

Owner and public comment on the Spruce Hill Historic District

7/26/23

5021 Upland Street
Philadelphia PA 19143

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia PA 19102

Dear Ms Fadullon or the appropriate person,

I am writing to support your Commission on behalf of the Spruce Hill neighborhood and its request for historical designation. My interest is that I live near there and want to continue benefiting from its beauty and uniqueness.

I have several points that I would appreciate your response to.

1 History includes narratives of local residents, cultural connections, architecture, parks, and physical character. Giving Spruce Hill a historic designation would help preserve all of this.

2 Giving Spruce Hill a historic designation also has several environmental benefits. There are currently mature shade trees that keep the air cooler and cleaner than it would be if these trees were destroyed to put up apartment buildings. In addition, the neighborhood already has a healthy level of density. One negative consequence of increasing that density would be additional stress on the sewers. Construction projects also cause pollution and contribute to global warming. A historic designation would keep the neighborhood cooler and less toxic.

3 Spruce Hill has been an ethnically and economically diverse neighborhood, made up of long-term homeowners and renters. Some of the homes provide generational wealth, especially for Black families. Giving the Spruce Hill neighborhood a historical designation would promote affordability by stabilizing property values. On the other hand, new apartments that have already gone up in the neighborhood have not brought the costs of rent down, so they do not benefit lower-income people. Finally, some people have argued that home maintenance costs are prohibitive for lower-income homeowners when their neighborhoods receive a historic designation. However, there is financial support from various resources that help keep them in their homes so that they can continue to enjoy living in a beautiful neighborhood. Therefore, I don't think a historical designation will lead to displacement of long-term residents.

I hope you will grant Spruce Hill the historical designation it deserves and I eagerly await your response.

Sherri Michalovic
sherrigastman@gmail.com

Sherri Michalovic



PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

for greater philadelphia

February 16, 2024

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Members of the Historical Commission,

I am writing to support the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant nomination. The nomination is the first of four that will, after many years, recognize the significance of the West Philadelphia neighborhood. The nomination clearly demonstrates that the district meets criteria A, C, D, E, and J.

These efforts began in 1987 when the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, a predecessor to the Alliance, developed a nomination to designate a Spruce Hill historic district to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. An updated nomination was completed in 2002, but it, too, stalled.

Fortunately, the significance of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District was recognized in 1997 when the West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb Historic District, which encompasses the proposed district boundaries, was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Almost three decades later, however, Spruce Hill remains worrisomely unprotected in an environment of unrelenting real estate development pressure.

Spruce Hill is said to have the largest collection of Victorian-era residential architecture of any American city. Yet most of it is not regulated and is therefore subject to demolition or inappropriate alteration. Since the preceding Spruce Hill historic district nomination was written in 2002, a handful of historic districts were enacted nearby, such as Drexel-Govett, 420 Row (420-434 S. 42nd Street), 4208-30 Chester Avenue, Chester Regent, Satterlee Heights, and Powelton Village. But the vast majority of Spruce Hill remains largely unregulated and unprotected.

The Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant, is a fitting addition to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We applaud the Spruce Hill Community Association, University City Historical Society, and their partners for moving this nomination forward.

Sincerely,

Paul Steinke, Executive Director



March 28th, 2024

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Members of the Historical Commission,

We are writing to support the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant nomination. As representatives of the Steering Committee for the Young Friends of the Preservation Alliance (YFPA), we support the efforts of the Spruce Hill Community Association, the University City Historical Society, and their partners for documentation and responsible advocacy efforts. The nomination makes an overwhelmingly compelling case for the historical significance of this neighborhood in the period of significance between 1850-1930. The Spruce Hill neighborhood is by most counts the largest collection of Victorian architecture in the United States. Additionally:

YFPA rejects the caricature of preservation advocacy as only a cause for older people and property owners. Young people and renters care about historic neighborhoods. In most cases, we will live in these neighborhoods longer than the older people! Developers in the student housing market and landlords do not represent the best interests of young people, either college students or those who make Philadelphia a vibrant place today. Developers and landlords represent themselves and their investors.

YFPA rejects the false dichotomy between preservation and development, as well as the developer's misguided and self-interested rhetoric of "organic growth." Nobody is claiming that the neighborhood shouldn't change. A historic district can serve as an effective tool of preservation planning. In a neighborhood facing intense development pressures, it can help to coordinate the interests of different community stakeholders and ensure that future growth is sustainable and equitable. Current academic research suggests that the relationship between historic districting and the supply of affordable housing is site- and context-specific. Within a historic district, there is still opportunity to create affordable housing for all age groups in Spruce Hill. Hopefully, developers working in accordance with the district regulations that the Historical Commission helps to create will recognize the immense opportunity to supply housing that is both affordable and rich in historical character.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Bates, Patrick Bayer (Co-Chair), Kevin Block, Talcia Brown, Alison Eberhardt (Co-Chair), Alyssa Pizzi, Greg Prichard, Tyler Ray, Lee Riccetti, Ha Leem Ro and Tyler Schumacher

Steering Committee, Young Friends of the Preservation Alliance



April 5, 2024

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
Jon.Farnham@phila.gov

Re: Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant
CHD Hearing: April 17, 2024
PHC Hearing: May 10, 2024

Dear Dr. Farnham:

This firm is counsel to Campus Apartments LLC, University City Housing, and numerous other owners of real property located within the boundaries of the recently-nominated Spruce Hill Historic District (the “proposed district” or “SHHD”).¹ As you know, on October 11, 2023, Spruce Hill Community Association (“SHCA” or the “nominator”) nominated the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant (the “SE Quadrant”) for inclusion on Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (the “Register”).² By SHCA’s own admission, the SE Quadrant nomination is incomplete, insofar as it does not include a full and complete inventory of the proposed district. Notwithstanding, on February 2, 2024, the Philadelphia Historical Commission’s (the “Commission” or “PHC”) staff accepted the SE Quadrant nomination as complete. This unprecedented decision to consider the nomination of a proposed historic district in a piecemeal fashion runs contrary to the Philadelphia Code, the Commission’s Rules and Regulations, and fundamental notions of fairness and due process. On behalf of our clients, I therefore strenuously object to the Commission’s consideration of the SE Quadrant nomination as **incomplete** and **unripe** for determination. The Commission *must* return the nomination to the staff as incomplete and refrain from considering the merits of the proposed district until a complete nomination is submitted, inclusive of full inventory and description of each and every property in the proposed district.

SHCA’s fragmented approach to the historic nomination of the SHHD directly conflicts with the purpose and intent of the Philadelphia Zoning Code and is highly prejudicial to the rights of property owners within the boundaries of the proposed district. SHCA contends it separated the proposed district into quadrants “for administrative purposes . . . intended solely to ease the burden on the Philadelphia Historical Commission and staff of reviewing nearly 2,000 properties in a single nomination.” There is no precedent or authority for the Commission to review and/or approve a

¹ Campus Apartments, University City Housing, and their respective affiliates, subsidiaries and related entities own over 150 properties within the proposed district; more than fifty of which are located within the “Southeast Quadrant.”

² This marks the third effort to nominate the proposed SHHD to the Register. The first two efforts – in 1987 and 2002, respectively – failed.

partial historic district. The nominator does not contend that the SE Quadrant stands on its own merits as a distinct historic district. To the contrary, SHCA admits that the nomination “describes the whole of the Spruce Hill Historic District, [however] only the Southeast Quadrant is currently proposed for listing. Nominations for the other three quadrants will follow as the inventories are completed.” Further adding to the incomplete nature of the nomination is the nominator’s express caveat that “the northeast, northwest and southwest quadrant boundaries are subject to change.” Once again, by the nominator’s own admission, the nomination is incomplete.

