

Public Comment received by the Historical  
Commission regarding the nomination of  
3101 W. Passyunk Avenue



# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Office of the Mayor  
215 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 686-2181  
FAX (215) 686-2180

**JAMES F. KENNEY**  
Mayor

March 2, 2021

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director  
Philadelphia Historical Commission  
*Sent via electronic mail*

Re: Opposition to Nomination of 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue

Dear Mr. Farnham,

I write to note my strong opposition to the above-referenced nomination of City-owned property at Philadelphia Gas Works' ("PGW") Passyunk Gas Processing Plant in South Philadelphia.

I oppose the nomination due to its failure to meet substantially meet the nomination criteria and due to the safety and security risks to the community that would follow if historical designation were to be granted.

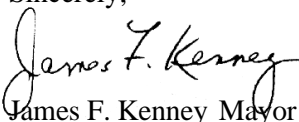
First, contrary to the nominating document, the site lacks significant historical resonance as part of PGW's history, nor does it demonstrate any continuing architectural integrity given many years of modification and disrepair. Notably, it is neither the hallmark of a gas industry or Philadelphia innovator, nor a community landmark, since the site is closed to the public and has been for over 100 years.

Secondly, any additional costs to PGW, a City-owned non-profit, could be passed along to PGW's ratepayers if the nomination were successful. These hard dollar costs would be in addition to the costs associated with any delays in site work, since designated status would require additional permit and other reviews by City agencies. I am concerned that this could impact environmental remediation projects that are ongoing at the site, which should be encouraged to proceed without unnecessary delay.

Thirdly, the site – classified as critical infrastructure subject to the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security - could be compromised as curious members of the public might try to gain unauthorized access to an historically designated site. It is important to note that this site will not, and cannot ever be open to the public due to paramount security and safety issues associated with being a 24/7 live gas processing and liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage facility.

In sum, while I strongly support historic preservation, this site does not qualify for designation. And since designation could actually *harm* the community in terms of increased safety and security risks, and unnecessary added costs and delays, I respectfully urge you to reject this imprudent nomination.

Sincerely,

  
James F. Kenney Mayor

cc: Robert Thomas, Chair  
Dana Carney, Commissioner  
Emily Cooperman, Commissioner  
Mark Dodds, Commissioner  
Kelly Edwards, Commissioner  
Steve Hartner, Commissioner  
Sara Lepori, Commissioner  
Josh Lippert, Commissioner  
John Mattioni, Commissioner  
Dan McCoubrey, Commissioner  
Jessica Sanchez, Commissioner  
Betty Turner, Commissioner  
Kim Washington, Commissioner  
Darrell Clarke, President, Philadelphia City Council  
Anne Fadullon, Chair, City Planning Commission  
Michael Rashid, Director, Commerce Department  
Melissa Long, Director, Division of Housing and Community Development  
Ralph DiPietro, Commissioner, Department of Licenses & Inspections  
Bridget Collins-Greenwald, Commissioner, Department of Public Property

## Kim Chantry

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**From:** Mark Rose <mrose@fau.edu>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 14, 2021 2:59 PM  
**To:** preservation  
**Subject:** Philadelphia Gas Works, Register of Historic Places

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14 March 2021

TO: Philadelphia Historical Commission

From: Mark H. Rose, Professor of History, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL 33431

Dear Colleagues:

Aaron Wunsch at Penn kindly asked to write in support of the proposal to include the Philadelphia Gas Works on the Register of Historic Places. I accepted on the spot. My wife and our children resided in Philadelphia for only two years; but I have returned frequently for professional meetings and lengthy research visits as part of my work in Philadelphia's political and industrial history. Most recently, our monograph, *A Good Place to Do Business* (with Roger Biles) is forthcoming with Temple Press, and it includes several chapters comparing Philadelphia developments with those in five industrial cities. I also edited book series at Temple University Press and at Penn Press focused on topics in technological and business history. My wife and I still have many friends in Center City and in the region. We think of ourselves as Philadelphians.

The Philadelphia Gas Works comprise a central part of the city's industrial and labor history. In the early days, the PGW supplied the light that illuminated the city's streets and powered the city's factories. Gas, available around the clock, helped foster a fundamental change in waking hours and manufacturing processes. Along the way, countless employees across the decades learned the (harsh) discipline of industrial production. They also began to think of themselves not only as former residents of Cork or Milan but increasingly as Irish, Italians, working-class, and eventually as hyphenated-Americans. Starting around 1900, many banked at PSFS. I can still picture those employees trooping to work before dawn along the city's undeveloped streets. And as well, I readily re-imagine conversations among engineers and architects as they conceived the PGW's first designs and carried them through to magnificent buildings constructed from local stone—classic 19th century Philadelphia industrial architecture. When I talk with students about American industrial development, gas (and electric) service are always among my earliest topics. And in turn, Philadelphia-area growth and change are among my key examples

One must be struck by yet another dimension of the PGW's importance in local and national history. The Works are located south of Society Hill and the former Dock Street Market. During the 1950s and 1960s, "Bill Rafsky helped direct both of those urban renewal projects. Rafsky and others sought to return upper-income and mostly white residents to the area around Independence Hall. Taken together with the PGW, what we see in Philadelphia (and other cities) is the central roles played by business and political leaders in shaping their city's social and economic geographies. The PGW stands as a spectacular example of human design on Philadelphia's early landscape.

The PGW's inclusion in the Register holds my highest and strongest support.

