

ACTIVITIES OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF OCTOBER 2023

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 219 permit applications were approved, 77 with conditions, for historically designated properties in October 2023. An additional 19 permit applications were returned to applicants in eCLIPSE with requests for revisions and/or additional information. The Historical Commission conducted no adjacent property reviews, a new type of review in which the Department of Licenses and Inspections can impose monitoring and other requirements on construction projects that are adjacent to designated buildings to protect those buildings. The Historical Commission staff conducted an additional 53 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 |
|----------------------|---|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| 4201-47 Woodland Ave | Griffith Hall | 3/15/2023 | 11/29/2023 | 8 months |
| 2037 S Broad St | Beneficial Savings Fund Building | 6/21/2023 | 11/29/2023 | 5 months |
| 1520-22 Chestnut St | SS Kresge Store | 11/30/2022 | 11/29/2023 | 11 months |
| 1330-36 Chestnut St | F.W. Woolworth Co. Store | 9/6/2023 | 11/29/2023 | 2 months |
| 1200-08 S Broad St | Grand Lodge of Sons of Italy in America | 10/18/2023 | 11/29/2023 | 1 month |
| 700-34 Race St | Roundhouse | 10/13/2023 | 3/8/2024 | 6 months |

The staff administered the reviews of designation matters at the 13 October 2023 meeting of the Historical Commission. At that meeting, the Historical Commission took the following actions on designation matters:

- Continued the review of one nomination: 775 S. Christopher Columbus Boulevard, Piers 38 and 40 South, to the March 2024 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Declined to designate on property: 160 W. Washington Lane; and,
- Individually designated six properties: 1611 Walnut Street, Hollinger Building; 150 W. Washington Lane, Cranford; 1621 Jefferson Street, Dr. Oscar James Cooper House; 307 S. Chadwick Street, Frank Weise House and Studio; 4837 Germantown Avenue; and 4839 Germantown Avenue.

The Committee on Historic Designation met on 18 October 2023. At that meeting, the Committee offered recommendations on the following designation matters:

- The individual designations of six properties: 804-16 N. Orianna Street, St. Agnes Roman Catholic School; 6519-25 Germantown Avenue, The Warren H. Poley Apothecary & George W. Cox House; 4700 Kingsessing Avenue, Church of the Atonement; 5128 Wayne Avenue, Sallie Watson House; 5114 Wayne Avenue, Sallie Watson Barn/First United Presbyterian Church of Germantown; and, 1503-05 Walnut St, City National Bank.

On 27 October 2023, the staff sent first notice letters for the following nominations: 4740 Baltimore Avenue, Calvary United Methodist Church; 684-86 N. Broad Street, American Trust, Loan & Guarantee Investment Company; 1538 Kerbaugh Street, Ray "Campy" Campanella Childhood Home; 1402-04 W. Oxford Street, Barber's Hall; 5131-37 Walnut Street, Groh Building; and 915-17 S 11th Street, South Philadelphia State Bank.

Laura DiPasquale is reviewing a historic district nomination proposing a Washington Square West Historic District.

Kim Chantry is reviewing a historic district nomination proposing a Spruce Hill Historic District.

Jon Farnham is reviewing a historic district nomination proposing a Germantown Market Square Historic District.

The staff is working on several individual nominations.

Martha Cross and Jon Farnham have convened an advisory committee to make recommendations to the Department of Planning and Development on legislation authorizing the Historical Commission to establish a second type of historic district, as suggested by the Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation. The committee met on 31 January, 31 March, and 25 May 2023. All staff members are participating in the committee's activities. The committee will continue its work as a series of working groups. Heather Hendrickson is preparing a report documenting the committee's activities.

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 was held on 16 October 2023. A second meeting of the Committee is being scheduled.