A. The Nomination Is Incomplete

The Historical Commission’s Rules and Regulations define a “District,” in relevant part, as “[a] geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of buildings, structures, sites, objects, and/or public interior portions of buildings and structures united by past events, plan or physical development.” Rule 5.7.b of the Commission’s Rules and Regulations requires District nominations to include certain information, such as “a narrative description of the district’s physical appearance” and “a narrative statement of the district’s significance,” with citations to the specific criteria for designation that the proposed district satisfies. In addition, Rule 5.7.c further *requires* district nominations to include “a descriptive, evaluative, and photographic inventory . . . organized by street address” for each and every property within the proposed district.

The Commission’s staff is tasked with reviewing nominations for completeness. Rule 5.8 explicitly warns that “staff shall not forward incorrect and/or incomplete nominations to the Committee on Historic Designation or the Commission.” In the instant case, the nomination is incomplete by the Commission’s express standards. As noted above, a district nomination is not complete without an inventory that “shall include an entry for every property within the [proposed] district.” See Rule 5.7.c (emphasis supplied). The nomination does not contain “a descriptive, evaluative and photographic inventory” of approximately three-quarters of the properties within the proposed district. The nomination merely includes a partial inventory of only those properties in the so-called SE Quadrant. The SE Quadrant, however, does not constitute a “District.” The SE Quadrant merely reflects SHCA’s arbitrary division of the proposed district into four quadrants. By marking the piecemeal nomination of the SE Quadrant as “complete” and forwarding the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation (the “Committee” or “CHD”), the Commission has violated the mandate of Rule 5.8 and prematurely attempted to claim jurisdiction over 379 properties within the SE Quadrant.³

There is no precedent or authority for the Commission to consider and/or designate a *partial* historic district. Nor is there any legal basis or authority to treat district nominations differently based upon the size of the proposed district. The Commission is only authorized to review *complete* nominations of proposed historic districts. The size of the proposed district is immaterial. As such, the Awbury Historic District, with its thirty-three properties, is subject to the same requirements, standards and criteria for designation as the Spring Garden Historic District, with its more than 2,000 properties. SHCA made the intentional decision to include “nearly 2,000 properties” within the

³ The Commission already maintains jurisdiction over the 193 properties within the SE Quadrant that are already listed on the Register individually, or as part of an existing historic district.

proposed district. The proposed district is smaller than and/or comparable to the existing Rittenhouse-Fitler, Society Hill, Old City and Spring Garden Historic Districts – all of which were logically reviewed and considered as complete districts at the time of designation.

B. The Unprecedented, Piecemeal District Nomination Violates the Due Process and Property Rights of Over 1,000 Property Owners

SHCA proposes to create the largest historic district in Philadelphia since the designation of the Old City Historic District in 2003, yet without providing the requisite notice or an opportunity to be heard to over 1,000 property owners within the proposed district. The Commission is required to send written notice of the proposed district designation “to the owners of each building, structure, site or object within the proposed district” at least sixty days prior to a public meeting to consider the nomination.” Notice of the hearing is also required to be published in a newspaper of general circulation and posted at locations within the proposed district. *See* Phila. Code § 14-1004(2)(b). The nomination proposes to designate the SHHD as a whole; however, property owners located in the so-called southwest, northeast and northwest quadrants have not been provided with the requisite notice of the hearing, nor been made aware of how their respective properties relate to the character of the proposed district through, history, architecture, design or plan. Therefore, the Commission’s consideration of the SHHD through the partial SE Quadrant nomination violates the Philadelphia Code and fundamental rights of due process guaranteed by the Pennsylvania and United States Constitutions.

SHCA prioritizes relieving the purported administrative burden that would be imposed on the Commission’s staff “reviewing nearly 2,000 properties in a single nomination” above the fundamental due process rights of thousands of taxpaying property owners. This disjointed approach denies owners of properties within the SE Quadrant the ability to assess the context, merits and basis of the proposed district as a whole by reviewing and assessing the complete inventory required by the Commission’s Rules and Regulations. Likewise, the partial nomination is highly prejudicial to property owners within the other three quadrants not presently under consideration. A determination that the SHHD meets the criteria for designation based solely on the merits of the SE Quadrant would impermissibly predetermine the merits of the district, without consideration of the remaining quadrants and without affording property owners within those quadrants with an opportunity to challenge the basis and merits of the district as a whole.

It should be axiomatic that any potential administrative burden on the Commission’s staff due to the size of the proposed district does not outweigh the fundamental due process rights of property owners to have a full, fair and complete hearing on the merits of the proposed district. It appears that the nominator’s concern for the administrative burden on the PHC staff is merely pretext and that SHCA’s true motivation is to prematurely halt or slow the demolition, alteration or construction of any building or structure within the SE Quadrant during the pendency of the Commission’s consideration of the nomination. *See* Phila. Code § 14-1005(6)(f) (prohibiting the issuance of building permits for buildings located within a district being considered by the Commission for designation.) In the nominator and staff’s rush to halt development within the SE Quadrant, they have bulldozed over the Constitutional due process and property rights of the citizens and property owners located within the proposed district.

In light of the foregoing, my clients and I strenuously object to the Commission's consideration of the SHHD – SE Quadrant nomination until such time as a complete nomination of the proposed Spruce Hill historic district is accepted by the Commission, inclusive of a detailed inventory of every property as required by Rule 5.7.c. I further demand that the Commission and/or City of Philadelphia Law Department: (i) confirm that the SHHD – SE Quadrant nomination is incomplete; (ii) return the nomination to the staff with the instruction to not forward the nomination to the Committee or Commission until such time as a complete inventory is submitted; and (iii) confirm that the Commission lacks jurisdiction over the properties within the SE Quadrant until such time as a complete nomination is accepted by the Commission.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Respectfully yours,

Michael V. Phillips
Michael V. Phillips

cc: Leonard F. Reuter, Esq.

Kim Chantry

From: Libby Rosof <libbyrosof@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 7, 2024 5:24 PM
To: preservation
Cc: Jenine Sanzari
Subject: Spruce Hill Historic District (Southeast Quadrant)

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Gentlepeople:

I am writing in favor of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District (Southeast Quadrant). I have lived in the district for more than 50 years and brought up my family here. The signature architecture of the neighborhood makes for an unusual amount of community interaction and togetherness, while providing housing for diversity of people and incomes. In the past few years, however, many of these houses have been destroyed by shameful developers with no respect for the current residents and the historic architecture, those developers sometimes forcing long-timers and families out of their homes and undermining the integrity of neighboring houses, while crowding the visual landscape with behemoth apartment blocks. The lack of protections for the livability of the neighborhood is discouraging. I believe the Historic District designation will help slow down this destruction.

Libby Rosof

--

libby rososof

Board of Directors, and co-founder, theartblog.org

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READ THIS: Mom Rage: The Crisis of Modern Motherhood. More info at minnadubin.com.

Kim Chantry

From: David Brubaker <david.brubaker@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 5:59 AM
To: preservation
Subject: Support for the Spruce Hill Historic District Nomination

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Dear Members of the Historical Commission,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the nomination of the Spruce Hill Historic District. As a proud homeowner on the 4200 block of Pine Street, I have firsthand experience of the vibrancy, uniqueness, and rich historical nature that defines our neighborhood. This area not only represents a significant chapter in Philadelphia's storied past but also continues to be a living, breathing community where history and modernity blend seamlessly.

