

OWNER COMMENT RECEIVED
FOR WASHINGTON SQUARE WEST
HISTORIC DISTRICT

Proposed Washington square west historic district

Carl Lysaght <cly8419@gmail.com>

Sat 3/23/2024 1:51 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Per the letter I received today, please update me by email about this proposed historic district. You can send updates to this email. I own 1026 Pine St #7, which is within the district.

I also want to lodge my opposition to this district. The last thing I need is you being a pain in the ass when I want to replace a window.

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Washington Square West Historic Nomination Updates

Barbara Arvanitis <barbara.arvanitis@gmail.com>

Sun 3/24/2024 11:36 AM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Mr. Farnham,

I am an owner of a historic property in Washington Square West - 216 South Jessup Street, and am requesting to be placed on the list for email updates regarding the nomination of the district.

I am thrilled about the nomination and look forward to your email updates.

Thank you,

Barbara Arvanitis

Please remove my property from the proposed designation

francine sandrow <fransandrow@hotmail.com>

Sat 3/30/2024 11:49 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; Kevin Hoekzema@yahoo.com <kevinhoekzema@yahoo.com>

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To whom it may concern,

Please do not consider 825-27 Lombard Street as part of the upcoming discussion in the nomination for designation in historic districts. I will be attending every meeting to fight this designation, and do not intend to allow it to be included in district. It is on the outer boundary and there is no reason it cannot be excluded.

If you have any questions, please call me at 215-694-7775. I have had horrible experiences with the historic society and they are a blight on homeowner latitude.

I expect to hear from you regarding removal of my property from the zone as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Francine Sandrow
Kevin Hoekzema

Jaki <jaki@jakiashford.com>
To: Jaki <jaki@jakiashford.com>

Thu, Apr 4, 2024 at 3:01 PM

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D
The Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia 19102
215-686-7660

Re: Proposal of Washington Square West Historical District

April 3, 2024

Dear Dr. Farnham,

I have owned my properties at 261 S.9th & Street 226 S.Schell Street since 1978 and know that this proposal to create a historic district is of absolutely no benefit to property owners.

This will only have a negative impact on property owners by imposing more bureaucratic encumbrances.

The list of what will require agency approval is ridiculously long.

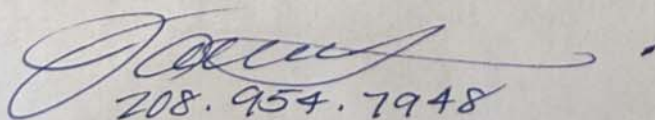
And this will also create an additional burden for people wanting to sell their property because past experience proves that these restrictions are only seen as negatives to potential buyers.

The vast majority of the properties in our area have no historical significance whatsoever.

And those that have some historical value have already been recorded into the National Register of Historic Places and have sign posts and plaques on or in front of the property informing the public of their historical relevance.

Washington Square West is already a thriving neighborhood and this initiative will only create a hardship for property owners with nothing to be gained by them.

I am completely opposed to this proposal.


208.954.7948

Washington Square West Historic District

Josh Angotti <angottijosh@gmail.com>

Sat 4/20/2024 7:38 AM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Hello,

I received a letter regarding Washington Square West and its nomination for Historic District status. I own 333-35 S 13th Street, which is a small triplex within the proposed historic district and I'm very concerned about the added maintenance and upkeep costs associated with historic district designation. I purchased the property in 2014 and have made many financial sacrifices to upgrade and improve the appearance of the building; however historic designation will make future improvements less affordable and will absolutely impact my ability to maintain my current upkeep schedule, and there are others who feel similarly.

Is there any opportunity for home/building owners to reject this proposal? If so, what is the process for doing so? Thank you.

