

425-49 Pine Street
Public comment received
by the Historical Commission

From: [Lamont, Keith](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Cc: tplamont@comcast.net
Subject: Redevelopment of 425-29 PINE ST - St. Andrew's Byzantine Ukrainian Catholic Church
Date: Monday, January 23, 2023 9:55:37 PM

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Hello Architectural Committee,

We would like to make comment for the upcoming public meeting being held on Tuesday, January 24 regarding the revised proposal by Rustin Ohler for the property located at 425-29 PINE ST.

We are proximate neighbors located at 343 S. 5TH ST. and abut the property in question.

In reviewing Standard 9 we would like to make some comments.

Historical:

- Bell tower
 - Proposed new windows destroy the bell tower slats and associated materials which currently maintain the historic character of the property (East, South, West facing)
- Mass of the new building
 - Exceeds current footprint of existing structure
 - New building obstructs almost all view of the historical building from the North
- Composite metal for 3rd floor does not align with historic materials/character of the property
- East and West sanctuary windows
 - Introduction of modern double-wide windows will destroy existing opening and the historic stained-glass materials used in the existing windows which characterize the property
 - Lower bell tower windows (South facing) are proposed to remain with original stained-glass materials
- Proposed massing eliminates existing green space, specifically the three mature trees which significantly contribute to the neighborhood

Thank you for taking the time to consider our comments. This development will have great impact on our adjacent property and will impact the integrity of Society Hill.

Best regards,
Keith & Tara Lamont



SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

425-29 Pine Street

The following comments pertain to the revised application submitted on January 17, 2023.

This matter is on remand from the Commission, which met on January 13th. We refer the Committee to the comments we submitted on January 12th, including the 4 letters generated by architects living in Society Hill (Daniel Kelley, Robert Parsky, Peter Bloomfield and Mark Keener). Also submitted at that time is a report prepared by Powers & Company, which was revised slightly today. A photograph on the cover of that report (and inside) shows the windows on the west and east side as clearly visible to the public, and those windows are character defining. As described in our report, the rear building is of earlier construction: the church was added to the previously existing rear building.

A. The Expanded Rear Building

Massing, size, scale and proportions

We agree with the original Staff recommendation that the 3-story rear addition violates Standard 9. The 3rd floor addition continues to be inappropriately higher than the peak of the front building. One idea is to eliminate a 3rd story altogether. Another idea is to reduce the footprint of the new 3rd story and slope the east and west ends of the new roof, thus maintaining the existing peaked shape on the roof of the rear building (which has some symmetry with the peaked front building).

One of the Commissioners referred to “contemporary ways to shape a 3rd floor,” and that “we’d like to see more options.” The new application does not explore any new options.

Materials

The application returns to the inappropriate “composite metal panels” at the 3rd floor. The first two floors are dark red brick, which we think has no relation to the front building. We have three alternate suggestions for materials on the rear building: either (a) a lighter color brick, maybe a tan or beige, for all three floors; (2) if there are to be two different materials, then it can be one color brick for the 1st and 2nd floors and a different color brick for the 3rd floor; or (3) tan or beige brick for the 1st and 2nd floors, and zinc-coated metal (vertical standing seam) on the 3rd floor. Also, limestone courses could be added, if done correctly.

The application indicates brick veneer. We ask the Committee whether veneer is sufficient or whether full brick should be required.

Plan – parking and trees

The application continues to omit any locations for parking, required by the Zoning Code. Nor does the application show locations for new trees, required as mitigation for the elimination of the heritage tree.

B. Windows

We continue to agree with the original Staff recommendation that the removal of the windows would violate the Secretary's Standards. These windows are highly visible and character defining.

The revised application still proposes to blow out the window openings entirely. This would be an inappropriate loss of character defining features. In addition, the new, larger openings would have to be rebuilt with new non-matching brick around all edges (the brick being removed will likely not be able to be reused); another reason why rebuilding should be kept to a minimum.

The application should work within the existing openings and extend/elongate them only downward. Or the application can explore adding new, small square windows below each existing window and of the same width, separated from the existing windows for a bit by the existing brick. The application should show how the existing window openings could be retained.

Looking at the entirely new windows proposed in the application, a Commissioner said the new window openings should be "reduced in width" and that "the head is uncomfortably close to the cornice." The new application ignores those suggestions.

The application inappropriately includes black metal elements as part of the proposed windows. Even the windows on the Pine Street façade have black metal elements, and the front steps are shown in black. This detracts from the lightness of the historic structure.

All louvers should be retained. There is no reason consistent with the Secretary's Standards to allow otherwise.

C. Miscellaneous

Impact on Lawrence Court Walkway: The planned public walkways are signature parts of the Society Hill Historic District. We would like to see perspective views showing the walkway, and a shadow study, to make sure the impact is minimal.

*Submitted by
Zoning & Historic Preservation Committee
Society Hill Civic Association
1/23/23*

Our Committee is comprised of: Paul Boni (Chair), Rick Herskovitz, Bill Jantsch, Robert Kramer, Lorna Katz Lawson, Norm Lieberman, Rosanne Loesch, Sally Smith, Larry Spector, and Mary Tracy.

425-29 Pine Street
Philadelphia, PA
HISTORY AND EVOLUTION



Prepared for the Society Hill Civic Association

January 14, 2023
Revised January 23, 2023

SITE AND BUILDING DESCRIPTION

SITE: St. Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church at 425-49 Pine Street is a one-story church building with an attached two-story, single-family residence in the rear. Largely dating to around 1950-1952, the church, which is built of yellow brick, is rectangular in plan with square towers flanking the south or primary elevation, which fronts on Pine Street. There are open spaces on all three non-street facing sides of the building. On the west side, there is a gated concrete driveway accessed via a curb cut on Pine Street; the driveway extends to the north elevation of the church building, and beyond the driveway there is a yard with several large trees that extends to the rear (or north) property line, located along Lawrence Court Walk (Figures 1, 2, 5, 6). The yard continues east along the north elevation of the residence to the east property line. Along the rear property line, an approximately 6'-tall, red brick wall separates the property from Lawrence Court Walk, which is a pedestrian walkway (Figures 13, 14). On the east side of the church, there is a concrete-paved courtyard with a rectangular raised planter in the center (Figures 3, 4). The courtyard extends from Pine Street to the south elevation of the residence.



Figure 1: Church, looking northeast from Pine Street. The original arched windows on the west elevation of the church are highly visible from Pine Street.

Historical maps from 1860 to 1950 show that the rear (north) property line was once located at the north elevation of an earlier building on the site (as described below, the existing north elevation is the surviving portion of a historic rear ell). During the 1960s when Lawrence Court Walk was created as one of Edmund Bacon's Greenways, the rear property line of 425-29 Pine Street was extended north, absorbing portions of multiple adjacent parcels to create the much larger rear yard that exists today (see Figures 5, 6).



Figure 2: Driveway west of the Church, looking north from Pine Street.



Figure 3 (left): Church, looking northwest from Pine Street. As on the west elevation, the original arched windows on the east elevation are highly visible from Pine Street.



Figure 4 (right): Courtyard east of the Church, looking north from Pine Street to the residence.