The designation of Spruce Hill as a Historic District is crucial in ensuring that the architectural integrity and aesthetic charm of our neighborhood are preserved amidst rapid urban development. It will provide a necessary safeguard against changes that might compromise the unique character that we, as residents, cherish deeply.

Preserving Spruce Hill's historical essence will also enhance our community's quality of life, maintain property values, and promote a sense of pride and belonging among its residents. It is an investment in our collective identity and future generations.

I trust that the Philadelphia Historical Commission will recognize the importance of this nomination and act in favor of protecting the vibrant and historical nature of Spruce Hill. Thank you for considering my perspective as both a homeowner and a passionate advocate for the preservation of our neighborhood's heritage.

Sincerely,

David Brubaker
4234 Pine St

Kim Chantry

From: Marta Bartholomew <marta.bartholomew@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 11:17 AM
To: preservation
Subject: Resident support of Spruce Hill historical preservation

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Dear Mr. Farnham,

As a young person in my 20s and working at Penn I would spend many of my lunch hours walking and wandering around the Spruce Hill neighborhood, enjoying its lovely architecture and natural beauty. I imagined that one day I might live there and raise a family. In 2016 I realized that dream and bought a fixer upper on Osage Avenue and have spent the last eight years slowly making improvements and repairs that complement the personality of the neighborhood.

Many of the aspects that I love about Spruce Hill will be protected by historical designation. Our community is strong and much of that is owed to its unique history and beauty that has stood the test of time. We need to preserve this for the future generations as the bedrock of a solid community. Neighbors will work together to support the needs of a historical designation.

I hope that we can all recognize what makes Philadelphia special – our neighborhoods and communities have real personality built through history – the neighborhoods are not generic and anonymous. We need to support and preserve that as a primary reason people choose to live in Philly.

I am an enthusiastic supporter of the historic designation. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter and all of your hard work.

Best,
Marta

Marta Bartholomew, MBA (she/her)
Director of Research Programs and Communications
Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR)

Director of Postdoctoral Affairs
Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA)
<https://postdocs.upenn.edu>

University of Pennsylvania
1 College Hall, Suite G08
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Mobile: (215) 834-4446
<https://research.upenn.edu/>

Kim Chantry

From: Mary Berzinsky <mberzinsky@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 10:17 PM
To: preservation
Subject: Spruce Hill Historic District (Southeast Quadrant) nomination

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My husband and I have lived in University City Spruce Hill Community for 32 years in the same house. As an architect and interior designer we care about what our neighborhood and the buildings in our community are taken care of properly. Restoration and maintenance is very important. We are in support of the historic nomination.

Mary and Greg Berzinsky

Mary Ryan Berzinsky
Interior Designer, NCIDQ

215 704 4201
mberzinsky@gmail.com
Connect on [LinkedIn](#)

Kim Chantry

From: Katherine Dowdell <kdowdell@farragutstreet.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 3:29 PM
To: preservation
Cc: Amy Lambert; Paul Steinke; Hanna Stark
Subject: Spruce Hill Historic District

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I am writing to express my full support for the designation of the Spruce Hill Historic District. This neighborhood clearly meets many of the criteria for designation, and is long overdue for such recognition and protection.

Thank you - Kathy Dowdell

Kim Chantry

From: preservation
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 6:25 AM
To: Kim Chantry
Subject: Fwd: Spruce Hill Historic District (Southeast Quadrant) nomination

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: Greg And Mary Berzinsky <berzinsky@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 10:18 PM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Spruce Hill Historic District (Southeast Quadrant) nomination

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My wife and I have lived in University City Spruce Hill area for almost 32 years in the same house. We support the historic nomination.

Greg and Mary Berzinsky
4205 Pine Street

Kim Chantry

From: Email Verification <Waynesautoservice@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 10:40 AM
To: preservation
Subject: Re: Why it should be preserved

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Here is the information.
University city

From: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 10:35 AM
To: Email Verification <Waynesautoservice@outlook.com>
Subject: Re: Why it should be preserved

Hi Wayne,
Thank you for your email. Can you please let us know the neighborhood you are referencing?

Thanks,
Laura

Laura DiPasquale
Historic Preservation Planner Supervisor
Philadelphia Historical Commission
preservation@phila.gov

From: Email Verification <Waynesautoservice@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 8:00 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Why it should be preserved

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This area is historical and should remain that way. There is too many new structures which is destroying the neighborhood.

Wayne Fleishman



Becca Geller-Puchalsky: President
267-261-2030
rebeccagellerpuchalsky@gmail.com

457 South 45th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

April 14, 20

Re: Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant
CDH Hearing: April 17, 2024
PHC Hearing: May 10, 2024

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

Dear Dr. Farnham,

The Board of the Spruce Hill Community Association (SHCA) is looking forward to the upcoming PHC public meetings where the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant nomination will be reviewed for inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We initiated community engagement on this topic during our monthly Board meeting in November 2022 (open to the public) with an educational panel discussion on what it means to be designated a historic district. The panel included Kim Chantry (PHC), Paul Steinke (Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia), Amy Lambert (University City Historical Society), and Thaddeus Squire (Member of Overbrook Farms HD). Over the past year, SHCA has provided monthly updates to the Spruce Hill community on the historic district nomination process, included extensive FAQ sheet on our website, set up table top displays and distributed flyers at the Clark Park Farmer's Market, Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll event, and 2023 MayFair event, conducted 3 public forums focused on the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District consisting of Q&A with panelists from UCHS, PHC, and neighboring historic districts, and continue to engage neighbors and local business owners on the topic.

As you can see, we are extremely passionate about educating and engaging the community on historic preservation in Spruce Hill, with the goal of adding a layer of protection of the historic homes and structures. We firmly believe that the preservation of our architectural heritage is essential for maintaining the character and identity of our community.

Spruce Hill is a unique and significant cultural landscape that embodies the rich history and heritage of Philadelphia. Its well-preserved buildings, streetscapes, and landmarks tell the story of West Philadelphia's development and evolution over time. From its architectural diversity to its association with important historical events or figures, the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District holds immense cultural and educational value for residents and visitors alike.

By designating Spruce Hill as a historic district, we can ensure its protection and stewardship for future generations. This recognition will not only celebrate our past but also provide benefits by advancing heritage curiosity, fostering community pride, and potentially enhancing property values.

If included in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, SHCA is committed to continuing to explore and access valuable resources and incentives for preservation efforts, such as grants, tax credits, and technical assistance. These resources are crucial for supporting rehabilitation projects and maintaining the integrity of our historic built environment.

Preserving our cultural heritage is a responsibility that we owe to future generations, and designation as a historic district is a meaningful step towards fulfilling that obligation.

We are aware that a letter on behalf of Campus Apartments LLC, UC Housing, and "numerous other owners of real property" suggests our nomination is "incomplete insofar as it does not include a full and complete inventory of the proposed district" (Phillips, 4/5/24). We have been clear about the inventories up for nomination since we began in November of 2022. The inventory is complete for the Southeast Quadrant of Spruce Hill neighborhood. The proposed district does not cover all of the Spruce Hill neighborhood because the inventory is extremely large. This strategy to divide the neighborhood into quadrants was negotiated with the PHC in 2022 to address SHCA capacity to engage neighbors and fundraise. With nearly 2,000 properties in the entire neighborhood, creating a more manageable designation strategy benefits the PHC, SHCA, and all affected residents. This intentional and advised strategy in no way suggests our current Southeast Quadrant application is "incomplete and unripe" (Phillips, 4/5/24). We guarantee that our application is complete, ripe, and backed by countless eager supporters.