Josh Angotti

AngottiJosh@gmail.com

571.332.0985

Proposed Washington Square West Historic District

Frazar Thomas <frazar.thomas@gmail.com>

Fri 4/19/2024 3:03 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Hello, my name is Frazar Thomas, and I own a home within the proposed boundaries of the new historic district for Washington Square West. I'm writing to register my opposition to the project. What makes this neighborhood so great is that it is dynamic and affordable, and I've been glad to see all the new housing go up in the area lately. Adding a new bureaucratic hurdle to new housing will only force out the young and lower income people that make this neighborhood great. Since both of the meetings are on weekday mornings, I will probably not be able to attend because of work, so I hope that by writing you I can at least give you some sense that there are people in the proposed district who are against this plan.

Thanks very much for your time,
Frazar Thomas

I Oppose the Washington Square West Historic District

Todd Pitock <todd.pitock@gmail.com>

Mon 5/13/2024 7:30 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.

Todd Pitock

www.toddpitock.com
todd@toddpitock.com
610-715-9540 (mobile)
Skype: toddpitock
LinkedIn: toddpitock

Fw: Historic Designation

preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Wed 5/15/2024 7:26 AM

To:Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>

Cc:Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

From: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 7:32 PM

To: Eleanor Wilner <pophys@aol.com>

Cc: WSWCA President <president@washwestcivic.org>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; Anne Kelly <Anne.Kelly@phila.gov>

Subject: RE: Historic Designation

Eleanor

I have copied Preservation to share you input and concern on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Mark

Councilmember Mark Squilla

1st District City Council

City of Philadelphia

332 City Hall

Philadelphia, PA 19107

p. 215-686-3458

f. 215-686-1931

e. Mark.Squilla@Phila.Gov

From: Eleanor Wilner <pophys@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 11:43 AM

To: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>

Subject: Historic Designation

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Dear Councilman Squilla,

We have owned a home in Washington Square West (and been registered Democrats) for nearly fifty years. We have recently been notified by the Philadelphia Historical Commission that they are proposing a Historical Designation of Washington Square West. We are strongly opposed to this proposal for a whole variety of reasons, foremost of which is the incredible diversity of this area in every aspect, historically, socially, commercially, economically. We are not, and do not wish to be, Society Hill. We urge you to use your office to make sure that this proposal does not come to pass. Surely the city can make sure that demolitions get PHC approval without a designation that would not only destroy much of the uniqueness of the area, but would undoubtedly cause financial hardship for some of our neighbors.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

Robert Weinberg and Eleanor Willner

324 S 12th Street



Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP

2005 Market St #2600

Philadelphia, PA 19103

www.stradley.com

Kevin R. Boyle

Co-Chairman

kboyle@stradley.com

215.564.8708

May 15, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Committee on Historic Designation
1515 Arch Street
13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
preservation@phila.gov

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
preservation@phila.gov

RE: **Classification of (i) 1230 Lombard Street (OPA 885438620), and (ii) 1232-1234 Lombard Street (OPA 885438840) (collectively, the “Property”) in the prospective Washington Square West Historic District**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am writing to you on behalf of Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The purpose of this letter is to advise you that the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and its related parishes and organizations (collectively, the “Archdiocese”) strongly oppose the establishment of the above referenced district to the extent that it includes any real property owned or operated by them. While the Archdiocese supports the concept of historic preservation, it opposes all designation of its property as historic landmarks whether through individual designation or through inclusion in a historic district. The reasons for the objections, include, but are not limited to, the unconstitutional infringement upon the rights of the Archdiocese to freedom of religion and various property rights as guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Within the City of Philadelphia, the Archdiocese already bears a burden with respect to historic preservation, given the significant number of properties that have some form of historic

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May 15, 2024

Page 2

designation, and the creation of the above district only increases the burden. Indeed, several former parish sites within the proposed district are already designated and have been, according to the nomination inventory, since 1961 and 1984, as applicable.

While the goals of historic preservation are laudable, operations of property owners, particularly non-profit facilities such as those owned by the Archdiocese, are constantly confronted with increased operating costs and decreasing revenues, especially when considering the age and type of properties involved. The additional financial constraints, delays and other problems created by owning property subjected to the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance have in the past interfered with the religious and spiritual goals of the Archdiocese.

