

**Public comment for  
3343 West School House Ln.**

**From:** [jonathan.berger](#)  
**To:** [preservation](#); [Steven Peitzman](#)  
**Subject:** Support of Nomination of 3343 W. School House Lane  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:22:18 PM

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Dear Philadelphia Register of Historic Places,

I write to support the nomination of 3343 W. School House Lane to the PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES.

The extensive documentation in the nomination, prepared by Dr. Pietzman, exhaustively reviews the striking exterior characteristics of the building.

Within the recent past, as I was preparing an offer of purchase from the former owner Debra Cruz, I toured the building and found much of the interior in excellent condition. This despite its age and lack of constant daily care that such an edifice requires.

Had I known of such a nomination I would have taken copious notes of the extensive ornate interior woodwork that guides the visitor from room to room and floor to floor. Before any decision is made on the future of the structure it would be imperative to have an interior design architectural historian evaluate the many and varied fixtures and inlaid carved woodwork that make up an extraordinary interior.

Another remarkable aspect of the interior are the views from inside the building out and across the landscape. As it is placed on a steep slope, near the top of the ridge line, overlooking the ravines that lead to the Wissahickon Gorge, its construction allows for a tiered view down and across the sloping terrain. As the aspect is towards the west and northwest, stunning sunsets are routinely seen with less obstruction than found on other properties in the same locale. Though less spectacular, but no less intense, the penetration of the early morning light is significant due to the south east facing aspect of the front of the home. In this regard in the late winter and early spring before the emergence of the canopy the turret on the front gleams and winks as the mica flecks in the schist shine in the morning light.

As documented the building was constructed in 1896 to 1897. Thus it is around 125 years old. My family moved to nearby and adjacent Timber Lane in 1952, thus providing family members with views and access for over one half of the life of the structure. Our property at 4101 Timber Lane directly abuts the nomination parcel on its west side. Here and on the adjoining ravine later filled in for purposes of an athletic field, family members played,walked, and travelled from Henry Ave to the family home. This use pattern continues to this day.

Given the land use history of the area, as well as contemporary reactions of delivery and Uber drivers and guests who have visited in the past 70 years ,it is reasonable to say that the area from Gypsy Lane to Henry Avenue is unique in the City. Though only ten minutes from Center City it continues to serve as a refuge for wildlife,watershed protection, urban heat mitigation, open space, and an oasis for residents and visitors as it has since the mid 19th century.

3343 West School House Lane is right in the center of this area. Its reuse and restoration will continue this important land use and ecological pattern.

Sincerely yours,

Jonathan Berger PhD