

## ACTIVITIES OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF JANUARY 2024

### 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 176 permit applications were approved, 62 with conditions, for historically designated properties in January 2024. An additional 24 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 40 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
700-34 Race St	Roundhouse	10/13/2023	3/8/2024	6 months
1503-05 Walnut St	City National Bank	11/10/2023	4/12/2024	5 months
4201-47 Woodland Ave	Griffith Hall	3/15/2023	4/17/2024	12 months
4740 Baltimore Ave	Calvary United Methodist Church	11/29/2023	4/17/2024	5 months
1200-08 S Broad St	Grand Lodge of Sons of Italy in America	10/18/2023	4/17/2024	6 months
1330-36 Chestnut St	F.W. Woolworth Co. Store	9/6/2023	4/17/2024	7 months
3443 W School House Ln	Samuel Tobias Wagner House	10/18/2023	5/22/2024	7 months

The staff administered the reviews of designation matters at the 12 January 2024 meeting of the Historical Commission. At that meeting, the Historical Commission took the following actions on designation matters:

- Continued the review of four nominations: 684-86 N. Broad Street, American Trust, Loan, and Guaranteed Investment Company, and 1424-26 Chestnut Street, Jacob Reed's Sons' Store, Main Sales Floor Interior, to the February 2024 meeting of the Historical Commission; 8835 Germantown Avenue, Julia Hebard Marsden House, to the April 2024 meeting of the Historical Commission; and 1402-04 W. Oxford Street, Barber's Hall, to the July 2024 meeting of the Historical Commission.
- Individually designated of four properties: 1538 Kerbaugh Street, Roy "Campy" Campanella Childhood Home; 915-17 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, South Philadelphia State Bank; 2037 S. Broad Street, Beneficial Savings Fund Society, South Philadelphia Branch; and 5131-37 Walnut Street, Groh Building.

The Committee on Historic Designation met on 17 January 2024 and offered recommendations on the following:

- Four individual nominations: 2435 N. College Avenue, Dixie Hummingbirds Headquarters; 5015 McKean Avenue, Overleigh; 604-06 S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Tripoli Barber Supply Company; and 704-10 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Coroneos Brothers.

- One historic district nomination: Germantown Urban Village Historic District.

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 and working with community members on a potential Tulpehocken Historic District.

Heather Hendrickson is working with community members on a potential Yorktown Historic District.

The staff is working on several individual nominations.

### **FINANCIAL HARDSHIP**

The staff received a financial hardship application for 502-04 S. Juniper Street and is reviewing it for completeness. If it is complete, it will be reviewed by the Architectural Committee and Committee on Financial Hardship in late February and the Historical Commission on 8 March 2024.

### **SURVEY**

The staff continues to add documents, photographs, data, and metadata to the City's Arches installation. 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.

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. Shannon Garrison of the Historical Commission's staff is managing the project. 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. A second Story Circle event was held on 2 November 2023. Treasure Philly! partners conducted one-on-one survey walks with community members throughout the fall. They continue to meet neighbors to document the history of Broad, Germantown, and Erie through survey and oral history. 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 spring of 2024.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCENTIVES**

The Historical Commission's staff did not issue any use-table-exception zoning incentive letters

in January 2024.

## **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.
- 325 S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street
  - An attorney representing a former owner of the property at 325 S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street appealed the Historical Commission's approval of a permit application for the property 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 held on 18 January 2024, at which time it rejected the appeal because it was not filed in a timely manner.
- 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. The Committee on Financial Hardship reviewed it on 16 October and 28 November 2023. The Historical Commission considered the matter on 8 December 2023 and approved the application. A neighbor who opposed the application has appealed the approval to the BLIR. The BLIR has not scheduled a hearing.

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

- 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 Committee on Historic Designation conducted its new review on 30 November 2022. On 10 November 2023, the Historical Commission reconsidered the nomination and again designated the property. The Historical Commission sent the final notice letter announcing the designation on 14 December 2023. It is unknown if the property owner appealed the new designation within the 30 days.
- 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 a meeting of the Historical Commission in 2024.

- 4501 Poplar Street
  - The property owner of the recently designated infirmary building at the former Stephen Smith Home appealed the designation. The Court of Common Pleas issued a scheduling order for Case No. 221201025. The Historical Commission submitted its record on 14 April 2023. The appellant's brief was due on 7 August 2023. The appellee's brief was due on 6 September 2023. Oral arguments were scheduled for after 19 October 2023. On 30 November 2023, the Court of Common Pleas denied the appeal. On 28 December 2023, the appellant appealed the lower court's decision to the Commonwealth Court.
- 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, Case No. 230401333. The Historical Commission submitted its record on 12 July 2023. Oral arguments took place on 9 January 2024. The Court denied the appeal and affirmed the Historical Commission's designation on 16 January 2024.
- 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, Case No. 230901379. 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. It appears that the property owner failed to file an appeal after being allowed to file late and therefore the appeal is moot.
- 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, Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 230702782. 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. The appellant has submitted its brief to the court. The Historical Commission's attorney submitted his brief on 7 February 2024.
- 2100 Diamond Street
  - On 1 June 2023, Judith Robinson of the 32<sup>nd</sup> 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 BLIR held a hearing on 21 November 2023 and voted unanimously to deny the appeal. Mr. Reuter argued the case and Mr. Farnham testified on behalf of the Historical Commission. The appellant subsequently appealed the BLIR's decision to the Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 231201850. The Court ordered the BLIR to file its record by 1 April 2024, the appellant to file her brief by 6 May 2024, and the City to file its brief by 3 June 2024. Oral arguments will take place after 1 July 2024.

**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 and Dr. Hankins are conducting federally mandated Section 106 reviews for the DHCD undertakings assisted by HUD. The Historical Commission has assumed 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 winter of 2024. The Historical Commission's staff is currently splitting its time between in-office and remote work.

**STAFFING**

Kristin Hankins started her employment with the Historical Commission on 22 January 2024. Dr. Hankins is working with Ms. Garrison on Section 106 reviews and survey tasks. With Dr. Hankins' start, the Historical Commission is fully staffed with 10 staff members.

**OTHER**

None.