In this instance, the Property consists of a modern, surface parking lot, and the Archdiocese does not believe that the goals of historic preservation are served by classifying this type of property as "contributing." While the Archdiocese opposes the creation of the historic district in general, it respectfully requests that in any final creation of the Washington Square West Historic District that the Property be reclassified as non-contributing.

Kindly keep me advised of any subsequent developments in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Boyle", written in a cursive style.

Kevin R. Boyle

Cc (via email only):

Suzanne Hueston (shueston@archphila.org)

Phil Schneider (pschneider@archphila.org)

I Oppose the Washington Square West Historic District

Jared Sobel <jsobel9@gmail.com>

Fri 5/10/2024 11:13 AM

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

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

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

I purchased my home in January of 2020. I have no intention of moving out of it anytime soon.

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. I had planned on replacing my steel windows with modern, energy-efficient and environmentally friendly windows. I cannot afford to do that with the historical regulations in place. Therefore, my windows will remain as they are and more energy will be expended on HVAC.

I implore you to instead support individual designation to achieve a pragmatic balance between preservation and development. If a home is historic, it should be designated. My home is not historic; it is just a random home on a small side street of Philly.

I just want to maintain it the best I can afford without people telling me what, when, where, and how I can or cannot do what I want to my personal property.

If given historic designation, I will ultimately not be able to properly maintain my home and have to eventually move out. Please do not force Philadelphians like myself out of our homes. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,
Jared Sobel
1321 Rodman St.
Philadelphia, PA 19147

RE: Historic designation of Washington Square West

Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>

Wed 5/15/2024 12:53 PM

To: Andrea Chenier <r.andreachenier@gmail.com>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Cc: WSWCA President <president@washwestcivic.org>

Andrea,

I have copied Preservation to alert them of this concerns.

Sincerely,

Mark

Councilmember Mark Squilla
1st District City Council
City of Philadelphia
332 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
p. 215-686-3458
f. 215-686-1931
e. Mark.Squilla@Phila.Gov

From: Andrea Chenier <r.andreachenier@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2024 10:54 AM
To: Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>
Subject: Historic designation of Washington Square West

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Mr. Squilla,

I wish to express my opposition to the current push to create a historic district in Washington Square West (where I live).

1.) The consequences of the proposal seem poorly considered, particularly unintended consequences. This may include increasing inequality and decreasing diversity in the area since only residents with adequate resources would be able to maintain and restore homes in a manner acceptable to the Historical Commission.

2.) The power of the Historical Commission is overly broad and my past experience (personal and in the neighborhood) is that

the Commission is extremely rigid in their interpretation of their mandate. Some years ago I experienced unprofessional (rude) behavior from one of their key staff in response to a query.

3.) The Historical Commission seemingly gives little or no consideration to other critical issues, such as energy efficiency (which in my view is more important in the long term than strict historical accuracy). In the case of their control over roofing and flashing, they might deny improved methods of preventing roof leakage in the name of historical accuracy. Their decisions lack transparency.

4.) None of the information I've received actually states which individual or which agency or institution (City Council?) approves the project or the timeline in which approval will be given or denied; another example of lack of transparency. I have also been unable to determine which individuals or organizations initiated and are so strongly promoting this change.

5.) Another level of bureaucracy will certainly not facilitate the creation of historically reasonable enhancements to individually-owned homes and businesses.

6.) With no evidence other than the apparent haste of the proposal, I suspect the designation of WSW as an entire historic district is a fait accompli. I further suspect the open meetings are mere window dressing to give the appearance of openness and transparency.

These points aside, I am generally in favor of historic districts, and in particular the destruction caused by developers, but I also believe the rigidity of some of these commissions - and Philadelphia's in particular - prevents flexibility and updating policies to account for changing conditions over time.

I would appreciate your knowing your position on this proposal, and your comments on my concerns.

Thank you,

Dick Brand
1224 Panama Street

PS. I appreciate the help your office provided to me when the City made a clerical record regarding my real estate taxes.