Thank you for your consideration and review. If you require any additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the SHCA Board.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BGPuchalsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Becca Geller-Puchalsky on behalf of the Spruce Hill Community Association Board

April 15, 2024

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Members of the Historical Commission,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the nomination of the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant, to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. As a resident of this vibrant neighborhood for nearly five years, I have developed a deep appreciation for its rich history, diverse architectural styles, and unique community character.

Arriving at Penn in 2017, I strayed from a required graduate admissions tour and explored Spruce Hill. I remember a distinct feeling of wonderment and awe at first seeing the vast array of historic homes, parks, and streetscapes. I also remember being shocked to learn that few of its buildings were historically protected. Having moved from the Midwest, where anything older than one hundred years was almost automatically appreciated and protected, this was, to me, unfathomable.

Indeed, the urgency of this designation effort cannot be overstated. Even in my somewhat shore tenure in Spruce Hill, I've witnessed an exponential increase in the number of demolitions and changes in the streets near my home. Undeniably, change is not inherently negative; rather, historic district designation is about *managing change thoughtfully*. It allows neighborhoods to evolve while safeguarding their unique character, architectural heritage, and cultural traditions.

Having studied and worked extensively in the fields of architecture and historic preservation, including my role as a Senior Research Associate at the Urban Heritage Project at the University of Pennsylvania, I have witnessed firsthand the value and significance of preserving our built environment holistically. The Spruce Hill neighborhood stands as a testament to the early development of streetcar suburbs and boasts one of the largest collections of Victorian-era housing in the nation.

Moreover, as a neighborhood near major universities, Spruce Hill experiences unique challenges and opportunities related to housing and development. Historic district designation can incentivize responsible development, promote human-scale density, and contribute to economic strength and environmental sustainability.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that designating Spruce Hill as a Historic District is a vital step in preserving our community's heritage, fostering economic resilience, and promoting a diverse and inclusive neighborhood. I urge you to support this nomination and help ensure a vibrant future for Spruce Hill and its residents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jacob W. Torkelson, MSHP, Affil. ASLA
Senior Research Associate
Department of Historic Preservation
Stuart Weitzman School of Design



April 15, 2024

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Members of the Historical Commission,

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the University City Historical Society, I would like to express our strongest support for the nomination of the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant.

UCHS has been enthusiastically supporting the Spruce Hill Community Association (SHCA) in their efforts to designate the neighborhood historic since 1987, when the first of three nomination efforts was undertaken. The baton was picked up again in 2022 with the most robust consensus yet among community members.

Spruce Hill is one of the most intact and early Victorian streetcar suburbs in the nation; its significance is irrefutable. In recent years, however, the district has recently been in the crosshairs of an onslaught of development that has demolished large swaths of the neighborhood's edges. The resulting development has destroyed the human scale of the neighborhood. Designation seeks to better manage the inevitable change that will continue to arrive in Spruce Hill, prioritizing people over profit.

Spruce Hill contains historic resources that narrate a prior era's successful attempts at both speculative and transit-oriented development. The wide variety of housing types – from rowhouses to large twins to 1920s-era apartments – provide housing to a wide variety of residents, a huge part of what makes the neighborhood inclusive and vibrant. Porches, adaptively reused garages or banks, and verdant sidewalks facilitate community gathering and allow small businesses to flourish.

UCHS is proud to be a neighborhood resource on preservation matters in West Philadelphia. Thank you for supporting historic designation for Spruce Hill.

Yours Truly,

Amy Lambert
President of the Board of Governors
University City Historical Society

CC: Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, Philadelphia's 3rd District
State Representative Rick Krajewski, Pennsylvania's 188th District

From: [Angela Kent](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: Support for Spruce Hill Historic District
Date: Monday, April 15, 2024 2:00:49 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

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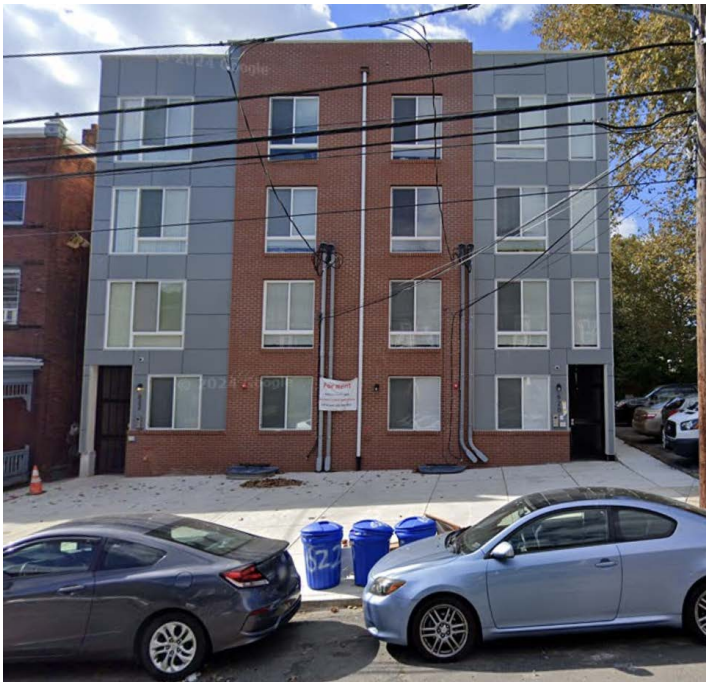
Dear Members of the Historical Commission,

I am writing in support of the Spruce Hill Historic District. My husband and I purchased our first home in Spruce Hill ten years ago and then became a part of the Chester-Regent Historic District. We are very proud and honored to live in such a beautiful, historic place. It gives me great comfort and joy to know that our home and block will be appreciated by current and future generations. I hope the same for all of Spruce Hill.

When we were first looking to purchase a home in the neighborhood, there was another house we were very much interested in on S. 42nd street. It had the most lovely historic details, both inside and out, and I photographed it at the time. We ended up purchasing a different home, and since then, that house on 42nd street has been demolished. I remember the day it came down, I felt devastated knowing we would have been able to save it had we become the owners. Or that it might have been saved had the previous nomination for Spruce Hill not been stalled. That was when I knew I wanted to be involved in the preservation of this neighborhood and recognized the urgent pace at which developers are removing historic properties and changing what we love most about this special place.

A before and after of the house and green space. 622 S. 42nd St.





Sincerely,

Angela Kent, NCIDQ

(410) 279-1087

Pronouns: she/her

From: [Andrew Figueiredo](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: (Nuanced) Constituent Opposition to Spruce Hill Historic District Designation
Date: Monday, April 15, 2024 8:54:18 PM

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Good evening,

My name is Andrew Figueiredo and I reside at 4300 Spruce St., Apt. A402, Philadelphia, PA 19104. I write today in my personal capacity as a Spruce Hill resident to oppose the historic designation proposed for the Spruce Hill neighborhood. I do share some of the concerns proponents of this designation have about developers who lack respect for adjacent historic properties, an egregious example of which has unfolded on 45th Street across from Clark Park. Something needs to be done to protect and preserve the heritage and character of the neighborhood. In my mind, that's why we have individual historic designations for certain buildings. That could and should be expanded.

However, I worry that a historic designation for the entire neighborhood is inadvisable due to the neighborhood's renter-heavy population. Spruce Hill's vibrance comes not just from the gorgeous architecture, but from its eclectic mix of students, artsy individuals, young families, and small businesses. Many residents live on middle-class incomes and have been adversely impacted by skyrocketing rents. Our neighborhood is not a museum; it's a living, breathing community that should welcome more people.