Thank you.



# **SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY**

**Oliver Evans Chapter, Philadelphia, PA**

**[www.siaoliverevans.org](http://www.siaoliverevans.org)**

**Muriel Kirkpatrick  
Vice-President,  
Acting President**

**Reese Davis  
Secretary**

**Helen Schenck  
Treasurer**

March 14, 2021

Dr. Jon Farnham, Executive Director  
Philadelphia Historical Commission  
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
[Preservation@phila.gov](mailto:Preservation@phila.gov)

Dear Jon:

The Oliver Evans Chapter of The Society for Industrial Archeology (OESIA) fully supports the nomination of the Point Breeze Gas Works to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Founded in 1971, The Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA) is an international organization that promotes the study and preservation of the physical evidence of the technological and industrial past. The OESIA Chapter was founded on March 31, 1984, under the leadership of David Orr, then chief regional archaeologist of the National Park Service. Orr, served as the first president; with John Bowie, AIA, Principal of John Bowie Associates, as vice-president.

The chapter soon founded the Oliver Evans Press and in 1990, with Bowie as editor, published Workshop of the World: An Introduction to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia. The Point Breeze Gas Works was significant enough to be included on page 1-14 in this "bible of industrial Philadelphia." That citation was based on a 1977 article by David Orr in the magazine *Historical Archeology*, Vol II, "Philadelphia as Industrial Archeological Artifact: A Case Study."

Sadly in the 31 years since Workshop of the World was published close to 40% of the structures discussed in those pages have been demolished. The Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW) was a model for the nation in the years before the Civil War. The fact that these structures, designed in the Gothic Revival style, look more like churches than factory buildings shows the pride that PGW once had in them. It is incumbent upon the Philadelphia Historical Commission to hold PGW accountable for the preservation of the few remaining structures that tell the history of the company and the national significance that it once held.

Sincerely,

*Muriel Kirkpatrick*

Muriel Kirkpatrick  
Vice-President, Acting President

The refinery has been continuously modified over the years. Initially the Atlantic Refining Company produced gasoline, lubricating oils, waxes, solvents and other petroleum-based substances. A major restructuring occurred in 1971, when the plant began producing only gasoline, industrial fuels, and asphalt. Major components of the facility include a c.1958 hydro-cracker, a c.1979 fluid catalytic cracking unit, and a variety of environmental controls, such as de-sulfurization and sulphur recovery units.<sup>20</sup>

### 1.10 Philadelphia Gas Works, Station A, 1853

Point Breeze, 3100 East Passyunk Avenue

Philadelphia's first gas works was built in 1836 at 22nd and Market Streets as a private venture but was soon taken over by the city when it proved successful. Gas works were subsequently built in the Northern Liberties, Manayunk, Germantown, and Kensington, and in 1853, at Point Breeze. Municipal control opened the way for political manipulation and abuse. To isolate the utility from corruption, management was passed to the United Gas Improvement Company during the 1880s, a period of municipal reform in Philadelphia.<sup>21</sup> In the 1930s, management passed back to the city, where it continues today under the Philadelphia Gas Works.

An increasing demand for gas by the early 1850s resulted in the construction of the gas works at Point Breeze. John Cresson, Chief Engineer of the Gas Works, designed the facility in a simple Gothic style. The plant consisted of four buildings: a retort house, where coal was distilled to make gas; a purifying house, where the gas was washed and refined; a meter house, where the gas was measured; and a gasholder, where the gas was stored prior to distribution. The purifying house and the meter house are still standing.<sup>22</sup>



Fig. 1.10.1 Philadelphia Gas Works Station A  
(Photo by Stephen J. Salamon)

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Marty Mader, Plant Manager, Atlantic Refining Company, November 16, 1989.

<sup>21</sup> Federal Writers' Project, pg. 138.

<sup>22</sup> David G. Orr, "Philadelphia as Industrial Archaeological Artifact: A Case Study," *Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 11, (1977). pgs. 3-14.

**SOCIETY OF  
ARCHITECTURAL  
HISTORIANS**

# **PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS**

## **OFFICERS**

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David.Breiner@jefferson.edu

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jgamundy@comcast.net

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vaplenc@yahoo.com

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info@philachaptersah.org

www.philachaptersah.org

March 24, 2021

Dr. Jon Farnham, Executive Director  
Philadelphia Historical Commission  
1515 Arch Street, 13<sup>th</sup> floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Jon,

The Board of Directors (those indicated below) of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians strongly supports the nomination of the Point Breeze Gas Works to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Society of Architectural Historians is one of the premier scholarly organizations dedicated to architectural history in our country. Our not-for-profit chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians national organization was founded in 1964 to encourage the study of architectural history and promote historic preservation, particularly in the Delaware Valley. We continue these activities today as a way of benefiting our larger community.

We strongly support this nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places for several reasons. Philadelphia was an industrial powerhouse when the Point Breeze Gas Works was erected in the 1850s as a response to increasing demand for gas, and the Point Breeze Gas Works captures this history. Designed by engineer John C. Cresson, the Point Breeze Gas Works exhibited Gothic Revival features, a style then popular and considered suitable for an important component of the industrial city. This makes it significant architecturally. Indeed, given its richness, the site has national, not just local significance. Fortunately, portions of the complex survive. So much of our city's industrial building fabric has been severely altered or demolished in the past decades; it is time for us to be good custodians of the historical industrial landscape as a record of the past and as a means of adapting for future needs.

