


PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED
FOR WASHINGTON SQUARE
WEST HISTORIC DISTRICT

comments for Wash West District

rabanth@aol.com <rabanth@aol.com>

Mon 4/8/2024 5:42 PM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; Paul Steinke <psteinke@preservationalliance.com>

 2 attachments (211 KB)

Wash West Comment.docx; Chain of Title 410 S Iseminger(1).pdf;

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Please include the attached comments in the review of the proposed district.

Before the age of big bank development loans, a developer would often buy a piece of land and supply some of the materials or labor for example creating a brick shell for all the houses in the row.

Then the developer would transfer some of the row to the next tradesman and pay them by letting them keep a piece of the development. The Linnard Bros. also did this, allowing the carpenter to keep a house in payment. This pattern exists throughout the district. I include the chain of title for my old house showing this pattern.

Thank you

Randal Baron

Wash West Comment

Please share these comments with the Committee on Historic Designation and the Historical Commission.

As a 42 year resident of Wash West, I am writing to thank the many people who have been involved in bringing this nomination to the fore and protecting this part of our City. Washington Square West has really exceptional merit even in a City that has so much of our country's greatest history. In terms of architecture, it is the place in the whole country where rowhouses really got started. It has the greatest collection of Federal and Greek Revival style houses in the country, our first real national styles. It is our only neighborhood in the whole country where this early style exists in such profusion.

Although Boston or New York or Baltimore certainly had this style, those neighborhoods have been wiped out by later development leaving only fragments. Other rowhouse neighborhoods in our City such as Rittenhouse or Spring Garden are later and predominated by the Italianate style, which is also found in the historic districts of much of the midwest. What many people may see as vernacular rowhouses are in fact Greek Revival in the details of their clamshell frame windows, the panel patterns of their doors and so many other ways. In general, I would like to see some of the better examples of smaller rowhouses on streets like Camac, Iseminger and Quince upgraded to Significant status, because they were individually designated in the past and because they are fine examples of their style, rare within the context of our City and indeed the country as a whole. These "Littlest Streets" also represent a unique development pattern that are essentially a district within a district.

In terms of social history, the neighborhood from the beginning contained the mix of classes and races within blocks and within houses that was a product of a walking City. This pattern of tiny houses on blocks next to big houses provides for diversity which is one of the things that makes Philadelphia so great. Wash West is also the real original neighborhood of Philadelphia's black community and the Gay community.

I include a list of specific recommendations for the inventory. I do not offer these as a criticism for the work that has been done, but rather to possibly make it even stronger. It of course will need double checking as I am going from memory.

323-325 Camac back up to form a part of Lantern Court accessible from Panama Street

318 Fawn should be listed as Significant because it is one of just a handful of half gable houses in the country. 322 Fawn should be listed as Significant as one of the very rare wood houses in the city.

1317 Irving and the other carriage houses on the block are attributed to Frank Furness in George Thomas's book about him and this is plausible as they are built behind and beside documented Furness townhouses.

410-416 Iseminger should be listed as Greek Revival as they were built with pilaster entries, corner blocks on the lintels and the marble stairs survive under the brick. Much of the block including Iseminger, Camac, and Lombard was built by the developer Thomas Linnard who owned a lumber yard and developed a number of rows at every size and price point. Please see the attached chain of title from 410 S. Iseminger. The inventory does not attribute any of these to him.

205-9 S. Jessup should be considered for Contributing.

The 300 block of S. Juniper has many houses that have the original 8 panel doors that are the original design for the block. Many of these doors are listed as non-historic.

Some on the even side also have unusual 3 over 3 windows in the 3rd floor which are the original design.

At 325 and 327 Juniper there exist two otherwise identical houses, one with an 8 panel door and one with horizontal panels. I believe both are original doors and show that these door styles coexisted in the Greek Revival period though normally the developer picked one or the other for a given row.

The apartment building at 330-332 Juniper are in fact two Greek Revival townhouses that were combined and covered with stucco to hide the façade alterations, not a 1920s Colonial Revival building.

