REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION  

15 JUNE 2022, 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 9:30 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:  

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<td>Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.</td>
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The meeting was held remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.  

The following staff members were present:  
  Jon Farnham, Executive Director  
  Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III  
  Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II  
  Nika Faulkner, Historical Commission Intern  
  Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner II  
  Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II  

The following persons attended the online meeting:  
  Howard Bilofsky  
  Linda D. Evans  
  Adrian Trevisan  
  Camilla MacKay  
  Renita Dubuque  
  Murray Spencer  
  Susan Wetherill  
  Theos McKinney  
  Suzanne Singletary  
  Kevin Block  
  Derek Duquette  
  Dennis Carlisle  
  Nancy Pontone  
  Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance  
  Allison Weiss, SoLo/Germantown Civic Association  
  Aaron Gross, Esq.
Tim Kerner
Carlyn Crawley
Sylvia Watts McKinney
Doug Mooney
Michaelle Bond
Lori Salganicoff, Chestnut Hill Conservancy
Maya Hogarth
Stacey Redmond
Brandon Washington
Vincent Thompson, Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson office
Steven Peitzman
Jessica Stow
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance
Sean Whalen
CJ Cunningham
Kaila Martinez
Tich McIlhenny
Claudia Sherrod
James McCrone
Amarynth Ruch
Rebecca Hubbard
Jay Farrell
Jacqueline Wiggins
David Traub
Madeline Shikomba
Cheryl Mobley-Stimpson
Faye Anderson
Keisha Usher-Martin
Jennifer Quinn
**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 700 Westview Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property is significant under Criterion A for its association with civil rights pioneers Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander and her husband Raymond Pace Alexander, who purchased the property in 1959. Among her many accomplishments, Sadie T.M. Alexander was the first African American to receive a Ph.D. in economics in the United States, the first woman to receive a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and the first Black woman to practice law in Pennsylvania. Raymond Pace Alexander gained prominence as a civil rights attorney, representing black defendants in high-profile cases including the Trenton Six, and went on to have a successful political and judicial career.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 700 Westview Avenue satisfies Criterion for Designation A.

**PRESENTERS:**
- Ms. Faulkner presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Howard Bilofsky represented the property owner.

**DISCUSSION:**
- Mr. Bilofsky stated that he supports the designation of his property. He explained that he is proud of the building’s history.
- Ms. Cooperman commented that the nomination was well-researched, and that the property is worthy of historic designation.
- Ms. Milroy agreed that the property is deserving of historic designation.
- Ms. Barucco agreed that the nomination was well-written and provides an excellent narrative of the legacy of the Alexanders.
- Mr. Laverty agreed that the Alexanders were highly significant. He asked why the nomination called it only the Sadie T.M. Alexander House.
  - Ms. Faulkner responded that Sadie lived in the house longer than Raymond and that the nomination sought to highlight Sadie’s legacy.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**
- Steven Peitzman commented in support of the nomination.
- Madeline Shikomba commented in support of the nomination.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**
The Committee on Historic Designation found that:
- Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander and her husband Raymond Pace Alexander purchased the property at 700 Westview Avenue in 1959.
- Among her many accomplishments, Sadie T.M. Alexander was the first African American to receive a Ph.D. in economics in the United States, the first woman to
receive a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and the first Black woman to practice law in Pennsylvania.

- Raymond Pace Alexander gained prominence as a civil rights attorney and went on to have a successful political and judicial career.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property is significant under Criterion A for its association with civil rights pioneers Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander and her husband Raymond Pace Alexander.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 700 Westview Avenue satisfies Criterion for Designation A.

**ITEM: 700 Westview Ave**
**MOTION: Designate; Criterion A**
**MOVED BY: Milroy**
**SECONDED BY: Laverty**

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**ADDRESS: 1901 W OXFORD ST**
Name of Resource: Sultan Jihad Ahmad Community Foundation
Proposed Action: Designation
Property Owner: Sultan Jihad Ahmad Community Foundation
Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** The City of Philadelphia constructed the building at 1901 W. Oxford Street as a police station in 1908. In 1964, the Reverend Leon Sullivan, a civil rights leader, converted the building for use as the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC). The nomination argues that the property satisfies Criterion A, owing to its role in the development of North Philadelphia during the Great Migration in the early twentieth century, and for its association with nationally significant figures like the Reverend Sullivan, President Lyndon B. Johnson, and Senator Robert F. Kennedy. The nomination contends that the building is a fine example of the Colonial Revival Style, satisfying Criteria C and D. The nomination argues that the property satisfies Criterion E, owing to its association with prominent black architect Walter R. Livingston, Jr., who renovated the building for the OIC. Finally, the nomination claims the property satisfies Criterion J, as the founding location of the Reverend Sullivan’s OIC, which played a central role in the civil rights movement.
movement. The proposed period of significance is 1908 to 1970, from the date of construction to the moment when the Opportunities Industrial Center vacated the building.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the building at 1901 W Oxford Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:19:55

**PRESENTERS:**
- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Patrick Grossi and Derek Duquette represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