We urge the Philadelphia Historical Commission to protect this valuable site by including it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We thank you for your important work in our great city.

Sincerely,



David M. Breiner, PhD

President, on behalf of the Chapter Board of Directors V. Aplenc, J. Mundy, D. Breiner

**From:** [howardbhaas@aol.com](mailto:howardbhaas@aol.com)  
**To:** [preservation](#)  
**Cc:** [oscar.beisert@gmail.com](mailto:oscar.beisert@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** PHC April 5 re Point Breeze Gas Works  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 31, 2021 5:22:55 PM

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Howard B Haas

Resident & Attorney at Law, Philadelphia, PA

215-546-8946 direct



**From:** [LYNN JACKSON](#)  
**To:** [preservation](#)  
**Subject:** Point Breeze Gas Works  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 31, 2021 5:40:25 PM

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

I am a resident of Philadelphia (19150) and I am writing to you to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue.

The Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House are among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility, having been built between 1853 and 1859 in the unique Gothic Revival style.

Protecting these structures, which occupy only 1.2% of the entire site, will have negligible impact on other development plans for the site and will go a long way in preserving a valuable and unique historic property.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Lynn C Jackson

**From:** [Edith Newhall](#)  
**To:** [preservation](#)  
**Subject:** Point Breeze Gas Works  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 31, 2021 9:24:02 PM

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edith Newhall

**From:** [Yevgeny Desyatnik](#)  
**To:** [preservation](#)  
**Subject:** Point Breeze Gas Works  
**Date:** Thursday, April 1, 2021 9:45:16 AM

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

I understand the concern that designation can bring, with the additional oversight, however if the concern with a dangerous structure does materialize, L&I still has the power to take action up to and including demolition, as we have recently seen. Designation simply offers the historical commission a seat at the table, and an opportunity bring to bear the expertise not present in other departments to the same specialized degree, and to weigh in on alterations or demolitions, as your esteemed body knows.

Respectfully,  
eugene desyatnik

**From:** [Urban Cottages](#)  
**To:** [preservation](#)  
**Subject:** Point Breeze Gasworks 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue  
**Date:** Thursday, April 1, 2021 6:46:40 AM

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole LaGreca  
Urban Cottages, LLC  
702 N. 3rd St. #801  
Philadelphia, PA 19123  
[urbancottagesllc@gmail.com](mailto:urbancottagesllc@gmail.com)  
PH: 267-505-8831

**From:** [Manda Perles](#)  
**To:** [preservation](#)  
**Subject:** Point Breeze Gas Works  
**Date:** Thursday, April 1, 2021 3:37:45 AM

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Manda Perles

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Westberg, Meris](#)  
**To:** [preservation](#)  
**Cc:** [Jamie Gauthier](#)  
**Subject:** Designate the Point Breeze Gas Works  
**Date:** Thursday, April 1, 2021 8:07:25 AM

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. One of the most impressive histories of Philadelphia is its technological achievement; a unique trait among other Mid-Atlantic cities and something to be celebrated.

Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. This technological advancement radically changes the city of Philadelphia and the country at large. One can trace class and racial trends to prioritized electrification, and without the Gas Works intact - there will be little physical material left by which to interpret that history.

Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage. Some of Philadelphia's proudest achievements are in technological advancement and architecture; this site represents both. To not protect it is to carelessly toss aside that municipal pride.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Meris Westberg

Resident, Ward 3

## Point Breeze Gas Works Historical Designation

John Webster <goddog215@hotmail.com>

Thu 4/1/2021 12:42 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Webster

<https://www.phila.gov/media/20210302081804/3101-W-Passyunk-Ave-nomination-2021.pdf>

Sent from my iPad

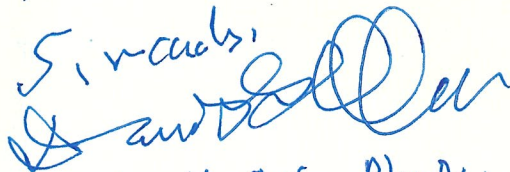
Dr. David G. Orr

135 Washington St.  
P.O. Box 720  
Delaware City, DE 19706

March 22, 2021

This letter is in full support of the nomination for  
the Buildings remaining at the Point Breeze Works Philadelphia  
in the first half of the nineteenth century led the young  
Republic in the development of Water and Illumination Gas  
utilities. The Motor House was drawn and researched  
by myself and Herb Levy while I was at the  
Department of American Civilization at the University of  
Pennsylvania. This history and record has been in the  
Historic American Engineering Record for almost half a  
century. I urge the members of the Committee to consult Dr.  
John Crossen was the chief engineer of the Point Breeze  
works at its onset. I did oral history on this work and in  
1976—I interviewed a 75 year old gasman who proudly  
told me that the Motor House was once part of a Swedish  
Monastery, hence the English Ecclesiastical Gothic style?  
Please excuse the handwritten note but I fast  
needed to send in my report (my computer crashed!).

Sincerely,



David G. Orr, Ph.D., F.A.A.R.



## Point Breeze Gas Works Historical Building

Becca Jett <beccajett1991@gmail.com>

Thu 4/1/2021 5:21 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage. The amount of historical buildings in this city that are demolished (in one of the oldest municipalities in our country) is highly disturbing.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Becca

## Point Breeze Gas Works

vce <vcross@gmail.com>

Thu 4/1/2021 6:49 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: Jamie Gauthier <Jamie.Gauthier@phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I write in strong support of the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Valerie Ross  
4247 Regent Square  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

## Support the Historic Designation for the Point Breeze Gas Works

Nicholas Johnson <nicholas108@mac.com>

Thu 4/1/2021 7:58 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility.

Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Johnson

## In SUPPORT of designation for the Philadelphia Gas Works

Katie Dillon Low <katied.low@gmail.com>

Thu 4/1/2021 7:15 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Historic Commission Members,

I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of the historic designation of the locomotive house, Purifying Houses, and small shops at the Philadelphia Gas Works site in Point Breeze. These structures are wonderful examples of the Gothic Revival style and deserve preservation based on their architectural merit but also to preserve the history and memory of Philadelphia's transition from candle use to gas lighting. Imagine that! These structures have been around since people only had wax candles to light their homes and streets. It is the duty of the Commission to help preserve our Philadelphia history. We cannot protect any of the buildings in this city without you! With only a little over 2% of all the buildings in Philadelphia being protected, it is so important for you to help grow that percentage. Our history is what makes us, and when those physical buildings are gone, the memory of the things that happened there and the people that used those places is also lost. YOU have an enormous amount of power over what is remembered and what is forgotten. Please, help everyone remember.

Katie Dillon Low  
19107



Virus-free. [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)

## Designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works

Allyson Hunter-Talbot <greylocs@yahoo.com>

Thu 4/1/2021 7:57 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Allyson Hunter-Talbot

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

## Point Breeze Gas Works

dave comper <dave62448@yahoo.com>

Thu 4/1/2021 6:27 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Pennsylvania, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage. Other than Churches, the Gothic Revival is rare particularly in civic and commercial buildings. The loss of these important structures would be very sad indeed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

K Davis Dambly

## Letter of Support for Philadelphia Gas Works, 3101 W Passyunk

Arielle Harris <harris.ari@gmail.com>

Thu 4/1/2021 9:06 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>

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April 1, 2021

To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works (PGW complex) at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue.

As a [Secretary of the Interior-qualified architectural historian](#), I can attest to the correct-completeness of the nomination. The historical commission is a body of historians and non-historians alike, and the nomination presents the history of the PGW complex in an easy-to-understand narrative, with plenty of appendixes and rabbit-holes to dive down for those interested in the history of gas production more generally, and other gas facilities in the City and Commonwealth. Altogether, I believe this impressive dossier successfully argues for the historical significance of this industrial complex.

Though the PGW site is no longer frozen in time as it was during its heyday, the surviving buildings merit protection in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Just because the buildings are city-owned does not mean they should be exempt from historic protection; so many of our city's utilities were designed to be pleasant to the eye and with attention to detail (see: our numerous post offices, train stations, Water Works, and electric power stations). This was not an unintentional decision - these beautiful buildings indicate a pride for our city and for providing utility services to our residents. We must ensure that the remaining group of PGW buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and industrial heritage.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Arielle Harris  
943 Federal Street

cc: Councilman Mark Squilla

## Support for the designation of historic resources at the Point Breeze Gas Works—3101 W. Passyunk Avenue

Georgette Bartell <geobartell@gmail.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 12:44 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To Historic Commission

Re Designation of Point Breeze Gas Works

Although these buildings known as Church Row are not visible to the public at this time, they represent the history of technology. Our society is now changing even more rapidly. That we have these relics in Philadelphia and have the opportunity to preserve them is a testament to our forward thinking. Understanding the breadth of our technological growth and seeing the past is part of understanding ourselves.

I implore you to use your power to make them remain.

Georgette Bartell  
Philadelphia



## 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue

Wang, Fon <fwang@ballinger.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 4:49 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Hello,

I am writing in support of the historic designation of the subject property. It is my understanding that the Philadelphia Historic Commission, Committee of Historic Designation voted to designate 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue, Point Breeze Gas works.

Built between 1853 and 1895, the purifying house, shops and locomotive house are a true representation of our City's important industrial heritage. Saving these structures and others that define our history would endorse our honored standing as World Heritage City.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Fon

| FON S. WANG, AIA LEED BD+C  
DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**B A L L I N G E R**

215 446 0672

## Support for the Designation of Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue

mbixler@hiddencityphila.org <mbixler@hiddencityphila.org>

Fri 4/2/2021 3:46 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: Kenyatta Johnson <Kenyatta.Johnson@Phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

The fact is that these structures occupy a mere 1.2% of a massive site and the claim that this designation will block future development is a gross misrepresentation.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Bixler

--

**Michael Bixler**

Managing Editor & Communications Director

[Hidden City Philadelphia](http://hiddencityphila.org)

## 3101 W Passyunk Ave. - Point Breeze Gas Works

Kevin Brett <kevin.j.brett@gmail.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 12:24 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Chair Thomas,

Point Breeze Gas Works is historically significant to the industrial heritage of Philadelphia. Other cities have managed to save and integrate historic gas structures into the fabric of their modern communities. I understand the buildings are currently inaccessible to the public, but that does not mean those buildings will remain inaccessible in the future. Historic preservation in Philadelphia should not be determined based on a short-term perspective of use.