Figure 5 (left): Side and rear yards, looking southeast from Lawrence Court Walk.

Figure 6 (right): North elevation of the residence, looking southwest from Lawrence Court Walk.

CHURCH: On the south elevation of the church, there is an elevated entrance with simple wood plank doors in the center bay (Figure 7). The entrance, which is reached by concrete steps with simple metal picket railings, has a limestone pedimented surround. The center portion of the south elevation, which has a circular stained-glass window above the entrance, is trimmed with flat, horizontal and vertical limestone bands, and the gable end wall above has limestone coping and a small cross at its peak. To the east and west, there are identical square brick towers topped with onion domes in copper. The south elevations of the towers have tall, arched stained-glass windows with arched, wood louvers above. The louvers are also found on the sides of the towers.



Figure 7: South elevation of the Church, looking north from Pine Street.

North of the towers, the east and west elevations both contain tall, arched stained-glass windows separated by square brick piers; there are two on the east elevation and three on the west elevation ([Figures 1, 4, 9](#)). There are also painted, hollow metal doors on each side. Due to the open spaces along the east and west elevations, the stained-glass windows are highly visible from Pine Street, as is the copper onion dome – a larger version of the domes that top the front towers – at the center point of the gable roof ([Figures 1, 3](#)).



Figure 8: South and east elevations of the Church, looking northwest from Pine Street.



Figure 9: West elevation of the church, looking northeast to the arched windows.

Only a portion of the north elevation of the church, which has no windows or other features, is visible as the remainder abuts the two-story residence ([Figure 11](#)).

RESIDENCE: The residence is a two-story brick structure abutting the north and part of the east elevation of the church. The exterior walls are painted red brick except on the courtyard-facing south elevation, which has unpainted yellow brick matching the yellow brick on the church. On all three sides, the residence has several 2-over-2, double-hung metal windows that likely date to 1950 or later. On the courtyard-facing south elevation, there is also a metal door with a small porthole window in the center bay.



Figure 10 (left): South elevation of the residence, as seen from Pine Street.

Figure 11 (right): North and west elevations of the residence, looking southeast from Lawrence Court Walk.



Figure 12: North elevation of the residence, looking southwest from Lawrence Court Walk. The jog in this wall matches the plan of the building as seen in the 1916 and 1950 Sanborn maps ([Figures 17 and 18](#)), indicating that this portion of the building pre-dates the Church.

As illustrated below, most of the exterior walls of the residence pre-date the acquisition of 425-49 Pine Street by the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The western half of the residence appears to be the first two stories of an original three-story rear ell built with the house that existed on this property in 1860 and possibly as early as 1839. The eastern half of the residence largely consists of a two-story addition built sometime between 1897 and 1916 by the Willing Day Nursery, occupants of the property from 1883 to 1943 (as shown in [Figures 15 and 16](#), below, this two-story brick structure appears in 1916 but not in 1897, when there was a one-story frame structure in this location). A plan filed with a 1946 zoning permit application for the new St. Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church indicated that a portion of the rear ell would remain for use as a residence ([Figure 19](#)). A second plan filed with a 1950 zoning permit application indicates that the residence, which would still reuse the rear ell, would be extended farther south, a project that included other changes, such as the addition of the front two towers. The church proposed in the 1950 zoning application was completed in 1952 ([Figure 20](#)).



Figure 13: Residence, looking southeast from Lawrence Court Walk.



Figure 14: Residence, looking southeast from Lawrence Court Walk.

HISTORY

Prior to 1950, 425-29 Pine Street was occupied by a Greek Revival style, three-story brick house with a piazza and rear ell ([Figure 15](#)). At least from 1860 onward, when the first detailed property atlas is available ([Figure 16](#)), the house was always a free-standing building, occupying only the eastern half of the extra-large, nearly 50'-wide parcel at 427-29 Pine Street (425, originally a separate parcel, was added in the 1880s). Except for small additions, no permanent buildings were ever constructed on the western half of the parcel, as shown in later property atlases ([Figures 17-18](#)).



Figure 15: Photograph of the three-story, Greek Revival style house that existed on the property before 1950, as pictured around 1950, just before the church was built (from the files of the Philadelphia Historical Commission).

The inventory of the Society Hill Historic District incorrectly claims that the building was constructed in the mid-nineteenth century “as the educational center of the Jewish National Worker.” While the house does appear to date to the mid-nineteenth century, this organization, known by its full name as the Jewish National Worker’s Alliance, was not founded until 1912. Although several trustees of the Alliance owned the building between April and August 1943, it is unclear if they were able to set up an educational center in the building for such a brief period of time.¹

¹ Clara Andrian to Harry Bellis, Max Herlick, and Meyer M. Wolov, April 1, 1943, Philadelphia Deed Book C.J.P., No. 197, page 305; Meyer M. Wolov, Harry Bellis, and Max Herlick to Eva Woloshin, August 23, 1943, Philadelphia Deed Book C.J.P., No. 320, page 553.

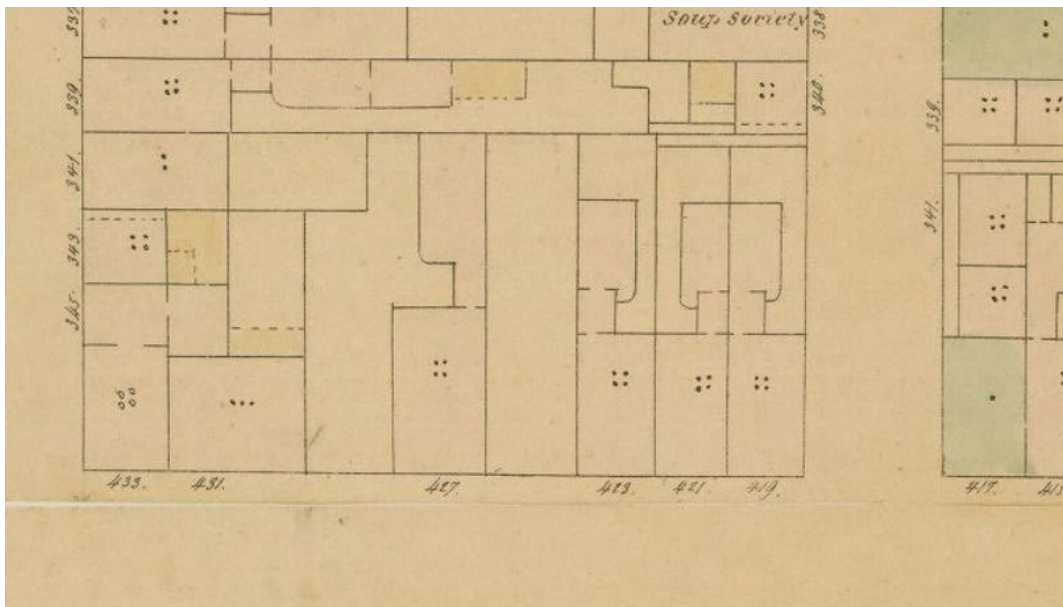


Figure 16: Map of the property in 1860, from Hexamer & Locher's *Maps of the City of Philadelphia*, Volume 1, 1860 (Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network).