Supply and demand teaches us that the way to keep rents lower in Spruce Hill is to build *more*, not less. Yet NIMBYs often weaponize historic designations are [often](#) as a veto point to prevent construction of new units. Sweeping historic designations give regressive NIMBYs ammunition to halt development entirely. Putting a stop to the expansion of the housing supply would price out the people who make this neighborhood what it is today, putting at risk its welcoming spirit and inclusivity. Please do not pit preservation and construction against each other--we need both. We can protect individual historic properties without stymying development across Spruce Hill.

Thank you,
Andrew

From: [LiLing Choing](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: 4208-30 Chester Avenue Historic District, 4204 Chester Ave
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 10:47:04 AM

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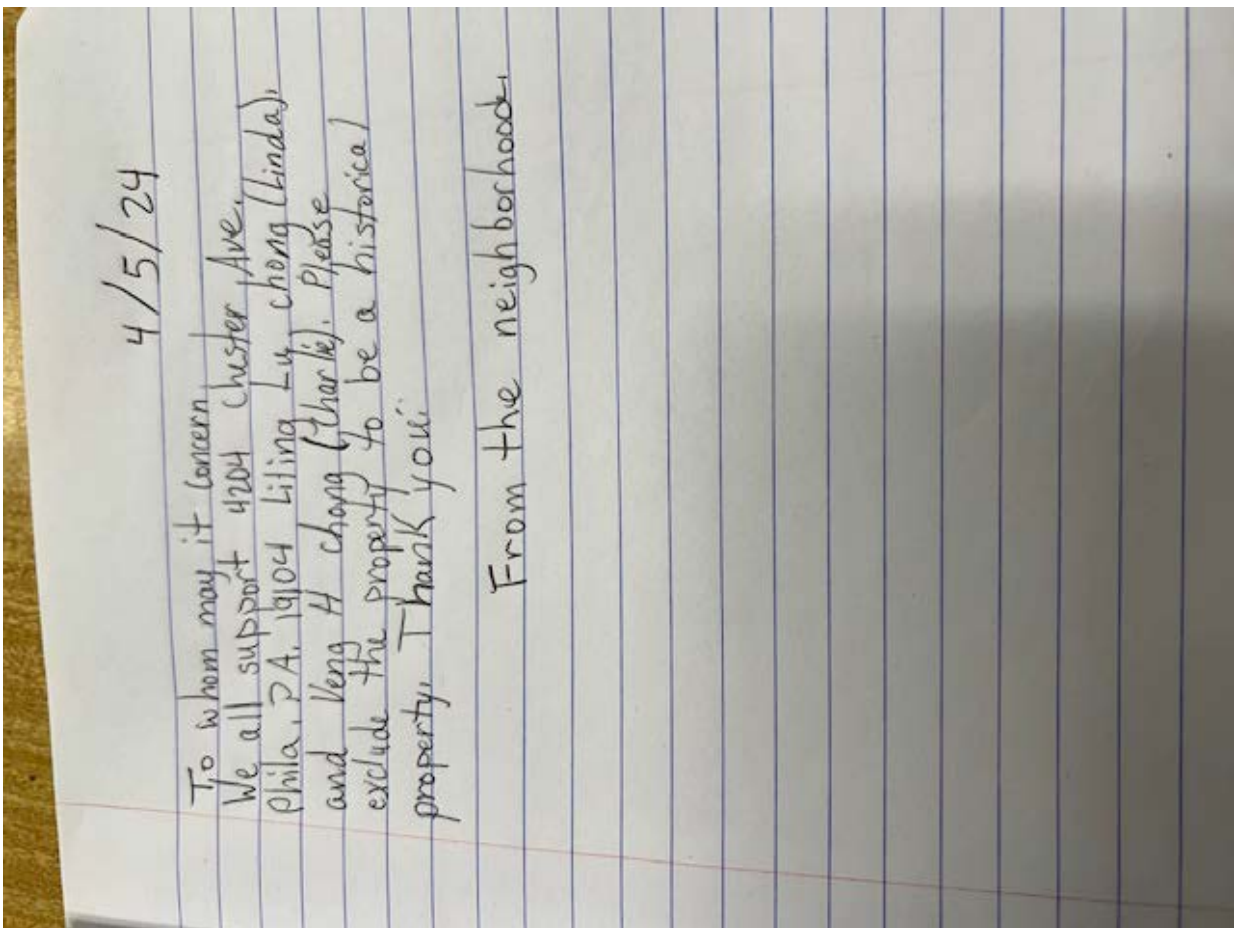
To whom it may concern:

We are writing to inform you that we would like to have 4204 Chester, Philadelphia PA 19104 excluded from the Historical Commissions Regulation.

Attached are pictures of signatures, references, support with names and contact information from the various members of our community who support us in this decision.

Please let us know if you have any questions. We look forward to to joining the Committee of Historical Designation call on 4/17 at 9:30am.

Best,
Linda and Charlie
Five Star Deli



Making 4204 Chester Ave a historical building would be an ~~undue hardship~~ ~~handship~~ for the small ~~business owners~~ ~~owners~~

- (1) Amie Sanders Please do not qualify the building.
4239 Baltimore Ave
Phila- PA 19104
(215) 370-2764
- (2) ~~Maury~~ We don't like 4204 Chester Ave to be historical. It's not quality. ~~we can't~~ ~~we can't~~ ~~we can't~~
4204 3rd floor ~~we can't~~ ~~we can't~~ ~~we can't~~
- (3) Maya: I would not like to be a historical landmark. I love this store. (267) 769-4138 (corner street)
- (4) Kueguy ~~Maury~~ (215) 571-9173
465 S. 41st St. Phila. PA. 19143
- (5) Shareff Jackson 267 730 0147 (P)
4210 Chester av Phila PA 19104
It's a staple of the neighborhood, and ~~it's~~ very nice store.
- (6) Jonathan Capor 215-980-8198
4218 Chester Ave Apt. 5
Philadelphia, PA 19104
This is a wonder for space and a necessity in the neighborhood.

(7) Gabriel West 215-834-6012 (1)
506 S. 41st St, Philly PA 19104
- A ridiculous an unnecessary burden,
don't do this to regular people
If you want historic status
PAY Linda & Charlie COMPENSATE
don't dictate.

(8) Jadelyn Watkins 509 S 42nd St.

ASHPEN WHITE 523-SOUTH
42nd St

267-732-83-80

Rajesh Kumar Singh, 4207, Apt. 104 (4)

(9) 4205 Chester Avenue Apt 402 (2)

Hannah Bengel

516-406-6478

It would make the process of
filing a small business difficult
~~XXXX~~

(0)

10 Laura Fernandez 2-14-24
4205 Chester Ave. (11)
Apt. 405
(215) 738-9960

(11) This stove is an important
small business in our neighborhood.
It should be a single step
process for them to be NO
registered historic site.