I support the preservation of the significant buildings on the Point Breeze Gas Works site.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kevin Brett, 19125

--

**Kevin J. Brett, Esq.**

Ph: 215-518-9440



## Point Breeze Gas Works

Barbara Burns <turkburns@aol.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 10:52 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Hello,

Was very upset to hear about Mayor Kenney opposing the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works. I believe this 160 year old property is a significant part of Philadelphia history and it is also one of the oldest gas works in the country. I can't stress how important I feel it is to preserve Philly history! I love my city and to see all the beautiful buildings being torn down is beyond distressing. To save the Gas Works would add so much to the rich culture of our city and part of what makes our city so special. We need to stop this destruction before we have a bland generic city and the loss of a property that makes Philadelphia so special.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Burns

## Point Breeze Gas Works

Carol Diament <caroldiament@gmail.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 11:34 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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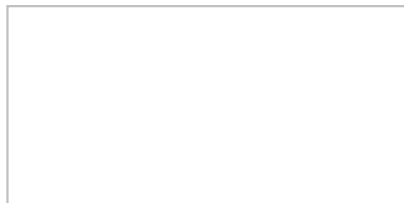
To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

I live in Philadelphia Philadelphia, and I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. I understand that the Purifying Houses, Shops are considered to be the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. I strongly urge you to support the preservation of the highly unique buildings.

Thank you very much..

Best,

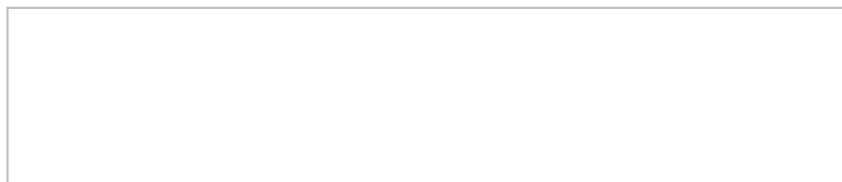
Carol



Best number to call 215-260-1359 (cell)

Compass RE

267.435.8015



## Point Breeze Gas Works

sberisoty@aol.com <sberisoty@aol.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 11:24 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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The Interlocking Gas Holders and other buildings at King's Cross in London, built 1860-80, are newer than our own Point Breeze Gas Works, ca.1853-59, yet protected and reused. That city turned a wasteland into the most fashionable type of urban center. Yet Mayor Jim Kenney and PGW oppose designation of 1.2% of a massive site? What is wrong with our city and society? Adaptive reuse must be promoted in a world where conservation is necessary to preserve the very viability of the planet. Stop allowing developers to tear down anything by right, it is wasteful and short sighted. It is beyond time to protect our world heritage site status. Protect all facets of our history, not just the homes and buildings of the elite. Protect the history of the common man and woman; they built this country. That is what makes us valuable in the eyes of the world.

Steven B. Erisoty  
71 Bethlehem Pike  
Philadelphia, PA 19118

Philadelphia Historical Commission  
1515 Arch St  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

April 2, 2021

To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. The nomination may be viewed [here](#).

The Interlocking Gas Holders and other buildings at King's Cross in London, built 1860-80, are newer than our own Point Breeze Gas Works, ca. 1853-59, yet protected and reused. London turned a wasteland into the most fashionable type of urban center yet Mayor Jim Kenney and PGW oppose designation of 1.2% of a massive site.

Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

These buildings could easily be incorporated and given it only takes up 1.2% of the site, there are still plenty options for PGW to build new on this massive site. Kenney's short-sighted statement proves he doesn't understand how economics work and demonstrates why our city is in dire straits in an array of areas but notably in this instance, potential innovative commercial support, adaptive reuse, environmental stewardship, and lastly, preservation. He is speaking from an unsophisticated and misinformed perspective and his is a particularly egregious and embarrassing public stance on a community issue. As the nation watches how cities respond to numerous issues from COVID-19 impacts, this is a case which could exemplify Philadelphia's potential and one that likely won't go unnoticed. If the Mayor's statement is heeded, Philadelphia will represent a new form of failure on a national level.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dana Fedeli

CC: Offices of Cindy Bass, Helen Gym, Kendra Brooks, Isaiah Thomas, Derek Green, Katherine Gilmore Richardson, Allan Domb

## Preservation of Point Breeze Gas Works

Nicole Matchette <nicolematchette@gmail.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 3:56 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Mr. Thomas:

It is appalling how much of our architectural heritage we have lost in just the past month due to new development in Philadelphia. Mayor Kenney's opposition to the preservation of the Point Breeze Gas Works shows that yet another significant loss could be added to the list. This building represents Philadelphia's historical and architectural heritage and merits historic designation. Please vote in favor of the citizens of this city and not in favor of developers; we are losing hope that our beautiful and historic city will, over time, have nothing left preserve at the rate we are losing our historic buildings.

Thank you,  
Nicole Matchette



## Point Breeze Gasworks

Walter Peterson <wpeterson@wpldesign.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 1:04 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Walter B. Peterson  
604 S Washington Square  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

--



**Walter B. Peterson**

Principal, **WPL Interior Design**

[215.592.9570](tel:215.592.9570)

[215.880.3955](tel:215.880.3955)

[wpeterson@wpldesign.com](mailto:wpeterson@wpldesign.com)

[wpldesign.com](http://wpldesign.com)

10 E. Athens Avenue, Suite 204B Ardmore, PA 19003



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**CUSTOM CABINETRY** designed and curated by WPL Design

April 2, 2021

Robert Thomas  
Chair  
Philadelphia Historical Commission  
One Parkway  
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Point Breeze Gas Works  
3101 & 3143 W Passyunk Ave

Dear Commissioner Thomas,

I write to offer my support of the Point Breeze Gas Works for listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. In particular, the earliest and most architecturally significant buildings within this campus are remarkable survivors of Philadelphia's industrial heritage constructed during one of our City's most robust periods of population growth. The original 1853 Purifying House (Resource 1), the 1855 Purifying House (Resource 2) and the 1859 Shops (Resources 6 and 7), with their gothic inspired designs, embody the aspirations of our nation in the mid-nineteenth century. These buildings are clearly worthy of designation and the protection that listing on the Philadelphia Register of Places affords.