Although the date of construction of the house has not been definitively established, it likely occurred shortly after the property was acquired by merchant William S. Smith in 1839.² Historical directories show occupants at 131 Pine Street, the property's address prior to 1857 when the numbering system changed, as early as 1796, but the Greek Revival style of the house suggests it was built later.³ Because Smith lived at 427 Pine Street until his death in 1871, whatever construction occurred on the property during this period must have been undertaken by him.⁴

3-Story House Used as Nursery

William Smith's wife, Isabella Smith, continued to live in the house until 1883, when she sold the property to Dr. Charles and Rebecca F. Willing, wealthy philanthropists, for the use of the Pine Street Day Nursery.⁵ One of numerous charitable nurseries set up during this period to provide daycare to the young children of poor working parents, the Pine Street Day Nursery originated as the Lombard Street Day Nursery in 1878, then located at 430 Lombard Street, and was renamed at the time of its move in 1883. In May 1885 the Willings donated the house and land to the organization.⁶ Included in the Willings' gift was the adjacent vacant parcel at 425 Pine Street, which the couple had also acquired in 1883.

² John W. Scott to William S. Smith, May 15, 1839, Philadelphia Deed Book G.S., No. 4, page 286.

³ *Stephen's Philadelphia Directory for 1796* (Philadelphia: Thomas Stephens, 1796).

⁴ "Funeral Obsequies," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 12, 1871.

⁵ William S. Smith to Rebecca T. Willing, May 1, 1883, Philadelphia Deed Book J.O'D., No. 116, page 112.

⁶ Rebecca T. Willing to Pine Street Day Nursery, June 3, 1885, Philadelphia Deed Book G.G.P. No. 44, page 254.

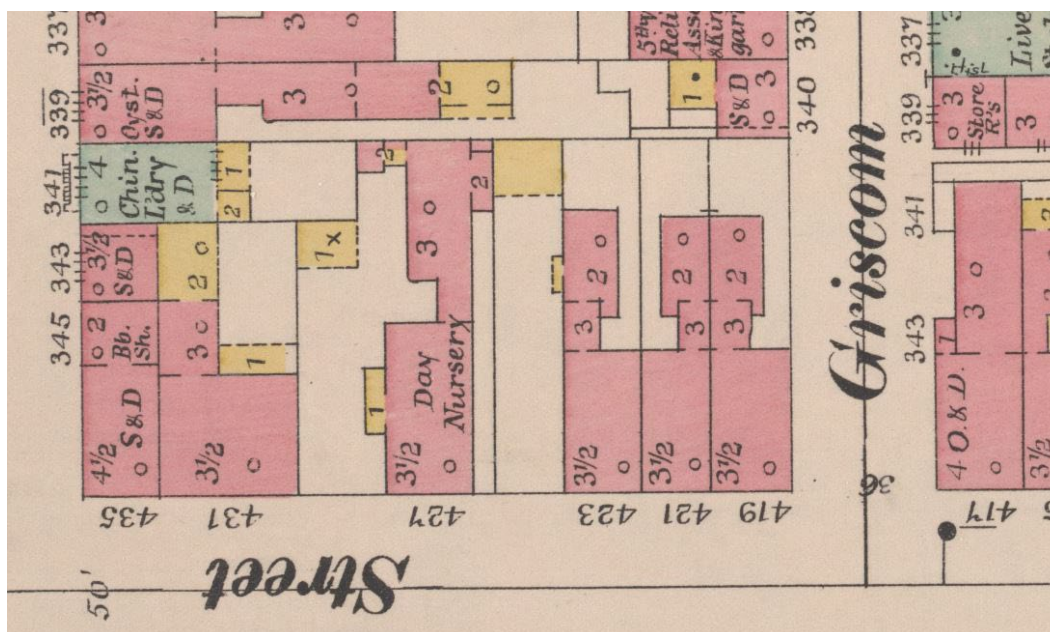


Figure 17: Map of the property in 1897, from Ernest Hexamer & Son's *Insurance Maps of the City of Philadelphia*, Volume I, 1897, Plate 4 ½ (Free Library of Philadelphia).

The open spaces flanking the building were regularly used by the Nursery for outdoor activities and recreation. An 1884 Congressional report on the condition of women working in industry noted the property's "pleasant playground," and in 1899 an inspector from the Pennsylvania Board of Commissioners of Public Charities described the "large yard on both sides," and that "The meals in summer-time are spread under cover in the yard."⁷ The Nursery, which was renamed the Willing Day Nursery in 1889 in honor of its benefactors, made some very small additions to the original building as evidenced by an 1897 fire insurance map (Figure 17). These additions primarily consisted of one-story frame structures, including a porch on the west side of the main block and a porch and balcony on the east side of the rear ell. By 1916, however, only the addition on the east side of the rear ell was still standing and had been made more permanent with brick walls (Figure 18). The Willing Day Nursery remained at 425-29 Pine Street until 1943, when the organization closed down.⁸ At the time of its closure, the footprint of the building was the same as it was in 1916 (Figure 19).

⁷ *Congressional Record of the Forty-Eighth Congress, First Session, Volume XV*, Appendix (Washington, D.C., 1884), 240; *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Charities of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for 1899* (Harrisburg, 1900), 70-71.

⁸ "Dissolution Notices," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 26, 1943.

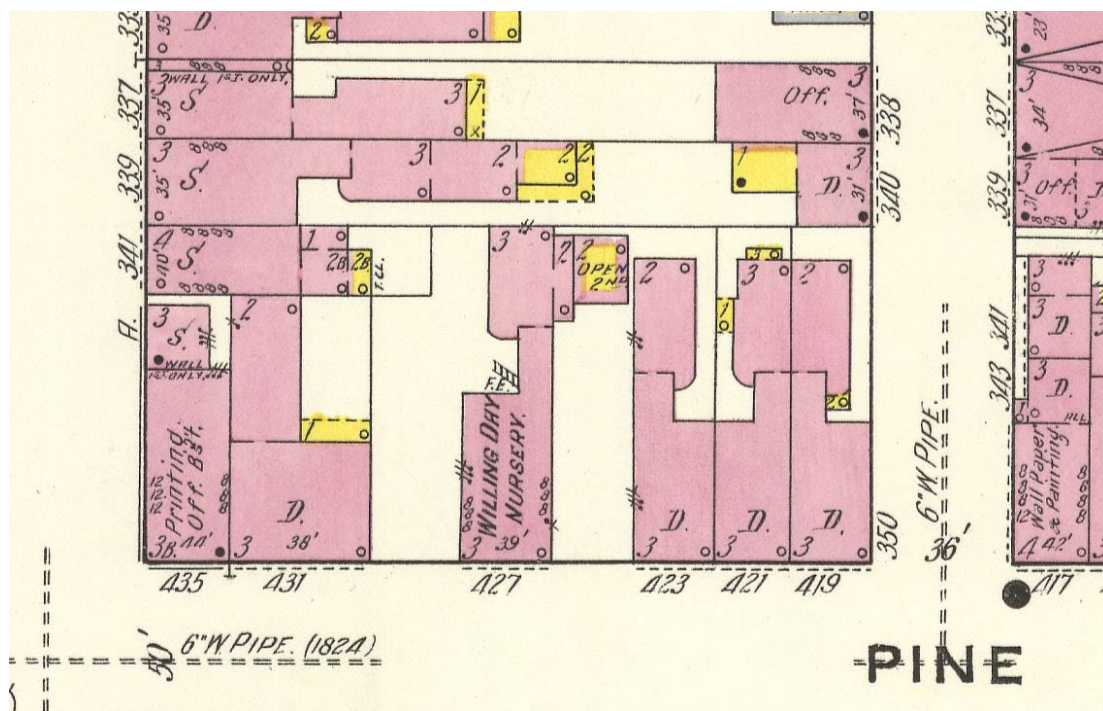


Figure 18: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1916 (Penn State University Libraries).