Thank you,
L. Fernandez (21)

(12) DAVID BYRO (21)
611 S. 42ND ST.
856-309-5659

AS A CUSTOMER OF FIVE STAR
DELI, I WANT TO COMMENT
THAT A HISTORICAL DESIGNATION
WOULD NOT BENEFIT ALL SMALL
BUSINESS OWNERS IN THE AREA

(13) Zachary Johnson
4207 Chester Ave
202-306-0189

(14) in support of the convenience store
-4124 Chester Ave
Krisztopherschumann
krisztopherschumann.20@gmail.com
itankara15@gmail.com
Ibrahim Tankara

~~207-34~~

(15) (215) 341-1100
Rob

(16) 555 South ^{4th} St

(17) Stephanie M. 19104
4943 Chester Ave
Philo PA 19143
484 425 3124

(18) Mackenzie Eltine
1734 monument st
215-776-7269

(19) Lisa Lu
4206 3rd Floor
Phone 267-535-1050

(20) Johny 267-535-1050
Sarah 215-435-0781
Love this store



(21) Hannah Harvey
555 S 43rd St
215 685 7529
very nice store!

(22) Richard Procel Jr
215-908-9469
6416 Akron St
RP

(25) Damian Hammond (25)
417-310-5020

Great selection and prices
42nd St

(26) Ken Dixon (15)

267-338-6641
Great service

(27) Lawrence Seels (15)

215-725-3455

great Service (Nice Personality)
2660 N. 31. St

(28) Collins, Isaac (20)

641 So YEWDELL
215-3817035

(29) Charlese House (25)

1609 S. 60th St
267 8790830

so convient and affordable

Please do not is histunal. Hardship for
the owner

- (41) Haven Kielbka
973-747-2520
- (41) 4204 Chester Ave 3rd floor
Vimal Bhowm
- (42) 609-676-1999
1217 S 46th St
- (43) Brendon Chin
(956) 739-1100
620 S 42nd
- (44) Ian Glass
445-998-2244
6205 42nd Street
- (45) Ricardo Rodriguez
4129 Woodland Ave
610-299-1245
- (46) De Yang Lu
4204 Chester Ave 2nd Floor
(215) 538-9397
- (47) Chris Chung
4204 Chester Ave 3rd Floor
(215) 833-6439
- (48) Kristy Chung
4204 Chester Ave 3rd Floor
(215) 927-1364

- (49) Chau
- (50)
- (51)
- (52)
- (53)
- (54)

(30) Edeai McFadden
8030 Mickener Avenue
Phila, PA 19150

(31) Health Center #5
267-498-8708
My lunch spot in an area there
are not alot of stores. Very needed
for access to food in area.

(32) Ethna Smith
4607 Chester Ave
Phila Pa 19104
565-990-0814

(33) Harold Battista
4209 Chester Ave #B11
561-234-9834

(34) BILL ALEXANDER
4213 BALTIMORE
PHILA. PA 19104
215-677-1733

(55) Samantha M Monroe
4208 Chester 19107
267 648 9590

(56) Haleigh Bunting
1926 S. Bowie
604-332-1974

(57) John Thomas
607 S 42nd St
267-206-7557

(58) Reginald Gayle
4224 Baltimore Ave
610 772 4997

(59) George McHale
4224 Baltimore Ave
267-262-4067

(60) Brian Stewart
4209 Chester Ave Blk
215-680-2252

- (41) Haven Kielbka
973-747-2520
- (41) 4204 Chester Ave 3rd floor
Vimal Bhowm
- (42) 609-676-1999
1217 S 46th St
- (43) Brendon Chin
(956) 779-1100
620 S 42nd
- (44) Ian Glass
445-998-2244
6205 42nd Street
- (45) Ricardo Rodriguez
4129 Woodland Ave
610-299-1245
- (46) De Yang Lu
4204 Chester Ave 2nd Floor
(215) 538-9397
- (47) Chris Chung
4204 Chester Ave 3rd Floor
(215) 833-6439
- (48) Kristy Chung
4204 Chester Ave 3rd Floor
(215) 927-1364

- (49) Chau
- (50)
- (51)
- (52)
- (53)
- (54)

73 Cole Schaffer
856-630-5062

74 Stefan Filipovski
970-972-9104
4209 Chester Ave

75 Geri Paige
(215) 222-5568
4107 Chester Ave.

76 VAN Crawley
215-688-3031
2607 N 23rd St

77 Alice Ascher
4107 Chester Ave B-1
Phila PA 19104

78 Chae Rouse
4209 Chester Ave
Phila Pa 19104
215 454-7190

(79) Kendall Utley
4209 Chester Ave
570-561-5890

(80) Malik Bright
4203 Chester Ave
610-304-9777

(81) Sammy Rivera
4219 Baltimore Ave
732-948-3835

(82) Pooja Philip
4212 Chester Ave
484-678-6428

(83) Jesse Dewald
4203 Chester Ave Apt 2B
412-818-9342

(84) ~~Alexa~~ Alexander Boyd
4107 Chester Ave Apt 1-A
215-382-3679

85 Tyler Jones
4215 Chester Ave
484-547-1232

OP

IP

86 Alphonse Hill
4203 Chester Ave
1267-504-1427
David Gordon
1232-S Willville St
267-770-3015

SP

87 Barbara Warnock
4223 Regent Sq.
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(215)-964-4078

signage for the store is not retained
modern store-front;
store does not retain
original appearance in
any case.

88 Tobias Brown
4228 Chester Ave #F
267-496-4717

89 Tyler Fankin
4205 Chester Ave

(90) Raphael Rivera
537 S 42nd St
215-917-6787

(91) Bradley Teaira
4207 Chester Ave. Apt. 206
(267) 271-2341

(92) Jennifer Wyse
4205 Chester Ave. Apt. 406
(757) 374 9786

(93) KEVRA LYONS
4124 Chester Ave Apt 2M
kevelry@proton.me

(94) VANESA JACKSON
~~#5~~ SJU
2150765

(95) SHARICA HARRIS
267-650-8152

(96)

Michael Permutathi
443-942-7070
4105 Spruce St

Jerome Gallman
215-789-1071
4207 Chester Ave., 102

Gladys Thomas
215-251-7738
4207 Chester Ave. 102

Jameson Cooper - Jameson.L.Cooper@gmail.com
267-816-1281
4207 Chester Ave. 102

Monica Withers
506 S 41st St Apt LJ
Philadelphia, PA 19104 monicaalise@hotmail.com
267-978-2022

(66) Joshua Morris
4224 Chester Ave
617-704-7565

(67) Imani Curtis
6025 Bliss Ave
215-594-5532

(68) Deja Paines
4228 Chester Ave
315-430-8120

(69) Myron James
1232 S. 51 St.
267-678-9587

(70) Jeffrey Sessoms

(71) 4510 Nehemiah camp
267-495-9321

(72) Delfine Brown
215-475-1646
AMEEN BEYAH
(267) 249-7467

(61) Deborah Walker
4525 Kingsessing Apt #1
Phila, Pa. 19143
215-779-7643

(62) Manra Okoefe
516 S 42nd St (B)
Philadelphia, PA 19104
908-967-2402

(63) Michael Grandson
523 S 42nd St Philadelphia Pa 19104
485-237-5423

(64) Cosmere Tuck
1207 Chester ave
215-618-6506

(65) Loren T. Bussay
91 Buena Vista Drive
New Castle DE 19720
610 726 4057

From: [Allison Thayer](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: 4204 Chester Ave Historical Designation
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 12:51:29 PM

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

To whom it may concern,

Please exclude 4204 Chester Avenue, the home of 5 Star Deli, from the proposed historical designation. The long-time owners Ms. Lina and Mr. Charlie tirelessly serve their community and provide fresh food and household items in an area where affordable resources are in short supply. Additionally, the store is a meeting spot for conversation and social safety for long-time and elder residents of the neighborhood. Construction or modification to the building could cause the owners and neighbors undue hardship, and the historical designation would not be benefit the local and permanent residents of our neighborhood. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Allison Thayer
1129 S 46th Street

From: [Vivian Ng](#)
To: [preservation: Jamie Gauthier](#)
Cc: SHhistoricPreservation@gmail.com
Subject: I Oppose the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 1:36:07 PM

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear PHC, Councilmember Gauthier, and Spruce Hill Civic Association,

I oppose the designation of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant.