Knowing that these structures occupy just a minimal percentage of site, I find it incredibly sad that our Mayor is advocating that these structures should not be added to the City's Register. As the nomination contends, these properties have significant interest and value for our City and exemplify the economic and historical heritage of Philadelphia during the mid-nineteenth century. That they should be designed by a renowned designer and be of architectural interest is merely icing on the cake. If Philadelphia, undoubtedly one of our nation's most historic cities, cannot preserve these structures, then what hope is there for our nation as a whole? Going against the recommendations of qualified professionals and the expertise of its own staff, the Mayor has sent a strong signal to Philadelphians that preservation of our City's historic resources is no longer a priority.

I hope the Commission will act in the City's best interest and affirm the historic status of these structures so that they can be preserved for generations to come.

Respectfully,  
George Poulin, AIA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Poulin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "George" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Poulin".

3502 Hamilton St  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

## 3101 W. Passyunk Ave

Christopher Simmons <csimmons@heritage123.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 10:47 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear PHC,

As a resident, active historic preservation advocate, and action taker in Philadelphia, I am writing to express my request that PHC vote to designate the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. As you know, originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural, engineering, and technological heritage. Other cities have taken steps to preserve theirs, so why not Philadelphia?

So many primary historic sites have been lost in recent years, it hurts my heart. There are situations where we as a society must do away with the old in order to secure the future. Fortunately, this is not one of those situations. Regardless of the lack of support from the mayor (whom I deeply regret voting for with his bait and switch scam on preservation) and PGW, your duty is to protect history in this city. Regrettably, I can't say I feel PHC has sincerely upheld that duty. This is a major opportunity to move the needle in the right direction.

The almighty dollar is not cause for demolition around every bend. As a real estate investors with 10+ properties (none designated, but several that should and will be eventually), my wife and I put our money where my mouth is on that statement every day by preserving and historically restoring that which we are not legally obligated to. Developers will survive without being allowed to pillage every historic resource, and PGW will survive without this 1.2% of this land. The scare tactics of threatening cost increases are just that. This early industrial site must become preserved in some form, not reduced to rubble. I for one would love to see this accessible as an industrial museum in time.

Thank you in advance for voting to protect our historic resources, and not outdated viewpoints on historic preservation.

Christopher Simmons, partner  
Heritage Builders and Remodelers, LLC  
215-421-9280

## Point Breeze Gas Works

alec sorensen <ASorensen956@hotmail.com>

Fri 4/2/2021 4:49 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Additionally, as you might be aware, there seems to a growing grass roots movement to urge city leaders to better protect our invaluable historic and architectural assets. These assets are an important reason why many people love Philadelphia and choose to call it home. More and more people in the city are becoming involved in historic preservation and many of us are alarmed by the wanting of investment and progress being made toward strengthening protections and designations. For instance, a recent Change.org petition garnered over 150 signatures to designate the proposed Washington Square Historic District, which strangely has been shelved by the Commision for over 9 years. Finally, I am considering investing in several multi-family properties in the area and frankly, I would like to see the neighborhood receive designation in order preserve its historic aesthetic (which again is the reason why many choose to live there) and to prevent disruptive development which could negatively impact the long-term businesses and residents of the community.

<http://chnng.it/sb5SSBBy5r>



### Sign the Petition

Approve the designation of the Washington Square West Historic District

chnng.it

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alec Sorensen

## Point Breeze gas works

Bob Brano <bob.brano43@gmail.com>

Sat 4/3/2021 8:37 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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I very strongly support preservation and adaptive re-use of the Point Breeze gas works.

I have restored two homes in Philadelphia. 451 W Hansberry street in Germantown and 3925 Henry avenue (4 doors from The Kelly House).

I also lived at 3453 Midvale avenue, one of the historic Tudor townhouses.

Bob Brano

**From:** [Judith Robinson](#)  
**To:** [Darrell Clarke](#); [Kim Chantry](#)  
**Subject:** Preservation Heritage  
**Date:** Saturday, April 3, 2021 10:21:19 PM

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<https://www.facebook.com/585328118500816/posts/1348897332143887/?sfnsn=mo>

To whom it may Concern,

Historic Preservation is important in our city.

Please support this nomination.

Best Regards,  
Judith Robinson  
32ndWard RCO  
215-235-6517

**save 3301 Passyunk Ave**

Lindsey Tweed &lt;lbttweed@gmail.com&gt;

Sat 4/3/2021 2:30 PM

To: preservation &lt;preservation@Phila.gov&gt;

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Dear Mr. Thomas,

I am a resident of Philadelphia writing today to urge you to preserve the historic buildings at Point Breeze Gas Works. As you must know it is one of the oldest surviving gas works in the United States, and many other cities around the country have granted historical designation to gas works that aren't as old or significant. I was very disappointed to read that Mayor Jim Kenney has opted to side with a PGW consultant over the city's own Historical Commission. Philadelphia has an unfortunate tendency to demolish buildings of great historical value, and as I recall we have one of the lowest rates of historical designations of any major city.