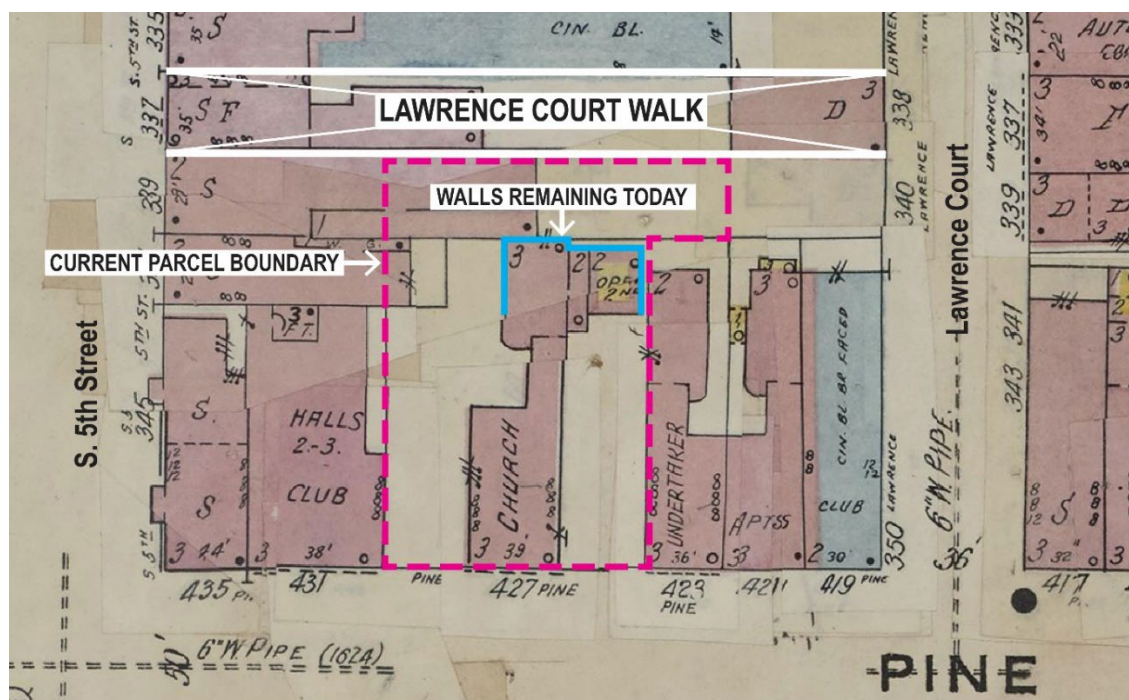


Figure 19: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950 (Library of Congress). As shown here, during the 1960s Lawrence Court Walk was built over 338 Lawrence Court and 337 S. 5th Street, and the rear portion of the parcels at 340 Lawrence Court and 339 S. 5th Street became part of the 425-29 Pine Street parcel.

20th Century Church is Built, Retaining a Portion of the Historic Rear Ell

425-29 Pine Street was acquired by the Ukrainian Catholic Church for the new St. Andrew's parish in 1944.⁹ Catering to what had become a neighborhood of predominantly working-class, eastern European immigrants by the early twentieth century, St. Andrew's services were initially held on the first floor of the existing three-story house. By 1946, the congregation had grown, requiring a larger space. In October of that year, the Church filed for permits for a new two-story building, which would replace the existing house.¹⁰ The new church would be rectangular in plan, built of brick and stone, and would retain the open spaces on both sides, except at the far north end of the east elevation where a two-story, one-family residence was planned. As shown in the zoning plan ([Figure 20](#)), the northernmost part of the historic rear ell would be incorporated into the residence.

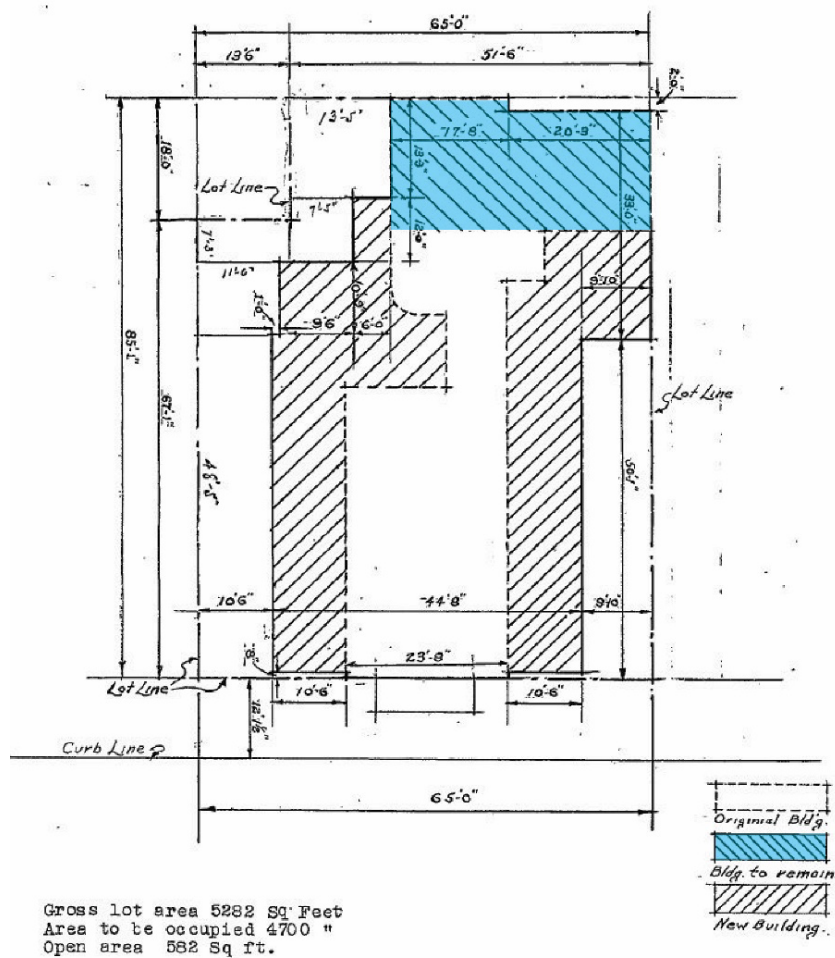


Figure 20: Plan from the 1946 Zoning Permit. The area shaded in blue indicates the portion of the historic building to remain. Although the church that was eventually built was not as wide as shown in this plan, it still retained a portion of the historic rear ell.