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 -- accelerating gentrification in Spruce Hill, and reduce access for diverse families to the Penn Alexander school. It will also burden small business owners and limit new retail from modifying buildings to fit their business.

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

Vivian Ng
4505 Spruce St, Philadelphia, PA 19139

From: [Chris Kucewicz](#)
To: [preservation: Jamie Gauthier](#)
Cc: SHhistoricPreservation@gmail.com
Subject: I Oppose the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 2:52:29 PM

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear PHC, Councilmember Gauthier, and Spruce Hill Civic Association,

I oppose the designation of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant.

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 -- accelerating gentrification in Spruce Hill, and reduce access for diverse families to the Penn Alexander school. It will also burden small business owners and limit new retail from modifying buildings to fit their business.

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

Best regards,

Chris Kucewicz
221 S. 51st St.
Philadelphia, PA 19139

From: [Leo Wagner](#)
To: [preservation: %20jamie.gauthier@phila.gov](mailto:preservation:%20jamie.gauthier@phila.gov)
Subject: No Historic District in Spruce Hill
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 1:13:34 PM

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Leo Wagner, I am a student of urban planning, a resident of the same Spruce Hill home for three years, a voter, and a renter. I urge Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, the Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC), and local leaders to **reject** the [proposed Spruce Hill historic district, southeast quadrant](#). Instead, I urge leaders to support individual designation to achieve a balance between preservation and development. Spruce Hill is a historic neighborhood, but it is also, **whether SHCA likes it or not, a neighborhood of renters**. Renters are integral to the vitality of the community, and many are attracted to Spruce Hill precisely because of its affordable rental housing in addition to its amenities and accessibility.

This historic district **will harm district residents, the neighborhood and the city:**

- It will make **home repairs more complicated, expensive and time-intensive**
 - PHC review can add months to a home renovation project, and the PHC can arbitrarily deny modifications to a property without any way for property owners to appeal
- It will **raise rents and home prices** by **restricting the supply of new housing**
 - Preventing the construction of new homes will reduce affordability, accelerate gentrification in Spruce Hill, and reduce access for diverse families to the public Sadie Alexander - Penn Partnership public elementary school.
- It will **burden small business owners** and **limit new retail businesses** from modifying buildings to fit their business.

The Historic Register **already protects** many properties in Spruce Hill.

- Nearly 200 properties in the proposed historic district are **already** on the Historic Register.
- Continued individual designation can protect the most historically significant properties while allowing more residents to share in this amenity-rich neighborhood and lowering the cost of maintaining historic properties

The goal of this historic district seems to be blocking development, and preventing additional renters from living in the neighborhood. Renters, such as myself, care about the community and contribute to the neighborhood's civic life, economy, and more. We want to be able to stay and thrive in the neighborhood, which a historic district will impede.

Sincerely,

Leo Wagner
4222 Baltimore Avenue, 1F
Philadelphia, PA 19104

From: [David](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 3:11:41 PM

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April 16, 2024

From:
Save Our Sites
2005 Cambridge Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

To: The Designation Committee of the Philadelphia Historical Commission

Re: Designation of the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant

Save Our Sites wholeheartedly supports the designation of the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeast Quadrant. The overall district, comprised of four quadrants, possesses a collection of Victorian residential structures unsurpassed in quantity and quality in the entire United States. The preservation of this invaluable collection is so important in maintaining and enhancing the livability of our Philadelphia community. Without question, increased livability for any city, ultimately results in needed economic benefit.

From a practical perspective, the division of the larger district into four discrete quadrants is very logical and appropriate. This division, enables all parties involved to address matters of concern, with respect to the designation of each quadrant, in a time-saving, orderly and fair manner.

Again, Save Our Sites supports the designation of the Southeast Quadrant of the Spruce Hill Historic District, and looks forward to the eventual nomination and designation of the other three quadrants.

David S. Traub, AIA Emeritus
Co-Founder of Save Our Sites
2005 Cambridge Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130
davidstraub@verizon.net
215-915-6627



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: [A Mullin](#)
To: [preservation: Jamie Gauthier](#)
Cc: SHhistoricPreservation@gmail.com
Subject: I Oppose the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 12:57:06 PM

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Dear PHC, Councilmember Gauthier, and Spruce Hill Civic Association,

I oppose the designation of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant.

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 -- accelerating gentrification in Spruce Hill, and reduce access for diverse families to the Penn Alexander school. It will also burden small business owners and limit new retail from modifying buildings to fit their business.

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

Anna Mullin
312 n 39th St
Philadelphia PA
19104

From: [Anthony West](#)
To: [preservation](#); [Jamie Gauthier](#)
Subject: Spruce Hill Historic District will enhance affordability
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 8:10:32 AM

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Designation of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant is a key to maintaining our community's affordability and diversity..

Preserving and protecting older housing costs much less than demolishing and replacing it. That is a fact of life in Spruce Hill, where gentrification is being driven largely by new construction today. Our distinctive historic architecture, in contrast, is well suited to accommodate the wide range of incomes we have long found here. It creates diversity, not gentrification.

Appropriate subsidies exist for low-income home repairs under Historic Designation. These programs should be reviewed and extended as needed by municipal officials for a fraction of the cost of new housing. Civic leaders can spread information on this assistance and maximize access to it.

Tony West
503 S. 44th St.

From: [Gail Massey](#)
To: [Jamie Gauthier](#); [preservation](#)
Cc: [SHhistoricPreservation@gmail.com](#)
Subject: I Support the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 9:48:22 PM

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I live in Cedar Park, but Spruce Hill is a lovely area to stroll through and enjoy the amenities. The idea of developers demolishing the beautiful homes and putting up bare bones apartments so they can get more rent money is deplorable.

This is happening in other areas of the city also.

There are plenty of beyond hope houses and vacant land where these developers could do some good.

Why should anyone visit this area if it is cookie cutter apartments?

Spruce Hill (and much of Philadelphia) must be preserved!

Thank you!

Gail Massey

From: [Becca Geller-Puchalsky](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: supporting the SHCA nomination
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 5:41:12 AM

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Good morning,

I have been a resident of Spruce Hill since 2012. It has been a joy to live here in my 20s and now raise my family here. We deeply value the porches where we can talk and hang out with friends/neighbors. We value the extensive tree canopy. We value the diversity of residents. I am in strong support of this nomination.

Becca Geller-Puchalsky

From: [Bill Russell](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: Supporting the Spruce Hill historic nomination
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 3:43:14 PM

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Hi -

I am reaching out because I am a resident of Spruce Hill, and wanted to voice my support for the historic designation.

As a former renter and now homeowner, I have experienced the stark divide between homes owned by local residents vs. corporate landlords who are seeking to profit off of our community. My former rental was an incredible building that has even been featured in architecture books about Philadelphia. I gradually watched the unit decline to the point I felt it was unsafe to live there any longer.

I do not want to stand by and watch these great historic buildings crumble under derelict management. I think this historical designation will help preserve the rich architectural context in Spruce Hill that is worthy of respect and continued investment.