Support for the Washington Square West Historic District

Larry Bishop <larrybishop44@comcast.net>

Thu 5/16/2024 11:40 AM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed historic district in Washington Square West. Originally proposed in 2009, it's high time to recognize the significance of approximately 26 city blocks.

The district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, which include social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological histories. The Washington Square West Historic District illustrates the development of Philadelphia's residential and commercial core over more than two centuries.

I urge the Historical Commission to approve the Washington Square West Historic District.

C. Larry Bishop
1208 Addison Wall
Philadelphia Pa 19147

Support for the Washington Square West Historic District

tobeydichter@gmail.com <tobeydichter@gmail.com>

Thu 5/16/2024 9:52 AM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

As resident of Wash West for 55 years, I urge you to approve the proposed designation of **Historic District for Washington Square West**. We live on Clinton Street, which Louis Kahn said was the only street he'd live on in Philadelphia. It and the surrounding area are quintessential olde Philadelphia and represent for generations to come the look and feel of our history.

I understand that the district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, which include social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological histories. The Washington Square West Historic District illustrates the development of Philadelphia's residential and commercial core over more than two centuries. It is a gem worth preserving!

I urge the Historical Commission to approve the Washington Square West Historic District.

Thank you!!

Tobey Gordon Dichter
1017 Clinton Street
Philadelphia PA 19107
215 922 1633

Support for the Washington Square West Historic District

Peter Furcht <pfurcht@comcast.net>

Thu 5/16/2024 11:21 AM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed historic district in Washington Square West. Originally proposed in 2009, it's high time to recognize the significance of approximately 26 city blocks.

The district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, which include social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological histories. The Washington Square West Historic District illustrates the development of Philadelphia's residential and commercial core over more than two centuries.

I urge the Historical Commission to approve the Washington Square West Historic District.

Peter Furcht
920 Clinton Street
Unit 2R
Phil., PA 19107

pfurcht@comcast.net

Opposition to the Proposed Washington Square West Historic District

Josh Zugergerman <j.zugergerman@gmail.com>

Sat 5/18/2024 8:21 PM

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

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

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Dear PHC and Councilmember Squilla,

I live in Washington Square West and am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed historic district covering the entirety of my neighborhood. While I provide more detail about my concerns below, in short it's a blanket designation in a neighborhood that is predominantly not historic, which will be burdensome, and expensive. To limit the overreach and burden, the neighborhood would be better served by individuals electing to participate on their own accord and individual selection of actual historic homes by the PHC

The PHC's March 21st letter was the first I heard that my neighborhood, and my house, would be contained in this new proposed historic district. Adding insult to injury, per the letter I would now need the PHC's approval to make changes to the exterior of my house as of March 21st, despite the fact that the historic district has not even been approved yet.

Setting that aside, my opposition to the proposed district stems from the fact that it is unnecessarily burdensome on the houses that are not in fact historic, such as mine, which was built in 1963 per the PHC's own records. In fact, the entire line of houses on Quince St. between Waverly St. and Lombard St. were all built in 1963, and face a surface level parking lot, also not a historic property. There is no reason that my home, or the many others that are not actually historic, should be subject to the PHC's oversight concerning alterations (cosmetic or otherwise) to the exterior.

As the PHC noted in its letter, "[m]ore than 26,000 properties illustrating Philadelphia's history from its earliest years to the recent past have been designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places." It's clear that the PHC is fully capable of designating properties that warrant such designation, including many in Washington Square West. In fact, any neighbor who wishes to have their house designated as historic is free to nominate it to the PHC. But designating the entire neighborhood, including those of us that oppose having our homes designated, is both lazy and a tremendous overreach that will simply saddle the owners of non-historic homes with pointless burdens, barriers, and bureaucracy.

For those reasons I respectfully request that you reject the establishment of the Washington Square West Historic District. Thank you for your consideration.

Josh Zugergerman
409 S. Quince St.