Please stand with the people of Philadelphia over corporate interests and preserve these buildings. Let it be one step towards our beautiful city truly embracing and celebrating its architectural heritage before it's gone.

Sincerely,  
Lindsey Tweed  
Holmesburg, Philadelphia



## I support the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue

Mason Carter <mcartern88@gmail.com>

Sun 4/4/2021 5:54 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: Allan Domb <Allan.Domb@Phila.gov>; Jamie Gauthier <Jamie.Gauthier@phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue.

Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility.

Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

The fact is that these structures occupy a mere 1.2% of a massive site and the claim that this designation will block future development is a misconception.

Thank you so much in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mason Carter

## The Destination of the Point Breeze Gas Works

Chihiro Williams <chihirowilliams@gmail.com>

Sun 4/4/2021 3:05 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: reprabb@pahouse.net <reprabb@pahouse.net>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue.

The Point Breeze Gas Works was built between 1853 and 1859. The Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. These buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. The Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, however, it has since been demolished.

I am very concerned that the city has been demolishing so many historical buildings that makes our city unique and beautiful. We must save the surviving buildings of the Point Breeze Gas Works as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage, and honor the works of our ancestors.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

--

*Chihiro Williams*

Resident of Philadelphia

## Preserve the Point Breeze Gas Works Survivors

Susan Babbitt <philad49@att.net>

Sun 4/4/2021 4:30 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a long-time Philadelphia resident and old building enthusiast, I would like to support the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. The purifying houses, shops, and locomotive house could be the oldest surviving U. S. structures relating to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public utility. They are also appealing examples of the once ubiquitous Gothic Revival style. The meter house was demolished although the Historic American Engineering Record had documented it. That foolishness must not be allowed to continue; it would be especially foolish since these valuable buildings occupy little more than 1% of a large site! Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely, Susan Babbitt 19107

## PGW buildings

michelle shuman <shuman.michelle@gmail.com>

Mon 4/5/2021 8:08 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: Venise Whitaker <Venise.Whitaker@Phila.gov>

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Good morning,

I'm writing to strongly support the designation of the PGW buildings. It's incredible to have found buildings from so early in the history of gas utilities, let alone ones that are so architecturally interesting and even still in use as gas infrastructure! Surely if they've managed to adapt through 150 years of technological change they can continue to do so into the future. The story they tell of Victorian technological optimism is particularly important as we increasingly recognize how much our world, especially in Pennsylvania, has been shaped by fossil fuels like gas, and as we hopefully move away from them in the future. We are lucky to have such an intact piece of that history and should absolutely preserve it.

Thank you,  
Michelle Shuman

## Point Breeze Gas Works - Support Designation

Dawn Bilobran <[dbilobran@313hp.com](mailto:dbilobran@313hp.com)>

Mon 4/5/2021 4:37 PM

To: preservation <[preservation@Phila.gov](mailto:preservation@Phila.gov)>

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

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Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

I am an Architectural Historian and own a Historic Preservation firm in Detroit, Michigan. A portion of my work focuses on the preservation and adaptive reuse of industrial heritage and public utility architecture, an often overlooked example of beauty in design and technological innovation.

Similar sites have found success by embracing the power of the past, notable examples include: Seattle Gas Works Park in Seattle, WA; Gasometers, Vienna, Austria; Sears Power House/Shaw Technology and Learning Center, Chicago, Illinois; and Denver Tramway Power House in Denver, Colorado. I urge you to look outside the box, and imagine the possibilities. The public is excited by the prospect of engagement with these buildings - those that for so long have generated reliable power yet remained a distant off-limits to most consumers. Please allow the Pointe Breeze Gas Works to continue powering the Philadelphia community!

I am happy to offer my professional services to support the retention and reuse of these structures. Please feel free contact me at [dbilobran@313hp.com](mailto:dbilobran@313hp.com) or 248-909-0075. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dawn Bilobran  
313 Historic Preservation

## In support of designation of Point Breeze Gas Works

Ammon, Francesca R <fammon@design.upenn.edu>

Tue 4/6/2021 11:31 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

I am writing to request support for the designation of historic resources at the Point Breeze Gas Works (3101 W. Passyunk Ave), a property that I see is on the agenda for an upcoming Historical Commission meeting. These buildings represent significant local and national examples of industrial heritage, and this World Heritage City should be at the forefront of protecting such structures. I understand that the Committee on Historic Designation has voted to designate these buildings. I support that conclusion and strongly encourage the Historical Commission to follow the Committee's recommendation and protect these valuable resources.

Best,

Francesca Russello Ammon, PhD

Associate Professor of City & Regional Planning and Historic Preservation

University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design

(215) 746-8235 | [fammon@design.upenn.edu](mailto:fammon@design.upenn.edu) | <http://francescaammon.com>

[Bulldozer: Demolition and Clearance of the Postwar Landscape](#)



257 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101 tel 717.234.2310 fax 717.234.2522 info@preservationpa.org www.preservationpa.org

April 6, 2021

Philadelphia Historical Commission  
Via Email - preservation@phila.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

Preservation Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth's only statewide private nonprofit dedicated to protecting and preserving historic places, fully supports the preservation and reuse of "Church Row," the group of historic buildings at the Point Breeze Gas Works that are currently threatened with demolition.