Thank you,
Bill Russell

From: [GERALDIN PAIGE](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: The property of Veng and LiLing Choing
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 2:43:30 AM

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

I am writing to you on behalf of Veng and LiLing Choing, the owners of Five Star Deli at 4204 Chester Avenue. Mr. and Mrs. Choing were recently informed that their property is under consideration for being designated as a historic site. However, the Historical Commission reviewed their property on May 25, 2022 and excluded it from such a designation.

Mr. and Mrs. Choing have faithfully supported this community for over 20 years. To me and many others in this area, these wonderful people are far more than owners of a small store; their kindness, generosity, and friendship have endeared Veng and LiLing to countless people over the years, and for many of us, they are parts of our extended families.

Veng and LiLing are not only an important part of our community due to the services they provide, but they have been caring and loving members who never hesitate to lend a helping hand to those in need. I am deeply concerned about the financial burden that Mr. and Mrs. Choing will endure if their property is labeled as a historic site. The extra costs associated with this designation will create an undue financial hardship for them and their family. It is for this reason that I ask you to exclude their property as a historic site.

Sincerely,
Geraldine Paige

From: [Leonard Bonarek](#)
To: [Jamie Gauthier](#); [preservation](#)
Cc: [Garden Court Zoning](#); [SHhistoricPreservation@gmail.com](#)
Subject: I Wholeheartedly Oppose the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:38:08 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear PHC, Councilmember Gauthier, and Spruce Hill Civic Association,

I oppose the designation of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant.

I was born and raised in Takoma Park, Maryland, a community that (I believe with the best intentions) was an early adopter of historic designation for neighborhoods. Today, Takoma Park is one of the most expensive places to live in the DC area, an area known for its lack of housing affordability.

I'll speak plainly: I make \$95,000 and I can't afford housing in my hometown. Even if I could afford to return, my community no longer exists, having seen 100% turnover since my childhood. The community that replaced it is far less diverse, far wealthier, and apparently has persistent turnover. In my childhood, it was rare for a house to be sold and for a new neighbor to arrive. Today there are "for sale" signs all around my old neighborhood.

Here and now in Philly, market forces and local policy choices are already sending Garden Court and Spruce Hill in this direction, and it is very concerning to me. Looking at current valuations and property tax rate in my neighborhood, I'm not sure that I will be able to afford to stay in my modest home without subdividing it, even though I make over double the median income for our city. This is a deeply troubling pattern as my case is far from unique.

Designating a historic district absent rezoning to allow for more density is a policy choice that will have disastrous results by every metric except home valuation.

Below is my childhood home: 7504 Hancock Ave, 20912. My parents sold it in 1995 for \$175,000. It is currently estimated to be worth \$1.34 million per Zillow. Notably, this is not in Takoma Park's historic district. Home sizes and valuations per square foot are significantly higher there.



Please consider this cautionary tale carefully, as it would be tragic for me to be orphaned from a second community that I call home in my lifetime. Designating Spruce Hill as historic will actively harm me and my family. It's that simple.

I also cosign everything below.

Historic Designation 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 -- accelerating gentrification in Spruce Hill, and reduce access for diverse families to the Penn Alexander school. It will also burden small business owners and limit new retail from modifying buildings to fit their business.

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

Leonard Bonarek
449 S 48th St

From: [Julia Murdza](#)
To: [preservation: Jamie Gauthier](#)
Cc: SHhistoricPreservation@gmail.com
Subject: I Oppose the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant
Date: Thursday, April 18, 2024 9:59:56 AM

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear PHC, Councilmember Gauthier, and Spruce Hill Civic Association,

I oppose the designation of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant.

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 -- accelerating gentrification in Spruce Hill, and reduce access for diverse families to the Penn Alexander school. It will also burden small business owners and limit new retail from modifying buildings to fit their business.

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

Julia Murdza
4735 Hazel Ave, Philadelphia PA, 19143

From: [Alexander Milone](#)
To: [preservation: Jamie Gauthier](#)
Cc: SHhistoricPreservation@gmail.com
Subject: I Oppose the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant
Date: Thursday, April 18, 2024 8:04:21 PM

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear PHC, Councilmember Gauthier, and Spruce Hill Civic Association,

I oppose the designation of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant.

It will make home repairs more complicated, expensive and time intensive, limiting all but the wealthiest residents from being able to maintain and repair their homes. It will also raise rents and home prices by restricting the supply of new housing -- accelerating gentrification in Spruce Hill, and reducing access for diverse families to the Penn Alexander school. It will also burden small business owners and limit new retail from modifying buildings to fit their business. This proposed district is being pushed by a select and privileged group of residents who are attempting to push out low income residents and block anything new from being built in the district that costs less than 1 million dollars. There is no justification for this proposed historic district that necessitates it being implemented vs continuing to approve properties to the historic register based on individual merits.

There is an important balance that must be achieved between the preservation of historic buildings and allowing places to change with the times. This proposal doesn't do that, it only makes the situation worse for everyone but existing wealthy homeowners.

Sincerely,
Alexander Milone
1347 S Bouiver ST.
Philadelphia PA, 19146

From: [Will Tung](#)
To: [Jamie Gauthier](#); [preservation](#)
Cc: [Andrew Goodman](#); SHhistoricPreservation@gmail.com
Subject: I Oppose the Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant
Date: Thursday, April 18, 2024 4:56:12 PM

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Dear PHC, Councilmember Gauthier, and Spruce Hill Civic Association,

I oppose the designation of the proposed Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant.

When I was as an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania I rented apartments in both 4029 Spruce Street and 4054 Spruce Street — both within the proposed district. It was affordability that drove me to seek off-campus housing -- Penn tuition isn't cheap, and my college years were an extremely stressful time for my family and myself financially.

Establishing a historic district here will further drive up area rents by both mandating expensive repairs and by making housing more difficult to build.

We are facing an affordable housing crisis both citywide and here in West Philly. The establishment of a historic district runs counter to our shared values of ensuring West Philly maintains its economic and racial diversity.

The disdain I hear from my fellow neighbors for undergraduates and newer residents is disheartening -- because my experience living in Spruce Hill in my early 20s is where I found my love of Philadelphia, and it is in West Philly where my wife and I chose to settle down and raise a family. Driving our decision to locate here is affordability and proximity to transit above aesthetics.

I now work in municipal service as a firefighter. I lament that neighborhoods like Spruce Hill, its many public amenities, and excellent public schools are out of reach for city employees like me due to a lack of available affordable housing.

This historic designation will only further cement Spruce Hill as a neighborhood only for the wealthiest Philadelphians.

We need to consider the people who inhabit a neighborhood and make sure their needs come before the physical appearance of its buildings.

Will Tung
5120 Springfield Ave
973-222-5690

Fw: Spruce Hill Historic designation

preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Wed 4/24/2024 10:02 AM

To: Kim Chantry <Kim.Chantry@Phila.gov>

From: murray dubin <murray.dubin@gmail.com>**Sent:** Tuesday, April 23, 2024 2:02 PM**To:** preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>**Subject:** Spruce Hill Historic designation

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gentlepeople,

I have lived in the southeast quadrant of the current historic designation request since 1971, in an apartment on the corner of Pine and St. Marks for less than two years, as a homeowner on the 4200 block of Osage for 46 years, and in the condo on 42nd Street, between Pine and Osage for nearly five years. If you look at these three spots, you'll see that my wife, Libby, and I have moved less than 100 yards since 1971.

Why mess up a good thing?

Don't let the developers knock down one gorgeous old house with a high rise apartment box.

Don't let them mess it up.

sincerely,

Murray Dubin
4200 Pine Street
Apt. 105
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104
267-290-6161