**DISCUSSION:**
- Ms. Milroy asked about the original architect and requested that it be added to the nomination if known. She questioned the style being referred to as Colonial Revival.
- Mr. Laverty agreed that this is not solely a Colonial Revival building. He stated that the nomination was well-researched and well-written and supported the nomination. He questioned the assertion that the building’s architecture was meant to frighten.
- Ms. Cooperman agreed that the style of the building is difficult to define, but that it is still significant under Criteria for Designation C and D.
- Ms. Cooperman requested that the author put the argument for designation first in the nomination so that the reader does not have to hunt for it.
- Ms. Cooperman suggested that additional information about Walter R. Livingston be provided in the nomination.
- Committee members agreed that Reverend Leon Sullivan was highly significant.
- Ms. Barucco suggested removing Criterion for Designation D.
  - Ms. Milroy agreed that the style cited in the nomination makes this difficult but that the Committee may want to be flexible.
  - Ms. Cooperman commented in support of keeping both Criteria C and D.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**
- David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, described the building and commented in support of the nomination.
- Jacqueline Wiggins commented in support of the nomination.
- Linda Evans commented in support of the nomination and explained that she grew up across the street when this building was used as a police station.
- Claudia Sherrod commented in support of the nomination.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**
The Committee on Historic Designation found that:
- The City of Philadelphia constructed the building at 1901 W. Oxford Street as a police station in 1908.
- In 1964, the Reverend Leon Sullivan, a civil rights leader, converted the building for use as the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC).

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:
- The property is associated with nationally significant figures like the Reverend Sullivan, President Lyndon B. Johnson, and Senator Robert F. Kennedy, satisfying Criterion A.
• The nomination contends that the building is a fine example of the Colonial Revival style, satisfying Criteria C and D; however, the building is not an example of solely Colonial Revival style.
• The property is associated with prominent black architect Walter R. Livingston, Jr., who renovated the building for the OIC, satisfying Criterion E.
• The property is the founding location of the Reverend Sullivan’s OIC, which played a central role in the civil rights movement, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1901 W Oxford Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J.

ITEM: 1901 W Oxford St
MOTION: Designate; Criteria A, C, D, E, and J
MOVED BY: Laverty
SECONDED BY: Miller

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ADDRESS: 4500 AND 4506 TYSON AVE
Name of Resource: Disston Memorial Presbyterian Church
Proposed Action: Designation
Property Owner: Tyson PA LLC
Nominator: Tacony Community Development Corporation
Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 4500 and 4506 Tyson Avenue, historically known as the Disston Memorial Presbyterian Church, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The properties include the Church, Parish Hall, Sunday School, and Garage buildings. Construction commenced in 1885 with the Church. The Parish Hall was added in 1908, owing to the growth of the congregation. The additions of the Sunday School and Garage buildings from 1925 to 1927 completed the church complex.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century through the mid twentieth century, the church property served as a social hub for Tacony's Presbyterian community and the origin for dozens of clubs and organizations that were part of the development of Northeast Philadelphia. The nomination maintains that the Disston Memorial Presbyterian Church is representative of the social and cultural community in Tacony, as well as the Disston family's strong influence over neighborhood development, satisfying Criterion J.
The nomination contends that the Church building is the work of prominent architect Edwin F. Durang, satisfying Criterion E. More than 200 buildings in the Philadelphia area have been attributed to Durang, most notably churches and institutions for Roman Catholics. Durang, who had a relationship with Mary Disston, designed the Church, which was constructed in memory of Henry and Mary Disston’s late daughter, Mary Disston Gandy.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 4500 and 4506 Tyson Avenue satisfy Criteria for Designation E and J.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:47:56

**PRESENTERS:**
- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Nominator Amarynth Ruch represented the nomination.
- Attorney Aaron Gross represented the property owner, David Damaghi.

**DISCUSSION:**
- Mr. Gross stated that his client is excited to be a partner in the community and owns many other properties which are primarily institutional or industrial buildings, including other church buildings. He explained that his client purchased St. Leo’s Church in Philadelphia shortly before it was tragically destroyed by a fire. He stated that he was unaware that the nominator was the Tacony Community Development Corporation (CDC). He stated that his client does not demolish or develop his properties in the classical sense, but rather purchases buildings in poor condition and finds unique uses for them. He stated that his client believes the properties should remain and be part of the community, and that he owns other properties which are already designated as historic. He asked to meet with the Tacony CDC and the Historical Commission’s staff to understand why and how the nomination came about, and that they could meet on site to show what has been done to improve the property. He stated that he would like to have that dialogue in the next few weeks.
  - Ms. Cooperman noted a recent staffing turnover at the Tacony CDC. She explained that designation of the property would only provide jurisdiction over exterior work to the buildings. She explained that the vast majority of building permit applications are processed by the Historical Commission’s staff, and only a small number of permit applications are referred to the Historical Commission and its advisory Architectural Committee for reviews at public meetings.
  - Mr. Farnham reminded everyone that this review is of the nomination itself and that this Committee makes a non-binding recommendation to the Historical Commission regarding whether the property meets Criteria for Designation. He noted that the review by the Historical Commission could be postponed to a later date should the owner need additional time after meeting with the nominator and the Historical Commission’s staff.
  - Ms. Ruch responded that the Tacony CDC would be pleased to discuss the property and to visit the site.
- Ms. Ruch noted that the church is deeply rooted in the community and the Disston family had a significant impact on the community and industry nationwide.
- Ms. Miller commented that she finds these kinds of nominations to be incredibly interesting.
Ms. Cooperman commented that she spent a lot of time working on the National Register of Historic Places nomination for Tacony, and that this property has a key institutional presence in the community and the National Register Historic District. She stated that she did not have record while working on the National Register nomination that the property was designed by Edwin Durang, which adds additional significance.