⁹ Eva Woloshin to the Most Reverend Constantine Bohachevsky, April 8, 1944, Philadelphia Deed Book C.J.P., no. 503, page 581.

¹⁰ Zoning Permit 28383, issued October 18, 1946.

The 1950 Sanborn map (Figure 19) shows that the historic three-story house remained standing that year. And no building permits were issued until 1950 (Permit 5149), suggesting that construction on the new church did not begin until later in 1950, or possibly in 1951. In fact, a new zoning permit application proposing a revised design for the church was submitted in August 1950.¹¹ The plan included in the 1950 application (Figure 21) incorrectly represents the width of the historic three-story house as 38'; in reality, it was closer to 23'8" as noted in the 1946 plan. Despite this error, the 1950 plan shows a proposed design matching the church that exists today. Designed by Scranton-based church architect Vincent Russoniello and built by John Rubel, the new design for the church included two towers flanking the south elevation, as well as an enlarged residence in the rear. Like the 1946 plan, the 1950 plan incorporated the northernmost part of the historic rear ell into the residence, although the ell was reduced in height from three stories to two (Figure 21). The new building was completed in 1952 as evidenced by a dedication ceremony that took place in October of that year.¹²

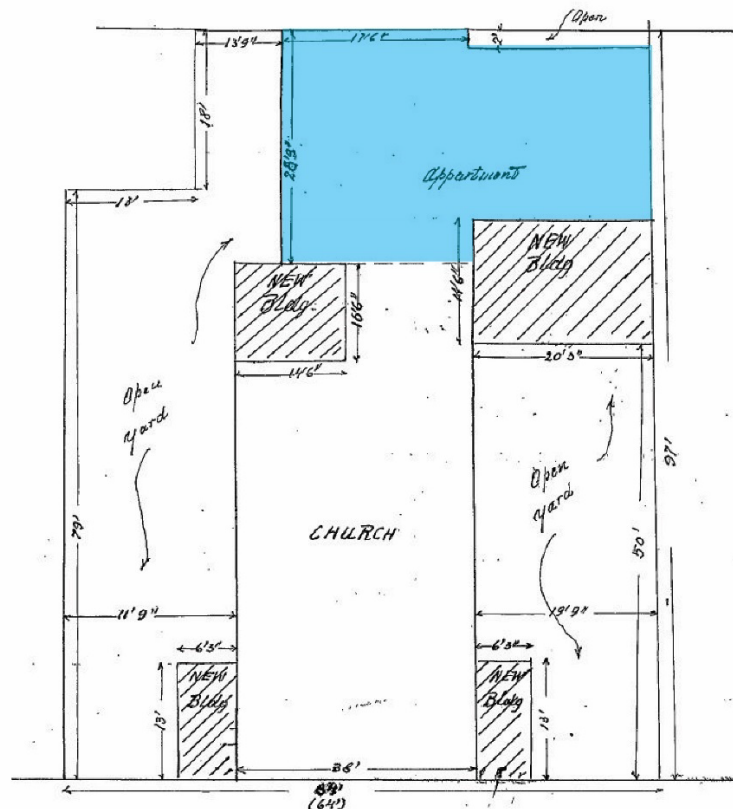


Figure 21: Plan from the 1950 Zoning Permit. The area shaded in blue indicates the portion of the historic rear ell that was incorporated into the two-story residence.

¹¹ Zoning Permit 39366, issued August 4, 1950.

¹² "Archbishop O'Hara Blesses School and Church," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 6, 1952.

No changes to the height or floor area of the building have been made since its completion in 1952. The open spaces on either side have been largely retained, meaning that the spatial relationships that existed on this property since 1860, and possibly as early as the late-eighteenth century, have been preserved.

Edmund Bacon's Greenways and Lot Line Changes at 425-29 Pine Street

North of the property, several major changes occurred during the 1960s. At this time, a network of pedestrian walkways or "greenways," conceived by Edmund Bacon, were created throughout Society Hill as part of the neighborhood's redevelopment. According to Gregory L. Heller, biographer of Edmund Bacon, "The idea was that these mid-block garden walks would tie Society Hill together, leading pedestrians through a human-scale journey, with short, winding passages."¹³ One such greenway was Lawrence Court Walk, which was built just north of 425-29 Pine Street, extending parallel to Pine Street between 4th and 5th Streets. The western half of Lawrence Court Walk, located between Lawrence Court and 5th Street, was built over two properties at 338 Lawrence Court and 337 S. 5th Street (see [Figure 19](#)). A brick wall was built at this time to separate the Walk from 425-29 Pine Street, which by this time had absorbed portions of several adjacent parcels to create the large rear yard that exists today. Lawrence Court Walk remains intact as one of Society Hill's prized pedestrian walkways, allowing travelers, in Heller's words, to "get from place to place without having to mingle with cars, all the while experiencing their neighborhood in a new and exciting way – turning the corner to the pleasure of seeing a garden, a church, or a playground."¹⁴

¹³ Gregory L. Heller, *Ed Bacon: Planning, Politics, and the Building of Modern Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 120.

¹⁴ Heller, 120.

From: [Amanda Kaiserman](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Cc: [Nicolas Tosi](#)
Subject: Re : Tr : Ukrainian Church 425-9 Pine Street
Date: Monday, January 23, 2023 10:48:22 AM

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To the Historic Commission,

This letter is from Amanda Kaiserman and Nicolas Tosi of 424 Pine street, the neighbors directly facing the Ukrainian Church on 425-9 Pine. After a meeting with other concerned neighbors, we are writing for the second time to express concern and opposition to the recently updated design of this church project. Approval of this latest iteration of this design would allow the developer to vandalize the Ukrainian Church. We hope it will not be taken lightly, as it is not merely decoration, but will be a permanent blight on this beautiful block of Pine Street.

The rapidity with which these designs are churned out and re-proposed only underlines the total lack of thought, respect or sensitivity to the design and preservation of this historic building. The latest version is simply different without any real or discernable improvement. It is the Whacky Wall Walkers see-what-sticks approach to design, or Lego design at best. Since Mr. Travis knows not the difference between good and bad design, his intent appears to be to wear the committee down to get to yes, without committing to doing the real work of designing with integrity and with respect to the beauty and form of the Ukrainian Church.

Third floor massing:

Our most major concern is about the massing and form of the third floor addition which contradicts the style of with the church. The mass of the back building is still too heavy and bulky a box that fights the delicacy of the forms of the roof of the church. The form bares no relation to the church and will overwhelm the existing structure. Although some people said in the last meeting that it reads like a separate building, it is not and should but be treated as such. Church roofs are meant to reach up to heaven, and the boxy third floor rear addition will negate the intention of the historic church design.

Furthermore, to allow the developer to block the windows of the building to the east in this way is truly a crime, and will result in the destruction of value of that owner's building. It would be my wish that the developer be held accountable to make a truly thoughtful design that creates and asset to the neighborhood and not a liability, which this clearly is.

The materials for third floor addition:

The materials for the third floor addition should be brick. This contrasting block material looks very cheap and not modern in a good way. It makes the building look generic and doesn't fit into the neighborhood, nor is it modern and aesthetically pleasing. There must be other approaches possible, either in brick that relates to the building or in metal and glass that could be modern and complimentary, but this just looks like all the other cheap building going up around the city.

