

ACTIVITIES OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF DECEMBER 2022

DESIGN REVIEW

Design review continues to be the staff's primary task, with all staff members collaborating on the processing of building permit applications. The permit reporting utility in eCLIPSE shows that 188 permit applications were approved for historically designated properties in December 2022. The staff returned 25 additional permit applications in eCLIPSE to applicants with requests for revisions and/or additional information. The Historical Commission staff conducted an additional 42 detail reviews outside of eCLIPSE.

DESIGNATION

Designation tasks occupy much of the staff's time. Nearly all staff time not devoted to design review is dedicated to designation-related tasks.

The reviews of the following nominations have been continued by the staff:

Address	Name	Continued From	Continued To	Total Duration
1520-22 Chestnut St	SS Kresge Store	11/30/2022	1/18/2023	1 month
1424-26 Chestnut St	Main Sales Floor	1/13/2023	3/10/2023	2 months
12965 Townsend Rd	Byberry Store	1/18/2023	3/15/2023	2 months
1611 Walnut St	Hollinger Building	6/15/2022	6/1/2023	12 months
401-09 N 65th St	St. Donato's	1/13/2023	7/14/2023	6 months

The staff administered the reviews of designation matters at the 9 December 2022 meeting of the Historical Commission. At that meeting, the Historical Commission took the following actions on designation matters:

- Individually designated one property: 914-26 Christian St, the former St. Paul's Roman Catholic Parochial School; and,
- Continued the review of two nominations: 775 S. Chris Columbus Blvd, Piers 38 and 40 South, to the March 2023 Committee on Historic Designation meeting; and 3401 Solly Ave, Stonyhurst, to the March 2023 Committee on Historic Designation meeting.

The Committee on Historic Designation did not meet in December 2022.

The Historical Commission's staff rejected no nominations as incorrect and incomplete in December 2022.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

The staff is administering the review of a financial hardship application for 156 W. School House Lane. The Committee on Financial Hardship meeting, which was scheduled for 25 August, 4 October, and 31 October 2022, has been postponed each time at the request of the applicant.

SURVEY

The initial project to install, configure, and test Arches for use as the survey data management platform was completed in 2020. Philadelphia's installation of Arches has been named PlatForm for the first map of the City of Philadelphia, which William Penn called a "Plat-Form." Arches is an open source, web- and geospatially based, customizable information system that was purpose-built by the Getty Conservation Institute and World Monuments Fund to inventory and manage immovable cultural heritage. Arches is the inventory and data management platform for

the City's comprehensive, citywide survey of historic resources. The consultant, Farallon Geographics of San Francisco, worked with the staff to design, customize, configure, and install Philadelphia's installation of Arches and continues to work with the staff on maintenance and upgrades. The Historical Commission received a \$25,000 CLG grant from the State Historic Preservation Office earlier this year to fund enhancements to Arches. An additional \$27,500 from the William Penn Foundation grant described below will also be expended on the project. The monies will fund upgrading Philadelphia's installation of Arches from Version 4 to Version 6 or 7; enhancements to the data collection capabilities, especially for nominators; the creation of additional resource models, customized structures that hold specific types of data; and preparing the system to be used by the general public. Mr. Farnham is working with the Arches consultants at Farallon Geographics to undertake the upgrades to the Arches installation. The work is being done under contracts held by the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation and the Mayor's Fund for Philadelphia.

The Department of Planning & Development received a grant of \$250,000 from the William Penn Foundation to develop and pilot a historic resource survey program. Martha Cross, the deputy director of the Division of Planning & Zoning, is leading the work. Shannon Garrison of the Historical Commission's staff is assisting her. The survey pilot project will explore ways to engage with populations and histories not currently reflected in the properties listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Through the project, Department of Planning and Development seeks to expand the traditional understanding of preservation to include a wider range of tools and more comprehensive understanding of cultural heritage. After funds were awarded, in February of 2020, Historical Commission and Department of Planning and Development staff took time to rethink the goals of the pilot project and survey, in the wake of the pandemic, the civil uprisings of 2020, and shifting values in the field of preservation. In February 2022, we hired a consultant team comprised of the The ROZ Group, Little Giant Creative and Partners for Sacred Places. The consultant team is working with the staff to develop a survey methodology that is community driven and can be implemented city-wide. The methodology will then be tested through a pilot survey project. The ultimate goal is a methodology that will ensure a more inclusive accounting of the city's diverse historic and cultural resources and set forth a sustainable plan for staff to conduct ongoing survey work. Consultants and city staff spent summer 2022 reaching out to various stakeholders and laying the groundwork for the public facing phase of the project. On October 13, 2022, the Historical Commission's staff and consultants hosted a town hall meeting at the Community College of Philadelphia as part of our Cultural Resources Survey outreach efforts. Approximately 50 people attended and participated in group conversation and activities related to documenting Philadelphia history and cultural traditions. On November 17, the Historical Commission's staff and consultants hosted a virtual town hall as part of our Cultural Resources Survey outreach efforts. Approximately 60 people attended. The project timeline is two years, with the pilot wrapping up in 2024.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCENTIVES

The Historical Commission's staff issued no zoning incentive letters in December 2022.