Mr. Laverty commented that he was surprised that this was designed by Edwin Durang, since the majority of Durang’s churches were Roman Catholic, but it may be owing to a family connection with the Disstons.

Ms. Milroy agreed that this was a thorough nomination for an important complex in the neighborhood and beyond.

Ms. Barucco stated that the Disston family’s influence cannot be overstated.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
• None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:
The Committee on Historic Designation found that:
• The properties include the Church, Parish Hall, Sunday School, and Garage buildings. Construction commenced in 1885 with the Church. The Parish Hall was added in 1908, owing to the growth of the congregation. The additions of the Sunday School and Garage buildings from 1925 to 1927 completed the church complex.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:
• The church building is the work of prominent architect Edwin F. Durang, satisfying Criterion E.
• The Disston Memorial Presbyterian Church is representative of the social and cultural community in Tacony, as well as the Disston family’s strong influence over neighborhood development, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 4500 and 4506 Tyson Avenue satisfy Criteria for Designation E and J.

ITEM: 4500 and 4506 Tyson Ave
MOTION: Designate; Criteria E and J
MOVED BY: Barucco
SECONDED BY: Laverty

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ADDRESS: 2852-56 FRANKFORD AVE
Name of Resource: Ioska Tribe, No. 379, Improved Order of Red Men
Proposed Action: Designation
Property Owner: 2850 Frankford LLC
Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia
Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2852-56 Frankford Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property, designed by architect Carl F. Otto and constructed in 1922, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, H, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that the multi-purpose “store and lodge” or “store and hall” building, designed with a large second-floor hall to serve a fraternal organization that was subsidized by ground-floor commercial tenants, was a common building type in Philadelphia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Built for a “tribe” of the Improved Order of Red Men, a national fraternal organization, the building served the local Kensington community during its heyday as a prosperous working-class neighborhood at a time when fraternal and masonic institutions were central to the cultural and social lives of men in the United States. Under Criterion H, the nomination argues that the signage and iconography of the primary elevation is an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood that speaks to the cultural and social practices of the Improved Order of Red Men, a predominantly white organization that appropriated aspects of Native American culture.

The nomination raises important questions about whether a building that housed an organization that appropriated and exploited aspects of Native American culture in ways that are undeniably racist should be designated as historic. Would the designation of this building perpetuate the racism represented by the fraternal organization and the building itself, explicitly in its exterior ornament? Would a designation reopen old wounds and reinforce racist stereotypes? Or would designation create a space in which to interpret the past and examine the present including systemic racism? Such questions can only be answered in dialogue with the communities involved and impacted.

The nomination would benefit from proofreading and editing. For example, the sentence from page 14, included below, should be rewritten. The “seizure” was neither “idealized” nor “misinterpreted.” The members of the fraternal organization idealized and misinterpreted Native American culture when they seized it.

This same signage and iconography also signify the cultural appropriation of indigenous people, specifically an idealized and misinterpreted seizure of Native American identity and heritage, as seen through the eyes of white men during the duration of the organization’s history from ca.1813 to the present.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2852-56 Frankford Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, H, and J, without implying that the property should be designated. The staff recommends that the Historical Commission and its advisory Committee on Historic Designation engage in a discussion with all interested parties about the cultural misappropriations at the foundation of this fraternal organization before deciding whether designating this property would benefit the public.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:09:50
PRESENTERS:
- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner. Ms. DiPasquale noted that the Historical Commission’s staff has not been contacted by the property owner.