Windows:

The change of the windows on the side of the body of the church, while improved in form, will probably remove all the detail of the brick work of the historic building. I therefore agree with the comments of the SHCA.

The windows on the addition look cheap and thoughtless.

Louvers:

We think it is unfortunate to remove the louvers for a closet and a stairway, and wonder if they can make them in another material that could be adjusted to let light in like Venetian blinds?

Trees:

There has been no discussion of the heritage tree. The developer had gone to great lengths to try to bamboozle everyone in the first meeting into thinking that he loves trees and will replant, and the trees now seem to have been shoved under the carpet in this discussion and in the design. All the neighbors I have spoken with feel strongly about the trees which everyone enjoys from their windows, and every tree is important to both the character of the neighborhood and to the climate. You have only to hear the discussions in Paris during the heatwaves of the regrets they have of having removed so many trees. The trees are also what soften this neighborhood and keep it from being a harsh urban landscape which make it so enjoyable.

-while this is proven not in your purview, but the immediate neighbors are not able to understand how there will be parking for three cars. There is clearly not enough parking for the number of residents being crammed into this back building, and also a big issue for parking in this neighborhood.

Please find here attached an article from the New York Times entitled "America the Bland." Approving this design will just contribute to the blandification of both this building and this beautiful historic neighborhood. While the article refers to a certain type of building, the principle relates to what is going on right in our historic neighborhood, "a lazy and pathetic execution of bad ideas," to achieve high density with low quality design and materials. But even worse- this is not an empty lot in a non historic neighborhood. It is a special building that will get a massive, generic cube in cheap materials grafted to its side like an unfortunate appendage.

<https://www.nytimes.com/by/anna-kode>

While we all want to see this church saved, it is clear that this developer has no true vision or regard for the building, the neighborhood or the neighbors. It is clearly a real estate operation on the cheap to make money, and sadly, it is obvious to everyone that the architects are way in over their heads. Approval of this design will just denature the character of the church.

I am not an architect, but perhaps finding a way to create a similar version the triangular shaped roof (as is currently on the rear,) on the new addition would at least maintain the character of the building and echo the shape of the church roof. It would create repetition and lightness. The roof would be much nicer with an articulated zinc roof. The church is crying out for delicacy.

We are in opposition to the latest design of this project for the reason that just because the project design has been changed and altered three times, doesn't make it thoughtful, better or even good. As a designer myself, I believe that form follows function, and because this project

is poorly conceived, it follows that the design is unlikely to be successful, especially in the hands of these architects. The developer also has no aesthetic values with which to drive the architects.

We hope that you will not give in to approval of this poor design, and we wish that the committee hold the developer and architect accountable to achieve a well considered design that respects and relates to the existing structure, while achieving the aesthetic level this neighborhood deserves. It is such a wonderful opportunity to design something thoughtful and clever, while paying respect to this historic church and the neighborhood. This is a cheap, ill finished, thoughtless and generic approach to a wonderful and exciting design problem! Neither developer nor architect have the right sensitivity nor the interest to honor this historic site.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Amanda Kaiserman and Nicolas Tosi
424 Pine Street



SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

425-29 Pine Street

The following comments of the Society Hill Civic Association's Zoning & Historic Preservation Committee are based on our review of the revised application submitted to the Commission on or about January 4, 2023.

For the history and evolution of the property, we refer the Commission to the report prepared by Powers & Company, dated January 14, 2023, a copy of which we are submitting today. In addition to its research, the report contains several photographs of the property showing the visibility of all facades including the large original windows on the East and West sides of the front building, as well as the rear building that, according to research, seems to be of earlier construction.

We also solicited the views of some prominent architects who live in Society Hill, and they have provided us with letters containing their views. The Civic Association does not adopt their views as our own, but we respect them and we submit them to the Commission for consideration. The common theme of all the letters is that the currently proposed design is not appropriate and that additional design work should be conducted. The letters are from Daniel Kelley, Robert Parsky, Peter Bloomfield and Mark Keener, and we attach them to this memorandum.

A. A Summary of Our Position

Compared to the original application, the revised application contains substantial changes that take the project in the wrong direction. The highly-visible, character-defining windows are still removed entirely, and larger openings created with no retention of the original. There is now a proposed mansard roof, which has no association with any period of time relevant to this property (nor with Society Hill architecture generally, of any era), and which makes the 3rd floor addition look heavier, instead of lighter. A number of other problematic design issues also exist. We continue to be concerned about impacts to Lawrence Court Walkway and we recommend that perspective views be provided.

B. The Expanded Rear Building

Massing, size, scale and proportions

We agree with the Staff recommendation that the 3-story rear addition violates Standard 9. In our opinion, the expansion should not be higher than the roof of the front building. Worse than the original application, the revised application uses a mansard roof, which does not relate to the historic property, nor to Society Hill architecture generally, of any

era. The Architectural Committee asked for revisions to make the addition appear lighter, and the revised application makes it appear heavier. One idea is to eliminate a 3rd story altogether. Another idea is to reduce the footprint of the new 3rd story and slope the east and west ends of the new roof, thus maintaining the existing peaked shape on the roof of the rear building (which has some symmetry with the peaked front building).

While parking is a zoning issue, the application should at least show the location of the required 3 parking spots. The lateral expansion of the rear building might inhibit safe parking and exiting. Also, if the large, heritage tree is removed, the proposed new footprint might reduce space needed for required mitigation.

Materials

The proposed 4" brick veneer is better than the previously proposed "composite metal panels." We ask the Commission whether veneer is sufficient or whether full brick should be required. If veneer is sufficient, we ask that a note be made for individual brick veneers and not panels.

C. Windows

We agree with the Staff that the removal of the historic, character defining windows would violate the Secretary's Standards. The revised application still removes these windows entirely. While we reiterate our idea to work within the existing openings and extend/elongate them only downward to get additional light into what would be the first floor of the residence, there might be an even better idea: small, new, square windows below each existing window and of the same width, separated from the existing windows for a bit by the existing brick. In sum, a revised application should show how the existing window openings could be retained.

The Architectural Committee recommended the retention of louvers, in some fashion, in the 2nd story, tower windows (on both sides of both corners), especially since inside would be a closet and a stairwell. The revised application continues to eliminate the louvers.

We do not object to skylights, if they are sensitive to the public rights of way.

D. Miscellaneous

Impact on Lawrence Court Walkway: The planned public walkways are signature parts of the Society Hill Historic District. We would like to see perspective views showing the walkway, and a shadow study, to make sure the impact is minimal.

*Submitted by
Zoning & Historic Preservation Committee
Society Hill Civic Association
1/12/23*

Our Committee is comprised of: Paul Boni (Chair), Rick Herskovitz, Bill Jantsch, Robert Kramer, Lorna Katz Lawson, Norm Lieberman, Rosanne Loesch, Sally Smith, Larry Spector, and Mary Tracy.