1225-33 Locust is listed as having a new storefront and the balcony removed in 1934. In fact the first floor has its original configuration for a fire station and the cornice was removed without a permit after designation.

At 1237-47 Lombard, the historic file photos show that the first floor windows were raised when the kitchens were installed in the front room, however the house at 1243 has been restored.

In the 1300 block of Lombard Street, the original door style is the 8 panel door. The corner store building at 1327 Lombard/Juniper has a very rare intact Greek Revival storefront and should be listed as Significant. It is an important model for restoring such storefronts. 1317, 1325 and 1327 have the sole remaining original 8 panel door design in the row

901-3 Pine Street was built as a Jewish Institution with the Jewish calendar year carved in the date stone.

1219-1221 Pine Street frame a charming courtyard called Lantern court entered through their rear at Panama St. This court is worthy of protection.

At 922 Spruce, a part of Portico Row, the windows are listed as non historic. In fact the cornice and the wood 1/1 windows were part of the alterations that were done by the founder of "Godey's Ladies Book" and were kept at the insistence of the Historical Commission because of that connection.

1101-1115 Spruce should be listed as Significant for architect and style.

1219 Spruce is a fabulous work of the architect Frank Miles Day and should be listed as Significant.

1223 Spruce Street is listed as having historic wood windows when in fact the windows are aluminum in the wrong configuration and have multiple violations.

1300 Spruce Street was lovingly restored and has correct historical wood windows, not vinyl.

1116 Walnut Street should be considered Significant both for its architect and as a very early and rare lesbian bar.

1219 Waverly should mention that it was the home of Black (Gay) pianist Andre Watts c 1954. He was already performing in major venues at the age of 10.

235 S. 10th restored their correct wood windows after a violation and years of enforcement. They are not vinyl as cited in the inventory.

240-244 S 12th should be considered as Significant as a very rare example of a Post Modern house. It has a fabulous courtyard.

254 S. 12th should be considered Significant as the home of Meta Fuller who was an important sculptor and who exemplifies not only Black but Lesbian history, two themes of this district.

411 S. 13th also had their windows restored to wood after violations, not vinyl.

412-26 S. 13th, I think is the factory where the Salk vaccine was made in bulk. I think I put an article about this in the file.

410 S. Iseminger St.

Plan 3s15, lot 116

m. erected

Grantor

Grantee

5/17/1830

Thomas M. Linnard,
lumber merchant
Adelaide T. h/w
James M. Linnard,
lumber merchant
Anna h/w

Joseph Chew,
ladies shoemaker

for \$3,200.00

a lot sit E s 13th St.
between Pine & Lombard Sts.
145' from S s Pine St.
Front: 96'
Depth: 90' to a 20' wide
street called Orleans St.
(i.e. Iseminger St.)
Bounded N by ground granted
to Daniel Thom E by
Orleans St. S by ground
granted to George Harmstead
W by 13th St.

NOTE: the above lot includes
what will be
410 S. Iseminger St.

(AM 15 659)

11/16/1839

Daniel Fitler, Esq.
High Sheriff
from Joseph Chew

George R. Harmstead,
carpenter

for \$100.00

a 3 story brick messuage
and lot sit E s 13th St.
beginning 41' N from N s
Lombard St. then N 49'2-1/2"
then E 62' then N 3'9-1/2"
then E 28' to Orleans St.
(i.e. Iseminger St.) then
S along Orleans St. 53'
then W 90' to 13th St. and
place of beginning

NOTE: the above lot includes
at the rear what will
be 410, 412, 414 and
416 S. Iseminger St.
See the included diagram.

being the southernmost
part of the above larger lot

(GS 9 515)

410 S. Iseminger St.

George R. Harmstead died. Fidelity Trust Co. was trustee of the estate.
"Grantors appear to be a few heirs."*