DISCUSSION:
- Ms. Milroy commented that the history presented in the nomination contains factual errors about the origin of fraternal organizations in America and needs correction.
- Ms. Cooperman opined that the issue with this building is the problem of association. Buildings are objects, she explained; they do not actually do anything themselves, people do, so our understanding of buildings is associative. Given the offensive iconography on this building, there is no way to disassociate it with the organization that built it and its racist underpinnings. If the building did not have the iconography and were just a hall used by a community in general with a commercial unit on the first floor, it might be able to disassociate it from the specific organization and be purely representative of an important building type and community building. She noted that it is undeniable that fraternal organizations were important in their respective communities, but that the racist connection is so visually present on this building that she finds it hard to recommend in favor of designation.
- Ms. Milroy opined that the nomination had the opportunity to explore the significance of the building to the neighborhood beyond the association with the Improved Order of Red Men but chose to put emphasis on the first two years of the building, when the IORM occupied it. She noted that, if it was an important part of the community, there should be more information in the nomination. She commented that, under Criterion H, the nomination specifically says that the signage and iconography are significant, and therefore the nomination is basically celebrating those aspects on the exterior. She noted that there are other fraternal organizations that have more significant stories, less overt racism, and are better examples of the building type. She agreed with Ms. Cooperman that this building and nomination are problematic on several levels and she would have a hard time supporting designation.
- Ms. Barucco agreed. She opined that the nomination is very imbalanced in its approach to the site’s significance. She noted that it mentions that various Hebrew schools also used it, and that further exploration of the history beyond the association with the IORM would have been interesting, and that perhaps the IORM iconography would have been much less important if the nomination was written differently.
- Ms. Milroy commented that the iconography on the façade is right there for all to see.
- Mr. Laverty recalled when the Committee was given the task of determining whether to add the Angelo Bruno house to the Philadelphia Register. He noted that there is a certain honor ascribed to a site added to the Register, and that while no story is untainted, he is not comfortable supporting designation of this building.
- The Committee discussed the recommendation process and options for making a recommendation.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that the Committee has a great deal of discretion and can do what it thinks is best.
- Committee members and Mr. Farnham expressed that it would be beneficial to hear from additional parties, including the nominators, members of the recognized Native American tribes, and near neighbors.
Ms. Miller noted that the absence of the Keeping Society and near neighbors is conspicuous. She opined that if they were that concerned about a resource, they should be here to speak on it. She noted that the Keeping Society and the nomination were not a solo effort. She noted that the nomination was the chance to make the case for the significance of the building, and she would only be interested in hearing the counterpoint.

Committee members and the staff noted the absence of any representatives of the Keeping Society. Multiple representatives typically attend every meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation, but none is here today to explain how and why this property was nominated.

- Ms. Barucco noted that the building seems to meet the Criteria, but questioned whether it merits designation, and whether its designation would satisfy a public purpose.
- Ms. Faulkner commented that she is half Native American and a registered member of the Lake Superior Ojibwe. She opined that situations like this one provide opportunities for interpretation, but designation does not guarantee it. She commented that the stereotypical iconography is a bit of an “eye-roller” to her. She noted that she is not sure she would support designation, because there is no guarantee that the building will be appropriately interpreted.
- Committee members discussed the importance of not erasing negative history, but about interpreting it where possible.
  - Ms. Cooperman recalled people arguing for the demolition of Eastern State Penitentiary owing to its troubling history, and the importance of remembering and confronting difficult histories. She questioned whether anyone overcome these past injuries that still live in the present, and whether that can be done by repurposing a building. She opined that it would be difficult to do so in this particular case.
  - Ms. Barucco agreed, noting that there may have been more of a chance if the nomination had been written differently, but the nomination as it was written made no attempt to overcome the negativity.
- Ms. Milroy questioned whether the Committee should reject the nomination or the building, reiterating that there is an honor bestowed by designation that she does not feel is warranted, given the way the building advertises its racism.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- David Traub of Save our Sites supported the nomination. He described the building and stated that the building is architecturally exquisite, with a tall second floor over a short first floor giving it architectural interest and distinction, nobility and elegance. He opined that it is worthy of designation under Criterion H.
- Steven Peitzman commented that the first nomination he contributed to was for the Odd Fellows building in East Falls, for which he did much reading about fraternal organizations in America. He noted that fraternal organizations and halls were prevalent throughout the country and an important part of the life of men in the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries, and they do represent an important part of most neighborhoods. He also noted that many of them had a fanciful or childish focus on Native Americans.
- Allison Weiss supported the nomination.
- Mr. Farnham commented that the staff received a letter from the Philadelphia Archaeological Forum that suggested that Native American communities be consulted, so the staff reached out to three recognized tribes that participate in the
Section 106 process. He noted that the designation decision will ultimately be made at the Historical Commission meeting, and that the nomination raises important questions as to whether designating would perpetuate the racism built into the building and the foundation of the organization, reopen old wounds, or create an opportunity for discussion and better understanding of the racist nature of the fraternal group.

- Kevin Block questioned whether it is possible to preserve the building as a whole without including iconography on the building.
- Madeline Shikomba commented that the discussion of the negative aspects behind the iconography may never actually come out; instead, designation would appear to celebrate the iconography on the building as a positive thing.
- Doug Mooney thanked the staff for reaching out to members of the Native American community and asked which tribes were notified.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that the staff contacted representatives identified as the people who speak for the communities officially in Section 106 preservation matters of the Delaware Tribe, Delaware Nations, and Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma.
- Lori Salganicoff noted that there has been lots of discussion about what to do with difficult histories throughout the country. She opined that we have landed in a time when we feel we know better and want to do something different but that to erase things that are uncomfortable and difficult evaporates the opportunity to have the discussion about them. She argued that if we take down buildings and monuments, we lose the opportunity to learn from them. However, she continued, we should not let that troubling history go unspoken, and that instead it provides a good opportunity for interpretation, which should be used to message where we believe we should be as a society.
- Keisha Usher-Martin opined that, while this may be a learning opportunity, there are other ways to learn from things like this than designating them as historic. She suggested that she would like to hear the feelings of Native Americans and that consideration should be given to the wound it created in the people who came before and for Native children in the future.
- Jacqueline Wiggins commented that one cannot make distinctions between the pain and the reality. She opined that the iconography on this building is reminiscent of Confederate flags and statues and expressed hope that the Committee would think thoughtfully and clearly about this nomination.
- Ms. Cooperman noted that this is not the end point of the nomination. The Committee will provide a non-binding recommendation, and there will be another opportunity for public comment. She stated that she looks forward to a robust discussion at the Historical Commission meeting.