A Variety of Constructive Opinions from Architects Living Nearby

Architects

234 Market Street

January 11, 2023

Philadelphia

Paul Boni
Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee
Society Hill Civic Association
PO Box 63503

Pennsylvania 19106

215.925.0100

mgapartners.com

Daniel Kelley FAIA

Mary Keefe

Catherine Broh AIA

Amy Stein AIA

Dear Mr. Boni,

Thank you for asking me to comment on the development of the former Ukrainian Church on Pine Street. As a resident of Society Hill for almost twenty years, and as an architect, I have a strong interest in maintaining the unique character of our precinct of Philadelphia while also acknowledging the growth and change that is essential to a dynamic city. Please feel free to convey these brief comments to the Historical Commission as well as others at your discretion.

I am the senior principal of MGA Partners, Architects located in Old City for over thirty years. Our practice is distinguished for high quality design for public buildings and universities. Most of our work on campuses involves significant or historically registered buildings in tight urban conditions, so I am familiar with the challenges of designing additions to be resonant with their context and in achieving the broad acceptance that is often required. Also, for fifteen years, I have been the president of the Bingham Court Homeowners Association, a group of 27 I.M. Pei designed townhouses in Society Hill.

I have reviewed the most recent submission to the Historic Commission and have the following comments:

First, I agree with SHCA that all the facades of the new development are very visible and will need attention, including the north elevation facing Lawrence Walk. While the massing is challenging, I believe that three stories can be manageable if designed well. While the proposed mansard roof does not achieve the best result, perhaps different versions of a sloped roof with dormers can be studied.

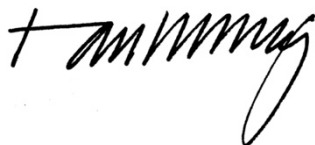
I find the new north, east, and west elevations unacceptable, as banal and without the detail or character consistent with the church or the residential structures of the area. For example, the exposed drain leaders and gutters, the beige brick color, and alignment of cornices lines stand out as needing attention. A key element of the three story massing is a change of material, so that should be consistent with the roofing material of the church, suggesting that the latter would need to be replaced to match the new. I am dubious of black asphalt shingles. I agree with SHCA that the existing windows are character-defining features that should be preserved, so I encourage studies that could use additional windows beneath them.

I suggest that perspective views be generated from several angles because the building elevations do not necessarily convey the massing or suggest ways to improve it. In particular, I would like to see whether the exposed mechanical units on the roof are visible. Lastly, I am told that the Zoning Code requires parking for three cars. I think that is unfortunate at this particular property due to the curb cut that will be required as well as the clutter of vehicles in a small urban space.

In summary, I think this design needs further development before we can have confidence that it will be a positive addition to our community.

Sincerely,

Daniel Kelley, FAIA



*Robert Parsky
604 S. Washington Square – Apt 903
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106*

January 12, 2023

Paul Boni, Chairman
Zoning & Historic Preservation Committee
Society Hill Civic Association
P.O. Box 63503
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Re: 425 -429 Pine Street -Former Ukrainian Church

Dear Paul,

I have reviewed the proposals to the Historic Commission and the Society Hill Civic Association comments and suggestions regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Ukrainian Church in the 400 Block of Pine Street and suggestions. I am in agreement with the Civic Association's positions, and this letter contains my additional comments.

My Background

I have resided in Society Hill for over 60 years. In 1968 I purchased a double property on 4th Street just north of Pine from the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority and resided there until 2019. As an architect and city planner, I designed and renovated the property into a single-family residence. I am very familiar with the Ukrainian Church property, just around the corner. I still recall it being a robust active place of worship. I have enjoyed walking by the church for decades and from my current Hopkinson House south-facing balcony I now enjoy a bird's eye view of the onion domes.

My professional career in Philadelphia, after Penn State-Architecture and Yale Master of City Planning, started at Stonorov and Haws Architects and Planners. During those years I was involved in planning, design and construction working alongside Oskar Stonorov in numerous Society Hill historic residences and other projects. I then became a Principal/Owner of Ewing Cole Cherry Parsky for over 25 years followed by Parsky Associates for another 20 some years. I have been involved in design, planning and construction of numerous significant buildings in the Independence Park area.

Ukrainian Church General Comments and Observations

- This significant Eastern Orthodox religious edifice is one of many different religious architectural styles in Society Hill. The neighborhood is rich with places of worship: Old Pine Presbyterian Church, St. Peters Episcopal Church, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Holy Trinity, Society Hill Synagogue, Keshet Israel Synagogues, Mother Bethel, and the B'nai Abraham Synagogue. The Pine Street Ukrainian Church has many unique architectural elements – the onion domes, various window sizes

and shapes, louvers and the overall simplicity of the building configuration. As a proposed repurposed structure, there are options to be explored in the consideration of new functions.

- The louvers, for an example, can be modified or restored with inside glazing to permit natural light for the proposed stairs and other functions.
- Many existing windows can and should be repaired and upgraded for climate control. All new windows should be of the same style as existing. This has been accomplished in most of the other historic residences and institutional buildings in Society Hill. This contributes to the redevelopment guidelines of Society Hill.

Urban Context

- This former church and other religious institutions became the focal places anchoring the pedestrian walkways of Society Hill. They are visual guides for residents and visitors.
- The proposed rear addition of the Ukrainian Church can be seen from the adjacent east/west walkway between Lawrence Court and 5th Street. This walkway connects the residential area to the local neighborhood 5th Street commercial functions. This must be done in a sensitive manner and care taken not to negatively impact the experience of using the walkway. A perspective study should be conducted.
- No new additions or vertical expansions should be higher than the peak of the roof of this important church building.
- The open spaces of the site provide opportunities for natural amenities to enhance all buildings for occupants and the overall neighborhood. I am aware that the parking requirements are zoning issues. However, how this function and the impact of a driveway system with safe access to Pine Street is a function to be addressed in the overall site planning.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to discuss this important historic urban building and proposed project. Please keep me posted.

Sincerely,

/s/

Robert Parsky

robertparsky@gmail.com

09 January 2023

Re: 425-429 Pine Street

Mr. Paul Boni *Chair*
Zoning & Historic Preservation Committee
Society Hill Civic Association
P.O. Box 63503
Philadelphia PA 19147-3503

Dear Paul,

Thank you for the update.

I work to be open to a broad variety of ideas as an architect, developer and resident of Society Hill. I do not look to stand in the way of progress. Rather, I have been in the position of this developer and their architect many times and understand the struggle. Our office, regularly, wins awards – both locally and nationally – for this type of project. A few months ago, Inga Saffron spoke about how we were able to add to a historic building (built at the same time as the church) in a thoughtful and careful manner. Here is a link to her review:

<https://www.inquirer.com/real-estate/inga-saffron/mid-century-modern-architecture-northeast-philadelphia-mental-health-20210929.html>

I am travelling on Friday the thirteenth but, were I here, I would attend the hearing and oppose the proposed solution. When I first looked at it, I thought the original proposal to replace the parish house building could not be more insensitive. Until I saw the revised version.

09 January 2023

Letter to Paul Boni Re: 425-29 Pine Street

Page 2

Both concepts for, the building, appear to be made of either cheap materials (brown Dryvit), or some unidentified brick with an odd “Mansard-esque” attached. Both are clumsy in their overall massing, and fenestration shows little respect for immediate context (the church and the walkway) or Society Hill in general. If you just look around, there are great examples of how to do this type of work. And, it can be done without increasing costs significantly.