Pause Philadelphia Historical Commission's Proposed Historic Designation

amanda mott <ammott80@hotmail.com>

Sat 5/18/2024 10:49 PM

To: mark.Squilla@philly.gov <mark.Squilla@philly.gov>

Cc: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Amanda Mott

1205 Pine Street

Philadelphia, PA 19107

Re: Philadelphia Historical Commission's Proposed Historic Designation of Washington Square West

May 18, 2024

Dear Councilmember Squilla:

I am writing to urge you to pause the proposed Philadelphia Historical Commission's Historic Designation for the Washington Square West neighborhood. I have attended a few of the virtual meetings held by the WSW Civic Association and PHC and have also read several studies on the topic and feel that further consideration is needed.

In 2026 Philadelphia will be front and center as America celebrates the nation's 250th birthday, an historic milestone worth celebrating. Yet, what kind of America do we want to celebrate: One that is still stuck in the Federal period or one that embraces the notion of democracy, innovation, and diversity?

I enjoy the history of the city and celebrate the natural layers, each generation's imprint that indicates a city that is lived in, a city that has energy, a city that has challenges, and one that invites progress while celebrating the past.

30 years ago, I chose to purchase a house in Washington Square West that had history—feeling a connection to the inhabitants that came before me was a choice. I also chose a neighborhood that was progressive. The house I have settled in had an eclectic mix of old and new. I bought from an artist whose personal touches called my name, even as I've updated a few things, I have uncovered the unique handprint of other generations that have called 1205 Pine Street home. There are signs of the boarding house c. 1900s – thick hinges where a door once hung, a letter by a boarder who writes home to Jamaica in 1908 imploring his mother to find him “a suitable Jamaican wife;” a deco metallic 1970s wallpaper uncovered here; a basement hearth from the 1850's hidden behind plaster and bricked up. The house has changed over time.

Do Philadelphia's leaders and the civic leaders, residents, and business owners in Washington Square West want a neighborhood that is stuck in 2024, a neighborhood that lacks opportunity for innovation, diversity, and vibrance? Or do we want a neighborhood that accurately portrays, the richness of a city that has a rich past, good and bad, and a place that reflects on what has gone before being ready to tell new stories, important stories yet to be written?

With the pressing challenges that every neighborhood in the city is facing from crime to climate change and future needs we have not yet realized, we need to have the freedom to hear from changemakers, architects, engineers, and artists with the ability to consider all ideas and welcome a vision that is rooted in looking forward not backward.

Is the value of this neighborhood and my home to be the date the house was built or the brick facade? Or will the value be counted in the richness of the progression over time, what it might be 30 years from now, how it might benefit the neighborhood 50 years from now?

I urge you to consider how each family's legacy left a patina on this house and also on the city and neighborhood and on the city's story and to realize nothing stands still, nor should it. My house abuts a series of newer houses to the west that were built from the foundation of a former police precinct and fire house that replaced neighboring row homes at some time between 1895 and 1920 according to maps available via the Greater Philadelphia Geo History Network pages <https://www.philageohistory.org/tiles/viewer/>. At the corner of 11th and Pine is Khan Park that was on the site of a former [The Gladstone Apartments which opened on Pine and 11th Streets in 1890](#) replacing what an 1875 map shows as a row of trinities. In the 1100 block of Waverly is Waverly community garden on the site of a carpet mill (c. 1910). My point is history is a living thing not something that should be turned to stone. Would we be better off without the park or the community garden? If a PHS designation had existed Washington Square West would have no section 8 housing, is that progress? Is the erasure of the trolley lines – as recently as a month ago I saw them cutting the electric lines that once drove those trolleys – is that progress or regress? It is simply the story of our neighborhood.

If a building is historically significant by all means let's work together to ask whether it is worth preserving, but let's do so without stifling innovation and progress and let's do so in a process that is transparent and inclusive. If the aim is to try to create a "picture box" I would argue a historical designation will not hold. Washington Square West has a storied past, for sure, yet the city's civic and zoning practices have cannibalized the neighborhood too badly to make an argument for the historic "picture box" to hold credence. So why now?