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

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- Fraternal organizations played a significant role in the lives of many Americans from the late eighteenth through early to mid-twentieth centuries.
- The “store and hall” or “store and lodge” building type was prevalent during the period of significance.
- The nomination focuses almost exclusively on the period in which the Improved Order of Red Men utilized the building.
- The iconography on 2852-56 Frankford Avenue is blatantly racist and highly visible, making it impossible to disassociate the building from its challenging history.
It is important not to erase uncomfortable or challenging history, but to interpret it properly. The opportunity to interpret and discuss the history of this organization and the stereotypes and racism inherent in the iconography of the building would be challenging, particularly since it is privately owned.

Designation imbues a level of honor on a building, and the property at 2852-56 Frankford Avenue is not worthy of that honor.

The absence of the nominators or members of the community who supposedly supported the nomination is conspicuous.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination satisfies Criteria for Designation A, H, and J, but the property at 2852-56 Frankford Avenue should not be designated as historic.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2852-56 Frankford Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, H, and J, but that there is no evidence presented in the nomination that a designation of this property serves a public purpose.

**ITEM:** 2852-56 Frankford Ave
**MOTION:** Satisfies Criteria A, H, and J; Decline to designate
**MOVED BY:** Barucco
**SECONDED BY:** Milroy

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**ADDRESS:** 8720 GERMANTOWN AVE
**Name of Resource:** The Yellowstone
**Proposed Action:** Designation
**Property Owner:** Lawrence A. & Mary Williams Walsh
**Nominator:** Chestnut Hill Conservancy
**Staff Contact:** Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 8720 Germantown Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property, which includes three freestanding buildings (the main house, known as The Yellowstone; a stone and frame carriage house; and a frame cottage), satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and E. Under Criterion A, the nomination explains that The Yellowstone was the original meeting place of the Chestnut Hill Village Improvement Association, an entity pivotal in the development of the Chestnut Hill neighborhood during the Progressive era. Under Criterion D, the nomination asserts that the property reflects the growing interest in the Colonial ...
Revival style after the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Georgian Revival subtype of the Colonial Revival. Designed by Theophilus P. Chandler, Jr., a leading architect in Philadelphia during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the property is further significant under Criterion E.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 8720 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and E. The staff notes that page 5 of the nomination asserts that the earliest documentation of the carriage house is the 1895 Bromley Atlas, and that the cottage was built and first occupied at some point prior to 1919; however, the stone and frame carriage house and a frame building in the location of the cottage are both also evident on the 1889 and 1911 G.W. Bromley atlases.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 02:06:50

**PRESENTERS:**
- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Lori Salganicoff of the Chestnut Hill Conservancy represented the nomination.
- Attorney Sean Whalen represented the property owner.

**DISCUSSION:**
- Ms. Salganicoff noted that the property, which features an important T.P. Chandler building, is considered Significant in the Chestnut Hill National Register Historic District, and should have been designated long ago. She opined that the current owners, the Walshes, are excellent stewards of the property, but are selling the property, and there is no way to guarantee that a future owner will treat it as carefully without designation. She noted that she appreciates the staff’s clarification of the approximate dates of the carriage house and cottage.
- Mr. Whalen explained that the owners have no objection to the designation of the main house, but object to the inclusion of the cottage as a contributing building to the historic property. He noted that it is an outbuilding with modern siding and is not readily visible from the street. He noted that the owners would like additional time to discuss the inclusion of the outbuildings with Ms. Salganicoff and the Historical Commission’s staff.
- Ms. Salganicoff commented that the property includes subdividable, developable land that is connected to the outbuildings in the back and one of the concerns about the Yellowstone is what could be constructed in the future. She noted that designation would provide oversight by the Historical Commission leading to careful consideration of future development plans.
  - Ms. Cooperman responded that potential future subdivision and new construction is not something the Committee has purview over.
  - Ms. Salganicoff opined that it is problematic to separate out one building from the larger parcel.
  - Mr. Whalen responded that he understands Ms. Salganicoff’s concerns but noted that there is no pending application or intent to subdivide the property at this time. Given that the property is already under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission, he continued, if the property were now to be subdivided, the designation would carry to the subdivided parcel as well. He explained that he understands that the full tax parcel would be covered by the designation, but that the owners wish for only the main house to be considered historic for the purposes of designation.
Ms. Cooperman noted that, if the owners wish to postpone the review of the nomination by the Historical Commission, they can make that request, but that the nomination is on today’s agenda, and the Committee on Historic Designation will provide a non-binding recommendation as to the merits of the nomination.

