



March 27, 2024

Jon Farnham, Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Martine DeCamp
Interim Executive Director

John Mondlak
Chair

Joseph Syrnick
Vice Chair

Rob Dubow
Patrick Eiding
Cheryl Gaston, Esq.
Maria Gonzalez
Michael Johns, FAIA, NOMA, LEED AP
Alba Martinez
Adam Thiel
Ximena Valle, AIA

RE: Philadelphia City Planning Commission Comments regarding the Spruce Hill Historic District,
Southeast Quadrant

Dear Dr. Farnham:

Pursuant to the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission must review and comment on the creation of historic districts and provide those comments to the Historical Commission to assist in its determination as to whether the designation of the district is in keeping with larger City policies and plans. On March 21, 2024, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission had the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant.

Historical Commission staff member Kim Chantry presented an overview to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Johns asked about the proposed historic district boundary and its exclusion of a few undeveloped parcels. Ms. Chantry explained that best practices for historic districts is to exclude non-historic parcels from districts when they fall on the edge of the boundary. Commissioner Gonzalez asked about the implications of historic designation for property owners within the district, and how the property owners were made aware of the requirements. Ms. Chantry responded that the Historical Commission reviews building permit applications for exterior work to buildings to ensure the proposed work satisfies historic preservation standards. She explained that the notice letters mailed to each property and property owner included information about what the Historical Commission regulates and how it regulates it. Commissioner Johns asked about the timeframe and outreach. Ms. Chantry stated that she participated in two community meetings as a panelist where the proposed district was discussed, and provided the dates of the upcoming public meetings where the nomination will be considered by the Historical Commission and its advisory Committee on Historic Designation. Commissioner Valle asked about new construction in historic districts. Ms. Chantry explained the different levels of jurisdiction that the Historical Commission could have over the review of new construction, depending on the status of the parcel at the time of the designation.

During request for public comment, West Philadelphia resident Kathy Dowdell, Amy Lambert of the University City Historical Society, and Suzanne Ponsen of the West Central Germantown Neighbors offered comments in support of the proposed historic district.

The Planning Commission found that the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant is in keeping with Citywide Vision Renew 8.1.1 to preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures, and districts, and the University Southwest District Plan to identify and designate a group or groups of buildings that best represent the historical development of Spruce Hill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M DeCamp', written in a cursive style.

Martine DeCamp
Interim Executive Director