If the argument is to hold further development at bay now in order to maintain a Federalist "moment in time" kind of city, I suggest one need only look to Society Hill to find the best argument for not passing the broad historic designation. Where is the street life? Where is the vibrance? Where is the racial, ethnic, and economic diversity? Where is the innovation? In comparison Northern Liberties, Passyunk Square, and Graduate Hospital are humming with life and diversity, and are enjoying small business growth.

I have lived in Washington Square West for thirty years and have seen good and bad changes, good and bad development. But cities are living breathing places, that are about change and evolution. Are there parts of our city worth preserving and protecting, absolutely. But a blanket designation will do nothing to protect what is left of the formerly Black-owned businesses and institutions--unless there is public money and interest to follow. And a neighborhood which strangles creativity and business growth will create a stagnant streetscape.

Benjamin Franklin, I think, would have paled at the idea of an effort to hold progress back and restrict civic engagement, through a "historic" declaration with the restrictive authority of the PHC. He looked forward, innovating, renewing. Would he have balked at the idea of changing neighborhoods that planned for civic good by holding democratic principles hostage. Had such measures existed in other areas of the city we would not have The Parkway or Independence Mall.

Consider also that there are good studies that show that such a designation contributes to [further gentrification](#). This gentrification has made living in Center City increasingly prohibitive, yet it is home to many

working-class and middle-class families who have worked at creating a community, not a monument to Federalist architecture.

While we no longer have to preserve the shared privy or well that once was a mainstay of living here, why can't historic preservation be managed with shared governance and community engagement – rather than locking Washington Square West into stranglehold that will become a dull, lifeless, monument.

Again, I urge you to pause this pursuit of blanket PHS historic designation for this vibrant neighborhood. It follows a misinformed sense of history as something stagnant and merely built of bricks and mortar. If Philadelphia had done that in 1776 we'd be under British rule.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Amanda Mott

Washington Square West Historic District

Barbara Arvanitis <barbara.arvanitis@gmail.com>

Sun 5/19/2024 8:48 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>; Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>; Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>;

Tami Sortman <tamisortman@gmail.com>; Marisa Shaaban <marisa.shaaban@gmail.com>; Katie Low <washwestkatie@gmail.com>;

Peter Coe <pjtcoe@gmail.com>; Robert Sher <rsher@rsher.com>; Deborah Sweeney <deb.sweeney@compass.com>; Philip Rakita <perakita@aol.com>

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Hello Historic Commission,

Thank you for attending and speaking at the May 14th Washington Square West Civic Association Board Meeting.

As a property owner of a contributing historic property in the Washington Square neighborhood I am 100% in favor for the Historic Commission to recommend and vote yes to make the specific boundaries indicated in the nomination as historic.

Preserving the historic fabric of the neighborhood is very important to me.

Additionally I would also like the opportunity to speak during the public comment period so please add me to the list.

Sincerely,

Barbara Arvanitis

Support for the Washington Square West Historic District

Peter Joly <pjoly1951@gmail.com>

Sun 5/19/2024 12:31 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed historic district in Washington Square West. Originally proposed in 2009, it's high time to recognize the significance of approximately 26 city blocks.

The district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, which include social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological histories. The Washington Square West Historic District illustrates the development of Philadelphia's residential and commercial core over more than two centuries.

I urge the Historical Commission to approve the Washington Square West Historic District.

Peter Joly
1207 Rodman St
Phila, 19147

Sent from my iPhone

Support for the Washington Square West Historic District

Dichter, Mark S. <mark.dichter@morganlewis.com>

Sun 5/19/2024 11:07 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed historic district in Washington Square West. Originally proposed in 2009, it's high time to recognize the significance of approximately 26 city blocks.

My wife and I have lived in the proposed Washington Square West historic district for almost 55 years, first at 250 S. Quince Street from August 1969 until we moved in 1976 to our current address at 1017 Clinton Street where we raised our two daughters. Over the years we have been here many of the buildings have been caringly maintained or restored. Unfortunately however because of the lack of historic designation we have also seen many historically significant buildings demolished because of the lack of historic district designation.