- Ms. Milroy commented that it is fun to be able to discuss a messuage, which is defined as a dwelling house with outbuildings and land assigned to its use.
- Ms. Cooperman noted that the Commission has designated many secondary structures as contributing to an overall property, especially those that retain historic elements such as windows and bargeboards, as such are present on the cottage.
- Ms. Barucco opined that it is great to see a full site intact with outbuildings, all of which appear to retain integrity and relay their significance in that regard.
- Ms. Barucco noted her desire for more information on the property as a whole, commenting that the nomination primarily focused on main house.
  - Ms. Milroy agreed, noting that, as a landscape historian, she wondered whether there were originally planned gardens and how old some of the trees are.
  - Ms. Cooperman noted that the Historical Commission cannot designate trees.
- Ms. Barucco suggested that the nominator and owner address the Historical Commission as to whether the outbuildings should be included as contributing to the designation.
- Ms. Milroy clarified that it was not Col. Samuel Goodman who received a Congressional Medal of Honor, as written in the nomination, but rather his brother.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:
The Committee on Historic Designation found that:
- The property at 8720 Germantown Avenue features three historic buildings: the main house known as The Yellowstone, whose current appearance was designed by T.P. Chandler; a stone and frame carriage house; and a frame cottage.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:
- The property was the original meeting place of the Chestnut Hill Village Improvement Association, an entity pivotal in the development of the Chestnut Hill neighborhood during the Progressive era, satisfying Criterion A.
- The property reflects the growing interest in the Colonial Revival style after the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Georgian Revival subtype of the Colonial Revival, satisfying Criterion D.
- Designed by Theophilus P. Chandler, Jr., a leading architect in Philadelphia during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the property is further significant under Criterion E.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 8720 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and E, with clarifications of the outbuilding dates based on the staff recommendation, and removal of the Congressional Medal of Honor discussion in the nomination.
ITEM: 8720 Germantown Ave
MOTION: Designate; Criteria A, D, E, with revisions
MOVED BY: Barucco
SECONDED BY: Milroy

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ADDRESS: 1102 MASTER ST
Name of Resource: Sister Rosetta Tharpe House
Proposed Action: Designation
Property Owner: Mildred G. McCollum
Nominator: Historical Commission staff
Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1102 Master Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property, the residence of Sister Rosetta Tharpe from 1962 to 1973, is historically significant and satisfies Criterion for Designation A. Known as the "Godmother of Rock 'n Roll" and the "Original Soul Sister," Sister Rosetta Tharpe was a gospel singer, instrumentalist, and songwriter who became a recording and performing star in the late 1930s. She was one of gospel music's first superstars, the first gospel performer to record for a major record label, and an early crossover from gospel to secular music. She sang spiritual songs in a raucous rhythm-and-blues musical style and played the electric guitar in a loud, distorted, groundbreaking way that set the stage for the emergence of rock and roll in the early 1950s. Sister Rosetta Tharpe significantly influenced later popular music, especially rock and roll, as acknowledged by Bob Dylan, Little Richard, Elvis Presley, and Johnny Cash. Her guitar playing technique had a profound influence on the development of British blues in the 1960s. In particular, Sister Rosetta Tharpe’s guitar playing on a European tour with blues legend Muddy Waters in 1964, specifically a performance in Manchester, England on May 7, 1964, has been cited as especially influential by prominent British guitarists Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Keith Richards. Sister Rosetta Tharpe was a key figure in the development of rock and roll, which became the dominant musical form and means of popular cultural expression in English speaking and other countries in the 1950s and 60s and continues to this day.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at the Sister Rosetta Tharpe House, 1102 Master Street, satisfies Criterion for Designation A.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:25:30
PRESENTERS:
- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:
- Mr. Farnham showed a short video of Sister Rosetta Tharpe performing in England in 1964, while she resided at the property at 1102 Master Street.
- Ms. Barucco stated that Sister Rosetta Tharpe is incredibly important in music history. She stated that she especially enjoyed the fact that two homes of significant Black women are being considered for historic designation at today’s meeting.
- Ms. Milroy stated that she enjoyed listening to Sister Rosetta Tharpe’s music while reading the nomination.
- Mr. Laverty noted that two properties considered at this meeting, this one and the one on W. Oxford Street, provide very interesting views into the history of North Philadelphia. He stated that the property is worthy of designation.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:
The Committee on Historic Designation found that:
- The property was the residence of Sister Rosetta Tharpe from 1962 to 1973.
- Known as the "Godmother of Rock 'n Roll" and the "Original Soul Sister," Sister Rosetta Tharpe was a gospel singer, instrumentalist, and songwriter who became a recording and performing star in the late 1930s.
- Sister Rosetta Tharpe was one of gospel music’s first superstars, the first gospel performer to record for a major record label, and an early crossover from gospel to secular music.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:
- The nomination demonstrates that the property at 1102 Master Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A, for its association with Sister Rosetta Tharpe.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1102 Master Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A.
ITEM: 1102 Master St  
MOTION: Designate; Criterion A  
MOVED BY: Barucco  
SECONDED BY: Milroy