7/3/1926	Charles R. Hamilton Florence h/w C. Ross Hamilton Jr.	<u>Harry T. Stoddart*</u> trustee deed of trust
	W S Iseminger St. 41' N from Lombard St. 52' x 38' 410, 412, 414 and 416 S. Iseminger St.	
9/27/1937	C. Ross Hamilton Jr. Anna H. h/w	<u>Ralph S. Croskey*</u>
	410, 412, 414 and 416	
8/16/1938	Bertram I. De Young Master	<u>Jean Swartz*</u>
	Master's deed in partition 410, 412, 414 and 416	
11/12/1938	Frances C. Levick, trustee for Harry T. Stoddard under decree of C. P. No. 1 March Term 1929 No. 13838	<u>C. Rose Hamilton Jr.*</u> <u>Charles R. Hamilton</u>
	410, 412, 414 and 416	
12/30/1938	Jean Swartz	<u>Edward H. Gornish*</u>
	410, 412, 414, and 416	
4/14/1955	Edward H. Gornish Sylvia	<u>Rose L. Zecca*</u>
	410 and 412 S. Iseminger St. W S Iseminger St. 78' 1/2 from S s Waverly St. 26'6" x 28'	

* Information obtained from records of transfer, Registry Unit,
Department of Records, plan 3 S 15, lot 116.

Richard S. Fuller
Research Assistant
August 12, 1963

I Oppose the Washington Square West Historic District

Alex Clark <raditude28@gmail.com>

Wed 4/17/2024 12:08 PM

To: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; president@washwestcivic.org <president@washwestcivic.org>

Cc: Info@washwestcivic.org <Info@washwestcivic.org>

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Dear PHC, Councilmember Squilla, and Washington Square West Civic Association,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed historic district in Washington Square West.

It will make home repairs more complicated, expensive and time intensive. It will also raise rents and home prices by restricting the supply of new housing.

I implore you to instead support individual designation to achieve a pragmatic balance between preservation and development.

Alex Clark
1109 N 3rd St
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Sent from my iPhone

I Oppose the Washington Square West Historic District

Nick Di Taranto <nditaranto@gmail.com>

Wed 4/17/2024 1:22 PM

To: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; president@washwestcivic.org <president@washwestcivic.org>; info@washwestcivic.org <info@washwestcivic.org>

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Sincerely,
Nick Di Taranto

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Nick Di Taranto (he/him/his)

I Oppose the Washington Square West Historic District

Caleb Holtmeyer <cjholtme8@hotmail.com>

Wed 4/17/2024 12:12 PM

To: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; president@washwestcivic.org <president@washwestcivic.org>

Cc: info@washwestcivic.org <info@washwestcivic.org>

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Caleb Holtmeyer

1001 Vine street, Philadelphia, PA 19107

I Oppose the Washington Square West Historic District

Nygel Jones <nygelisjones@gmail.com>

Wed 4/17/2024 12:02 PM

To: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; president@washwestcivic.org <president@washwestcivic.org>

Cc: Info@washwestcivic.org <Info@washwestcivic.org>

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Good morning, Councilmember Squilla, and Washington Square West Civic Association,

My name is Nygel Jones. I've been a resident of Washington Square West since 2021. I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed historic district in our neighborhood.

It will make home repairs more complicated, expensive, and time intensive. It will also raise rents and home prices by restricting the supply of new housing.

Nationwide, we're already undergoing a severe housing crisis and shortage. Please don't stifle the growth and opportunity a diverse and distinct neighborhood like ours provides.

I implore you to instead support individual designation to achieve a pragmatic balance between preservation and development.

Philadelphia is a great city with much to offer. Let's continue to champion this notion.

Thank you,
Nygel Jones

I Oppose the Washington Square West Historic District

A Mullin <ac.mullin@gmail.com>

Wed 4/17/2024 12:54 PM

To: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; president@washwestcivic.org <president@washwestcivic.org>

Cc: Info@washwestcivic.org <Info@washwestcivic.org>

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Anna Mullin
312 N 39th St
Philadelphia PA
19104

I Oppose the Washington Square West Historic District

Makenna Renfro <makennalrenfro@gmail.com>

Wed 4/17/2024 12:16 PM

To: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; president@washwestcivic.org <president@washwestcivic.org>

Cc: Info@washwestcivic.org <Info@washwestcivic.org>

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Makenna Renfro
218 Arch St, APT 901
Philadelphia, PA, 19106