From a more global aspect, the project shows little or no concern for solar aspect or local wind patterns. Hard to imagine, in this day and age.

Zoning may allow this project by right but, in my opinion, the density is far too high given the environment. Poor site planning shows no parking (unless the plans do not indicate it).

Basically, it is just not good enough.

I hope this can be denied and reconsidered once a better solution is developed.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "Peter Bloomfield".

Peter Bloomfield *AIA / NCARB*
Bloomfield and Associates *Architects*

Mark Keener | AICP, Registered Architect | 629 Lombard Street | Philadelphia PA

Paul Boni, Chairman
Zoning & Historic Preservation Committee
Society Hill Civic Association
P.O. Box 63503
Philadelphia, PA 19147-3503

Dear Paul,

Thank you for asking me to comment on the proposed application for 425-29 Pine Street. By way of background, I have been a practicing architect and planner for over 30 years; and have lived in the Society Hill neighborhood since 1992. I have experience working in historic districts, and chaired the effort leading to Society Hill's designation.

I have had the opportunity to see Peter Bloomfield's letter about this application and I concur with his assessment that it is "not good enough." I would add that the Mansard roof in particular is an appropriated form pressed into service to diminish apparent height. A similar form could resolve the height, moderating difference with adjacent buildings, but here the asphalt single version looks like a 1990 production builder approach.

The Secretary's Standards encourage new construction in a Historic District to be **compatible** and yet **distinctive**. This design, especially the 3rd floor exterior, does not achieve either.

I would respectfully suggest that the design team consult the [Preservation Alliance's "Sense of Place"](#) publication, which I believe is from 2007, for ideas that might be helpful.

I believe the proposed use is rational for this property. My hope is that the process ends with a much better design.

Thank you,



Mark Keener

From: [Amanda Kaiserman](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Cc: [Nicolas Tosi](#)
Subject: Ukrainian Church 425-9 Pine Street
Date: Thursday, January 12, 2023 11:40:44 AM

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To the Historical Commission,

My name is Amanda Kaiserman, and I live at 424 Pine Street which is directly facing the site of the proposal. I am writing to oppose the application as it is presently submitted.

We recently moved to our new home for the beauty of the neighborhood, and we love and enjoy the charm and harmonious design of the Ukrainian Church across the street.

While we would be pleased for a new neighbor to restore the church across the street and keep it from falling into ruin, we find the current design unfortunate as it does not respect the elegance of the church.

We fully agree with all of the comments that were made by the SHCA:

-THIRD FLOOR ADDITION: as proposed, it is not at all graceful. It overpowers the rhythm of the church and blocks the light that filters through the rhythmic shapes created by the domes and the roof. It would block the light to the walkway behind, as well as the light that we enjoy in our home and from the street. We agree that a sloped roof or some other approach would be more appropriate so as not to detract from the design of the church. As proposed, it is clunky and bulky and does not appear to be thoughtfully designed.

-MATERIALS: We also agree that the materials seem cheap and inappropriate in a neighborhood such as this. Allowing the proposal to go through as is will diminish the elegance of the street.

-WINDOWS: While we are not opposed to skylights (if they are attractively

designed,) it would be such a pity to replace the arched windows along the side which relate to the domes and give the character and style to the building. We agree with the suggestions of the SHCA, or would suggest to add in window openings of the same shape to allow light to pass and to create repetition that would articulate the wall while respecting the personality of the church.

- HERITAGE TREE- I would also add that I agree with my neighbors from 428 who feel that it would be a pity to lose the heritage tree which they enjoy from their window, and we fail to understand where they prepose to replant it.

The building proposal is generic, not well thought out. It does not echo or enhance the poetry of the Ukrainian Church which is beloved in the neighborhood. The blocky design of the third floor addition is in fact incongruous with the style of the church and fights with the existing architecture. While we are not opposed to the theoretical redevelopment of this church, we wish it to be done with sensitivity to the current structure, and we do not feel that this proposal is well thought out in a way that respects and gives back to the neighborhood. It is generic, clunky and overwhelms the church. The new addition will be very unattractive from the street, from which it will be visible, as well as for us, the immediate neighbors.

It would be wonderful to see a project that respects and enhances the beauty and character of the church, not that detracts and overwhelms it. We truly fear that the current proposal would be a blight to the neighborhood if allowed to proceed as is.

Thank you for considering our thoughts and comments.

Amanda Kaiserman and Nicolas Tosi
424 Pine Street

From: [dima.p](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Cc: [Vijay Reddy](#)
Subject: Ukrainian Church: 425-29 Pine Street
Date: Thursday, January 12, 2023 11:31:25 AM

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Good morning,

My name is Dima Mircheva, PE and I live at 339 S 5th str, which is directly next to the site of 425-429 Pine Street proposal, and I am writing to oppose the application as it is presently submitted. There are 2 main reasons for it:

1. The 3dr floor addition to the building does not appear to be consistent with the current historical look of the building. The addition will change the current historical view of the property not only from Pine street but also from Lawrence Court Walk. A 2-story building is more in compliance with the historical look of the Ukrainian church as mentioned by the zoning committee.
2. Removal of the heritage tree(s): The main reason for us purchasing our property was the privacy and the "suburban" look that those trees provide. The removal of the tree(s) will definitely change the look and appearance of the property from the historical Lawrence Court Walk.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of the above points.

Dima Mircheva PE and Vijay Peddareddigari MD
339 S 5th St
Philadelphia, PA
954-871-7255

From: [Kim Williams](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: 425-429 Pine Street
Date: Thursday, January 12, 2023 11:21:40 AM

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Dear Members of the Commission:

My name is Kim Williams. I reside at 423 Pine Street which is next door to the property proposal. I am opposed to the proposed application in it's current form for the following reasons:

- (1) The proposed third story addition will block the light and view from the sunroom windows on the third story of the west elevation of 423 Pine Street and is unacceptable.
- (2) The height and mass of the proposed third story addition are not consistent with the historical context of the existing structure.
- (3) The proposed exterior metal panels are incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The facade of all new construction should be brick similar in color and appearance to the nearby buildings.

Thank for your consideration of these comments in your review of the proposed application.

Respectfully,

Kim Williams
423 Pine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Alison Young](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: Comments on 425-429 Pine St proposal
Date: Thursday, January 12, 2023 9:26:24 AM

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Good morning,

My name is Alison Young, and I live at 426 Pine St, which is directly across from the site of the proposed development at 425-429 Pine St. I am writing to oppose the application as presently submitted.

Specifically, my opposition relates to the proposed roof height and design of the addition in the rear. As submitted, the additional height and box-style flattened roof is out of step with the current building design. As proposed, the design creates a nondescript box of windows that dwarfs the current style, roof, and façade of the current building. A more appropriate addition for this property would allow the front façade and unique roof structure of this historic building to remain higher than any addition. As proposed, from the Pine St view, this building would become a giant box with a church façade, rather than a church building with a small addition in line with its existing building proportions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alison Young
426 Pine St