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CHRISTIAN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Proposed Action: Designation  
Property Owner: Various  
Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia  
Number of Properties: 154  
Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate a historic district that consists of 154 properties on Christian Street between S. Broad Street and S. 20th Street in the Graduate Hospital neighborhood of Philadelphia. The nomination contends that the Christian Street Historic District is significant under Criteria for Designation A, C, and J. The period of significance begins in 1860 and ends in 1945, recognizing three different phases in the area’s development. Beginning in 1860 through about 1900, this was a predominantly Irish neighborhood known as St. Charles Parish. The row houses constructed in the early period of the neighborhood’s development between 1860 and 1890 reflect the environment in an era characterized by two distinct architectural styles: the Italianate and the Néo-Grec styles, satisfying Criterion C. The neighborhood underwent demographic transition between 1900 and 1910 and was associated with Philadelphia’s Black elite until about 1945. Christian Street was both a residential neighborhood for Black professionals and a streetcar thoroughfare lined with prominent Black institutions, including churches, a public school, a Y.M.C.A., a post office, fraternal and political club houses, a hair salon, and a pharmacy, all there to serve the immediate community, satisfying Criterion J. The individuals who lived and worked here included prominent Black pastors, doctors, teachers, architects, contractors, pharmacists, politicians, small business owners, a postal superintendent, and a funeral director, satisfying Criterion A. This nomination is a direct result of public concern about demolitions in 2020 on Christian Street west of Broad Street. City Council passed demolition moratorium legislation in 2021 which allowed for the Preservation Alliance and South of South Neighbors Association to collaborate on the nomination.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Christian Street Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:39:45
PRESENTERS:
- Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and Linda Evans of South of South Neighbors Association represented the nomination.
- Ryan Allis represented the property at 1615 Christian Street. Murray Spencer represented the property at 1725 Christian Street.

DISCUSSION:
- Mr. Grossi explained that the nomination was a collaborative process with the Preservation Alliance, South of South Neighbors Association, Councilmember Johnson’s office, and the Historical Commission’s staff. He stated that the nomination is merely a piece of a complex tapestry and is not intended to tell the whole story of the Black experience in Philadelphia.
- Ms. Evans commented in support as a representative from the South of South Neighbors Association and as a resident of the 1600 block of Christian Street. She thanked her neighbors, South of South Neighbors Association, Inga Saffron, Councilmember Johnson and his staff, the Preservation Alliance, and the Historical Commission’s staff for coming together in response to recent demolitions on this street. She stated that nine buildings have been demolished along Christian Street in the last five years, and five of those were affordable housing where seniors lived. She stated that the new construction is regretfully expensive. She concluded that the area is rich in Black history.
- Ryan Allis, owner of 1615 Christian Street, opposed the designation. He stated that he had been told the story of Doctors Row when he purchased the property but found that the nomination did not match the narrative he was told. He stated that he is opposed to the name “Doctors Row” and opposed to the inclusion of the word “Black” owing to there being no African American physicians on several of the blocks, and how “Black” was seemingly added later and that no one called it that historically. He stated that the architecture of his property is not grand. He stated that he does not want restrictions on what he can do with his windows. He stated that there are very few historic markers in this area, and that it feels like the blocks got singled out by a misnomer.
  - Ms. Cooperman clarified that the name of the proposed district as provided on the nomination form is the Christian Street Historic District.
- Murray Spencer, owner of 1725 Christian Street, supported the designation. He stated that there was a lot of demolition all at once owing to a change in the code, which allowed for larger buildings on the lots that spanned street to street at the front and rear. He stated that he supports the name Christian Street Historic District, and that signage can help pedestrians to know that the area has significance associated with Black history.
- Committee members noted that the name of the proposed district on the nomination form is the Christian Street Historic District, but that the title page and headers in the nomination include both Christian Street Historic District and Black Doctors Row.
- Ms. Barucco asked if the Committee should consider recommending a change to the name of the historic district. She noted that there has been much support from the community for including Black Doctors Row as part of the official name.
  - Ms. Cooperman acknowledged that it will not be possible to please everyone.
- Ms. Milroy stated that she does not doubt that this was known as Black Doctors Row, but that neighborhood names change over time, and so she would lean towards
keeping the name Christian Street Historic District. She explained that the official historic district name does not mean that Black Doctors Row will be lost. She asked for other precedents.

- Mr. Farnham responded that Automobile Row, which is a thematic historic district, has a name that is not as simple as the street on which it is located.

- Ms. Barucco reiterated that the title page for the nomination includes the Black Doctors Row name. She stated that this was a good nomination and a great story about cooperation amongst neighbors, the community, and the Councilmember. She stated that it is important to recognize this neighborhood’s history.

