with the building's present vacant status, but rather that there is no point in having an empty historic building.
- Ms. Cooperman noted that it is remarkable that Philadelphia has more than one highly significant early twentieth-century health-care related building, referencing Trumbauer's Jefferson building downtown, and this the Hahnemann building on N. Broad Street.
  - Ms. Barucco agreed, noting that the history of medicine is highly significant in Philadelphia.
  - Ms. Barucco noted that it is hard to argue against the fact that the 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building is an architectural landmark in Philadelphia.
- Mr. Cohen complimented the nominators and the analysis of the property and placing it in the medical scene in Philadelphia.
- Ms. Barucco suggested that the period of significance end in 1993 when the property was sold, rather than its closure in 2020.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Hal Schirmer supported the nomination, noting that Philadelphia has an abundance of architectural riches, and that if this building were anywhere outside of Philadelphia, it would be the marquee building.
- Celeste Morello supported the nomination. She noted that she has nominated a few buildings at the Jefferson Torresdale Hospital campus, which are older, and Jefferson did not oppose the designation. She agreed that the 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building is a beautiful Art Deco building and architectural landmark.
- David Traub agreed that the 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building would be a landmark in any other city, and remains a landmark in Philadelphia. It is a handsome building.

#### **COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The nomination is restricted to the 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building, which is a portion of the larger property known as 222-48 N Broad Street, as outlined in the boundary description of the nomination.
- The 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building has a significant place in the early twentieth-century medical history of Philadelphia.
- The 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building is an architectural landmark.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Neo-Gothic style, satisfying Criterion D.
- The 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building exemplifies the heritage and history of Hahnemann Medical College & Hospital, which opened in 1848 and became a major source of general medicine and surgical care, particularly the poor and working class people of North Philadelphia, which represented a shift in the cultural, economic, and social mores of the period, satisfying Criteria A and J.
- The 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building represents both innovation in the design of medical colleges and hospitals in the first and second quarters of the twentieth century and the broader development of modern hospitals in the Philadelphia region, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and larger nation, satisfying Criterion F.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Ms. Barucco moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building, a portion of 222-48 N. Broad Street, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, F, and J, with a period of significance of 1928 to 1993. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

<b>ITEM: 222-48 N Broad St</b>					
<b>MOTION: Designate; Criteria A, D, F, &amp; J</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Cohen</b>					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- Minutes of the Committee on Historic Designation 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.

#### **CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION**

§14-1004. Designation.

(1) Criteria for Designation.

A building, complex of buildings, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for preservation if it:

- 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;
- Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation;
- Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;
- Is part of or related to a square, park, or other distinctive area that should be preserved according to a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;
- Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
- Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or



(j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

DRAFT