We believe this statement from the 1974 Historic American Engineering Record documentation of buildings at the location remains accurate: "The history of the Philadelphia Gas Works presents an important corpus of cultural documentation. . . . In addition, the buildings, artifacts, and other extant visual material form important correlatives to existing knowledge of the illuminating gas industry. The development and eventual success of the gas works dramatically affected the lives of every Philadelphian. It created revolutions in domestic and public social activity." (Philadelphia Gas Works, Point Breeze Meter House, Intersection of Passyunk & Schuylkill Avenues, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, PA Historic American Engineering Record page 13, HAER PA,51-PHILA,699A-, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/pa1314/>)

These buildings tell a story of revolution! The gothic revival style buildings at the Point Breeze Gas Works represent Philadelphia's embrace of a new technology, as the city led the way forward in municipal services with construction of large-scale gas production facilities that used coal to create gas for lighting streets and homes.

We congratulated our colleagues at the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance when they recently announced progress toward preservation of an 1888 gasholder located in Concord. Its owner, Liberty Utilities, agreed not to seek a demolition permit while talks continue with the Alliance and the City of Concord on plans that would protect and preserve the unique building.

We hope that designation of these buildings will lead to a similar positive outcome in Philadelphia. We encourage the Philadelphia Historical Commission to protect these buildings and the legacy they represent and approve their addition to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Mindy G. Crawford  
Executive Director  
Preservation Pennsylvania

## Point Breeze Gas Works

Kelly E. Wiles <kelly.e.wiles@gmail.com>

Tue 4/6/2021 6:15 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

As a resident of Philadelphia, I am writing to express my support for the designation of the Point Breeze Gas Works at 3101 W. Passyunk Avenue. Originally built between 1853 and 1859, the Purifying Houses, Shops, and Locomotive House prove to be among the oldest surviving structures in America related to the manufacture of illuminating gas by a public lighting utility. Additionally, these buildings survive as unique examples of the Gothic Revival style. As you know the Meter House was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record, but has since been demolished. We must ensure that the larger group of buildings survives as a landmark to our city's architectural and technological heritage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly E. Wiles  
Architectural Historian





April 6, 2021

Dr. Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director  
Philadelphia Historical Commission  
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102 via email to [preservation@phila.gov](mailto:preservation@phila.gov)

Dear Dr. Farnham:

The Design Advocacy Group urges the Historical Commission to adopt the carefully crafted recommendation of its Committee on Historic Designation regarding the remarkable small group of nineteenth-century buildings of the Philadelphia Gas Works in Point Breeze.

As we all work to bring our city back to life--and into a better life, one of our most important "natural resources" is our historic architecture. However, as many of us have long recognized, and as the Mayor's Historic Preservation Task Force emphasized, we are inadequately safeguarding (and taking advantage of) the historic resources located in the city's diverse neighborhoods, where ordinary people lived and worked--and continue to do so. The PGW buildings, which stand far from the offices and landmarks of Center City, are such buildings. And, because this industrial zone is poised for reimagining, they are both valuable and vulnerable. As city-owned resources, they should be examples of the kind of protective but forward-looking stewardship that the times demand.

The mid-nineteenth century Philadelphians who designed, built, and worked in these handsome Gothic Revival structures were very ambitious for their city, and we should form a partnership with them, across the years, as we seek to realize our own ambitions for Philadelphia.

This letter is approved by the Steering Committee of the Design Advocacy Group, a 1700-member organization dedicated to excellence and equity in the built environment of Greater Philadelphia. (<https://designadvocacy.org/>)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David B. Brownlee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David B. Brownlee, FSAH  
Co Vice Chair, DAG

[dbrownle@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:dbrownle@sas.upenn.edu)  
215 732 0397

## Point Breeze Gas Works buildings

Nancy Pontone <npontone@gmail.com>

Wed 4/7/2021 11:40 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Philadelphia Historical Commission:

I am writing in support of historic designation for Point Breeze Gas Works buildings at 3103 W. Passyunk Ave. These Gothic Revival buildings represent the manufacture of illuminating gas, a new lighting technology, by a public lighting utility, Philadelphia Gas Works. Also, the Purifying Houses, also known as "Church Row" (1853-94), Shops (1859), Locomotive House (1859), and U.G.I. Office & Dispensary (1899-1929) are distinctive and significant architecturally. Like the Fairmount Water Works, these buildings are a testament to Philadelphia's municipal progress. On a fraction of the property, these buildings would not impede development of the site. They could be a focal point and an historic attraction.

It was disappointing to learn that the PHC staff supported designation but changed its opinion under the influence of Mayor Kenney. This is an opportunity to educate the Mayor about the needs and benefits of historic preservation. It is a chance for the Mayor to express his support for historic preservation and show that this World Heritage City can preserve its heritage. Philadelphia lags behind other cities in historic preservation. Please designate these buildings and show that Philadelphia can preserve its history.

Sincerely,

Nancy Pontone  
Philadelphia

(No subject)

Suzanne Hagner <suzannehagner@gmail.com>

Thu 4/8/2021 9:44 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Robertt Thomas,

I am writing to ask that you and your committee take action this Friday, April 9, 2021, to save 3101 W. Passyunk Ave. We have lost too many historic buildings in our City already. What makes Phila so unique is the history that is reflected in the old architecture.....

Thank you,

Suzanne Hagner