- Mr. Laverty agreed with Ms. Milroy about keeping a more general name for the historic district. He reiterated that the terminology of Black Doctors Row is within the nomination. He agreed that once the historic district is established, signage would go a long way in addressing the issue of conveying the history of Black Doctors Row. He stated that he would hate to see the designation process slowed down because of an issue of nomenclature.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Stacey Redmond, a former property owner on the 1700 block of Christian Street and current near neighbor, supported the designation. She explained that this was called Black Doctors Row historically owing to Mercy Hospital, one of the first African American hospitals in the state. She explained that Christian Street was home to many Black doctors who needed to be close to Mercy Hospital. She stated that this was an area historically where affluent African Americans could thrive. They owned the hospital, and they worked as doctors and nurses. Calling this Black Doctors Row gives credit to those doctors who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and could live here on Christian Street. She asked the Committee to not push aside the historic landmark and name. She stated that this area gave rise to affluent African Americans of not only South Philadelphia but of the whole city and throughout the country. She concluded that the area exemplifies the struggle and advancement of African Americans.

- Ms. Cooperman commented that there is always more history to be uncovered, and that the Committee does not want to exclude any of the history of the district.

- Faye Anderson, director of All That Philly Jazz, opposed the designation. She read her letter of public comment into the record, which was also provided to the Committee members and public in advance of the meeting. She stated that she gives walking tours of South Philadelphia, and no one has ever asked her about Christian Street. She accused the Historical Commission’s staff of wrongdoing in its review of eligibility of the proposed district and noted that she has submitted a complaint to the Office of the Inspector General. She stated that the Christian Street “elite” had access to opportunities which were denied to others with darker skin tones.

- Vincent Thompson, Communications Director for Councilmember Johnson, read Councilmember Johnson’s letter of support into the record, which explained how the Councilmember Johnson was responsible for the demolition moratorium to allow time for the nomination to be prepared. He stated that the district has been known forever to its residents as Doctors Row, and Black was implied. He stated that the Councilmember would be willing to discuss naming and signage. He stated that the Councilmember is interested in more historic designations based on Black history in the 2nd District.

- Madeline Shikomba commented in support of the designation. She stated that she would like to see the district acknowledge the significance of Black history, and the
background of the Black residents does not matter. It represents positivity regardless. She suggested the addition of either African American or Black to the name of Christian Street Historic District.

- Brandon Washington, a resident of the area, commented in support of the designation. He stated that his grandfather migrated here during the Great Migration and that the area was always called Black Doctors Row. He stated that there is very little historic information specific to Black Doctors Row because it was not written about. He suggested that the name of the historic district should emphasize Black history.

- Keisha Usher-Martin, a resident of the area, commented in support of the designation. She stated that it is important to keep African American in the name to identify the significance of the district. She stated that it is important as a mother of three Black children that they can walk around the neighborhood and see these important markers which explain why things are significant. She summarized that it brings a sense of pride and honor.

- Cheryl Mobley-Stimpson commented in support of the designation. She stated that she grew up hearing stories about Black Doctors Row. She stated that this discussion underscores the need for the Black community to write its own history. She stated that history is interpreted in many different ways, but that several generations have known this area as Black Doctors Row. She noted that a doctoral degree is not limited to a medical doctor, but also Juris Doctor, honorary doctorate, and Doctor of Philosophy. She explained Marian Anderson’s association with this area, in addition to the Rev. Tindley and Julian Abele.

  - Ms. Cooperman encouraged Ms. Mobley-Stimpson to provide her comments in writing in advance of the Historical Commission meeting, owing to the wealth of knowledge she was providing but for which the Committee had to limit the amount of time for public comment.

- Claudia Sherrod, a resident of the area, commented in support of the designation. She stated that she became acquainted with Doctors Row as a young girl and knew it as such. She stated that it deserves to be designated as historic, to recognize an African American community which inspired those who came after.

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

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The period of significance begins in 1860 and ends in 1945, recognizing three different phases in the area’s development. Beginning in 1860 through about 1900, this was a predominantly Irish neighborhood known as St. Charles Parish. The neighborhood underwent demographic transition between 1900 and 1910 and was then associated with Philadelphia’s Black elite until about 1945.

- The name of the historic district as provided on the nomination form is the Christian Street Historic District. The Historical Commission has the latitude to change or amend this name when it reviews the nomination at its upcoming 8 July 2022 meeting.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The individuals who lived and worked here during the period of significance included prominent Black pastors, doctors, teachers, architects, contractors, pharmacists, politicians, small business owners, a postal superintendent, and a funeral director, satisfying Criterion A.
The row houses constructed in the early period of the neighborhood’s development between 1860 and 1890 reflect the environment in an era characterized by two distinct architectural styles: the Italianate and the Néo-Grec styles, satisfying Criterion C.

Christian Street was both a residential neighborhood for Black professionals and a streetcar thoroughfare lined with prominent Black institutions, including churches, a public school, a Y.M.C.A., a post office, fraternal and political club houses, a hair salon, and a pharmacy, all there to serve the immediate community, satisfying Criterion J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the Christian Street Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and J.

**ITEM:** Christian Street Historic District  
**MOTION:** Designate; Criteria A, C, J  
**MOVED BY:** Barucco  
**SECONDED BY:** Laverty

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<td>Debbie Miller</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Milroy</td>
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**ADJOURNMENT**  
The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 1:21 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:
   (a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;  
   (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;  
   (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
(e) 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;
(f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;
(g) 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;
(h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
(i) 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.