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 to fund enhancements to Arches. An additional \$27,500 from the William Penn Foundation grant described below was also dedicated to the project. The monies funded upgrading Philadelphia's installation of Arches from Version 4 to Version 6; 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 worked with the Arches consultants at Farallon Geographics to undertake the upgrades to the Arches installation. The upgrade to Version 6, the updates to the resource models, and the bulk upload utility implementation has been completed. The work was completed 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 plan and 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, the 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. 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 spent 2022 connecting with stakeholders throughout Philadelphia, conducting public outreach at in-person and virtual town halls, and developing a survey methodology that is community driven and can be implemented city-wide. Treasure Philly!, the cultural resources survey pilot, launched in summer of 2023, in the Broad, Germantown and Erie neighborhood. The first community engagement event was held on 22 August 2023 at Zion Baptist Church. Survey activities were planned for 23 September 2023, but rained out. The ultimate goal is a survey 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. The project timeline is two years, with the pilot wrapping up in early 2024.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCENTIVES

The Historical Commission's staff did not issue any zoning incentive letters in October 2023.

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 appellant and the Law Department have 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.
- 2100 Diamond Street
 - On 1 June 2023, the 32nd Ward RCO appealed the Historical Commission's approval of the application for the construction of a new public safety building at 2100 Diamond Street to the BLIR. The hearing has not yet been scheduled. The City has requested an expedited hearing.
- 4641 E. Roosevelt Boulevard
 - At its July 2023 meeting, the Historical Commission approved an application to demolish a building and approved in concept an application to construct a City health center on the campus of Friends Hospital, 4641 E. Roosevelt Boulevard. The Preservation Alliance and some neighborhood partners appealed the approval of the demolition. The BLIR held the hearing on 12 and 19 October 2023 and voted unanimously to deny the appeal.
- 325 S. 18th Street
 - An attorney representing a former owner of the property at 325 S. 18th Street has appealed the Historical Commission's approval of a permit application with the

claim that the application should not have been approved because the applicant was not the legitimate owner of the property. The BLIR hearing was scheduled for 24 October 2023 but then continued.

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, appealed the designation to the Court of Common Pleas. The Historical Commission's staff submitted the record of the designation to the Court on 19 January 2022. The court continued the case to give the appellant an opportunity to have the Historical Commission consider a financial hardship and necessary in the public interest application. The appellant submitted the application to the Historical Commission and the Architectural Committee reviewed it in August 2022. A Committee on Financial Hardship meeting was held on 16 October 2023. A second Committee on Financial Hardship meeting is being scheduled.
- 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 10 November 2023 meeting of the Historical Commission.
- 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 an upcoming 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 issued a scheduling order. The Historical Commission submitted its record on 14 April 2023. The appellant's brief is due on 7 August 2023. The appellee's brief is due on 6 September 2023. Oral arguments are scheduled for after 19 October 2023.
- 7200-04 Cresheim Road
 - An attorney representing the owner of the recently designated property at 7200-04 Cresheim Road appealed the designation to the Court of Common Pleas. The Historical Commission submitted its record on 12 July 2023. Oral arguments were scheduled for 16 November 2023, but will likely be continued to a later date.
- 1632 Poplar Street
 - An attorney representing the owner of the property at 1632 Poplar Street filed a petition to allow a nunc pro tunc appeal of the Historical Commission's recent denial of a rescission request for the property. The petition was filed because the owner failed to appeal the decision within 30 days. The court held a hearing on 3 October 2023 and allowed the appeal to proceed. The City did not object.

- 5920 Greene Street
 - An attorney representing the owner of the property at 5920 Greene Street has appealed the Historical Commission's recent designation of the property. The court issued a scheduling order, which stipulates that the record must be filed by 6 November 2023, briefs filed on 4 December and 2 January, and oral arguments after 5 February 2024. The staff submitted the record to the court on 11 October 2023.

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

No cases are currently open.

SECTION 106

Ms. Garrison is conducting federally mandated Section 106 reviews for the DHCD undertakings assisted by HUD. The Historical Commission may 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 2023. The Historical Commission's staff is currently splitting its time between in-office and remote work.

STAFFING

The Historical Commission is fully staffed with nine staff members. Alex Till and Ted Maust were promoted to Historic Preservation Planner II. Heather Hendrickson will be eligible for the same promotion in a few weeks.

OTHER

None.