The district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, which include social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological histories. The Washington Square West Historic District illustrates the development of Philadelphia's residential and commercial core over more than two centuries. I worked with members of the board of the Washington Square West Civic Association and the Preservation Alliance to prepare this application. During the process we held several community meetings and responded fully to all of the concerns raised by our neighbors. The only adverse impact of historic district designation might be on those developers who wish to demolish buildings within the proposed district and adversely impact the character of our historic neighborhood

I urge the Historical Commission to approve the Washington Square West Historic District.

Mark S. Dichter

1017 Clinton Street

Opposition to the Proposed Washington Square West Historic District

Arshad, Fareeha <Fareeha.Arshad@Glenmede.com>

Mon 5/20/2024 9:14 AM

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

Cc: president@washwestcivic.org <president@washwestcivic.org>; Info@washwestcivic.org <Info@washwestcivic.org>; Fareeha Arshad <fari324@comcast.net>

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Dear PHC and Councilmember Squilla,

I am a resident and homeowner in Washington Square West. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed historic district covering the entirety of my neighborhood. While I provide more detail to my concerns below, in short it's a blanket designation in a neighborhood that is predominantly not historic, which will be burdensome, and expensive. To limit the overreach and burden, the neighborhood would be better served by individuals electing to participate on their own accord and individual selection of actual historic homes by the PHC

The PHC's March 21st letter was the first I heard that my neighborhood, and my house, would be contained in this new proposed historic district. Adding insult to injury, per the letter I would now need the PHC's approval to make changes to the exterior of my house as of March 21st, despite the fact that the historic district has not even been approved yet.

Setting that aside, my opposition to the proposed district stems from the fact that it is unnecessarily burdensome on the houses that are not in fact historic, such as mine, which was built in 1963 per the PHC's own records. In fact, the entire line of houses on Quince St. between Waverly St. and Lombard St. were all built in 1963, and face a surface level parking lot, also not a historic property. There is no reason that my home, or the many others that are not actually historic, should be subject to the PHC's oversight concerning alterations (cosmetic or otherwise) to the exterior.

As the PHC noted in its letter, "[m]ore than 26,000 properties illustrating Philadelphia's history from its earliest years to the recent past have been designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places." It's clear that the PHC is fully capable of designating properties that warrant such designation, including many in Washington Square West. In fact, any neighbor who wishes to have their house designated as historic is free to nominate it to the PHC. But designating the entire neighborhood, including those of us that oppose having our homes designated, is both lazy and a tremendous overreach that will simply saddle the owners of non-historic homes with pointless burdens, barriers, and bureaucracy.

For those reasons I respectfully request that you reject the establishment of the Washington Square West Historic District. Thank you for your consideration.

Fareeha Arshad
417 S Quince Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
412-952-6660

Fareeha N. Arshad, CFA, CFP® She/her/hers
Relationship Manager, Portfolio Management | Managing Director

fareeha.arshad@glenmede.com

O: 215-419-6152 | **M:** 215-796-7041 | **F:** 267-675-5353

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Support for the Washington Square West Historic District

Jude Tuma <jude@geminuscapital.com>

Mon 5/20/2024 10:15 AM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed historic district in Washington Square West. Originally proposed in 2009, it's high time to recognize the significance of approximately 26 city blocks.

The district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, which include social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological histories. The Washington Square West Historic District illustrates the development of Philadelphia's residential and commercial core over more than two centuries.

I urge the Historical Commission to approve the Washington Square West Historic District.

Jude Tuma

314 S 10 Street

Philadelphia, PA 19107



May 20, 2024

Via Email (Jon.Farnham@phila.gov; preservation@phila.gov)

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: 400 S. 9th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147
Proposed Washington Square West Historic District

Dear Dr. Farnham:

I am writing as counsel for University City Housing Company (“UCH”) in relation to the proposed Washington Square West Historic District (“District”).