APPEALS

The following permit decisions are or were under appeal at the Board of License & Inspection Review (BLIR):

- 1435-41 Walnut Street
 - At its September 2021 meeting, the Historical Commission denied an application to enlarge window openings at 1435-41 Walnut Street. The property owner

appealed the decision to the BLIR. The Historical Commission submitted its official record to the BLIR on 3 December 2021. The BLIR scheduled a hearing for 14 December 2021 but then postponed it. The hearing was scheduled for 20 September 2022, but the appellant and the Law Department agreed to remand the matter to the Historical Commission for a second review, which will be conducted at an upcoming meeting of the Historical Commission.

The following appeals to the Court of Common Pleas and Commonwealth Court are in process:

- 156 W. School House Lane
 - The Historical Commission designated 156 W. School House Lane on 12 March 2021. The property owner, the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, has appealed the designation to the Court of Common Pleas. The Historical Commission's staff has assembled the record of the designation for submission to the Court. It was due on 5 July 2021, but the Court continued the case at the request of the appellant on 1 July 2021. The Commission's record was submitted 19 January 2022. The case has been continued as the Historical Commission considers a financial hardship and necessary in the public interest application.
- 401-09 N. 65th Street
 - Attorney Neil Sklaroff appealed the designation of 401-09 N. 65th Street, St. Donato's Roman Catholic Church to the Court of Common Pleas. The court remanded the matter to the Historical Commission and Committee of Historic Designation for a new review with the property owner present. Attorney Conor Larkin took over for Mr. Sklaroff. The new review was held at the 30 November 2022 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation and will be held at the 14 July 2023 meeting of the Historical Commission.
- Disston-Tacony Industrial Waterfront Historic District
 - Nearly all property owners in the recently designated Disston-Tacony Industrial Waterfront Historic District have appealed the designation to the Court of Common Pleas. The appellants and Law Department have agreed to have the matter remanded to the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission for new reviews. On 25 July 2022, the Court of Common Pleas issued an order rescinding the designation of the district and remanding the matter to the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission for a new consideration of the historic district. The new reviews have been scheduled for the 15 March 2023 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation and the 14 April 2023 meeting of the Historical Commission. The property owners participating in the appeal are listed below:
 - 5101R-49 Unruh Avenue
 - 5201 Unruh Avenue
 - 5223 Unruh Avenue
 - 5235-45 Unruh Avenue
 - 5247 Unruh Avenue
 - 6801 New State Road, Unit A
 - 6801 New State Road, Unit B
 - 6801 New State Road, Unit C
- 1424-26 Chestnut Street
 - The property owner of the recently designated Jacob Reed's Sons' Store interior has appealed the designation. The Law Department has agreed to have the court remand the nomination to the Historical Commission and Committee on Historic Designation for a de novo review. The new review was heard at the 30

November 2022 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation and will be heard at the 14 March 2023 meeting of the Historical Commission.

- 4501 Poplar Street
 - The property owner of the recently designated infirmary building at the former Stephen Smith Home has appealed the designation. The Court of Common Pleas has not yet scheduling order, so no dates for submitting the record or briefs or for holding oral arguments have been identified.

ENFORCEMENT

With the Law Department and Department of Licenses & Inspections, the staff is pursuing numerous enforcement cases for unpermitted work, non-compliant work, and failure to maintain in good repair.

UNSAFE AND IMMINENTLY DANGEROUS CASES

The staff is monitoring an Unsafe case at 201 S. 13th Street, the St. James, where some masonry façade material fell onto Chancellor Street in November 2022.

SECTION 106

Ms. Garrison is conducting federally mandated Section 106 reviews for the DHCD undertakings assisted by HUD. The Historical Commission is planning to assume all Section 106 reviews for the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) as part of a larger Department of Planning & Development effort to assume all responsibility for PHA's federal environmental reviews.

OFFICE

The City of Philadelphia closed all non-essential City offices in March 2020, owing to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Historical Commission's staff was assigned to work remotely from home. The Historical Commission's offices reopened on 1 February 2022; all in-person, in-office interaction with applicants are on an appointment-only basis. Appointments are being scheduled with an automated online software system. All public meetings are being held remotely at least through the fall of 2022. The Historical Commission's staff is currently splitting its time between in-office and remote work.

STAFFING

The Historical Commission has hired a new staff member, Dan Krasnoff, who will transfer from the Streets Department to the Historical Commission on 6 February 2023.

OTHER

The Historical Commission held its annual training session on 2 December 2022.