UCH objects to the creation of the District and to the inclusion of 400 S. 9th Street in the District as a “Contributing” building.

The size of the proposed District is overly expansive, encompassing approximately 26 city blocks. While there are undoubtedly individual buildings within that defined area that meet the designation criteria, the vast majority of buildings are rowhouses that are not architecturally unique or historically significant.

A “Contributing” building is a building “within a district that reflects the historical or architectural character of the district as defined in the Commission’s designation.” In the nomination documents the Philadelphia Historical Commission (“PHC”) defines the character of the District as reflective of Greek Revival style. 400 S. 9th Street is a rowhouse near the outer boundary of the proposed District. Other than the use of marble, there are no other notable Greek Revival elements. Further, the building itself is not historically significant.

With over 50% of the properties in the proposed District already on the historic register, PHC’s goal of preserving the streetscape and the history of the District has already been achieved. Designating the entire neighborhood creates a disincentive for owners across the District to perform maintenance and stifles development in general.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please copy me on any future correspondence regarding the proposed Washington Square West Historic District.



Very truly yours,

UNIVERSITY CITY HOUSING COMPANY

Melissa A. Simola
In-House Counsel
1630 Locust Street, 1st Fl.
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-253-7052
msimola@uchweb.com

Washington Square West Historic District

Drew Moyer <drewalanmoyer@gmail.com>

Mon 5/20/2024 3:02 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

I'm writing in support of designating Washington Square West as a Historic District. I also write with great thanks and appreciation for the work that the Commission, the Preservation Alliance, the Washington Square West Civic Association (WWCA), consultants and other parties have put into this effort over a period of years. I serve on the Board of WWCA.

When I ran for election to the Board, I made clear my support and intentionality regarding the application for historic designation for the neighborhood. That is also true for numerous other members of the Board and evidenced by the Board's authorization to spend thousands of dollars on the application process. A handful of vocal opponents currently do not negate the majority of voices in support of the designation over many years. Perhaps the absence of a major historical building demolition in the last couple of years has quieted the emotions on this topic for some. They will surely be re-awakened should another landmark in our neighborhood be destroyed.

I've lived in Washington Square West for 14 years, the first 10 of which were in a non-historic home built in 1970. For the last 4 years I've lived in a historic home designated as such by the Historical Commission and built in 1837. In renovating each square foot of both the interior and the exterior of the home, I found no difficulty whatsoever in working with the Commission. In fact, I was surprised by the level of latitude available with renovations and repairs of a historic property. As I have watched a few neighboring historic homes be converted into condos or apartments, all within PHC guidelines and approvals, I sometimes wish for tighter restrictions to maintain the full character, beauty, and architectural significance of the properties.

In our community, there are frequent references to the "fabric of the neighborhood," particularly when it relates to development. Questions such as, "Is it still a Gayborhood?" and "Should there be a new arena?" are top of mind. ***There is no greater contributing factor to the fabric of our neighborhood than its historic properties.***

Thank you for your careful review and consideration of the application. I urge you to approve the designation of Washington Square West as a Historic District.

Sincerely,

Drew Moyer
314 S. 10th Street (a/k/a 1000 Clinton St.)
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Philadelphia Historical Commission

Cris Constantinescu <c.s.constantinescu@gmail.com>

Mon 5/20/2024 8:40 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>;ig15@le.ac.uk <ig15@le.ac.uk>

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Dear Commission, Dear Dr Farnham

We would like to be involved in the efforts to preserve Philadelphia's heritage and to have our property included in the Washington Square West Historic District. We would like to receive updates by e-mail. Please let us know if you need further information from us.

Many thanks and best regards

Cris Constantinescu, MD and Irene Gottlob, MD
427 S Camac Street
Philadelphia PA 19147

c.s.constantinescu@gmail.com and ig15@le.ac.uk

updates

Mary Grant <marygrant48@gmail.com>

Fri 3/29/2024 5:31 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Hello from Midtown Village.

I have just received notification of the possible designation of our neighborhood as an Historic District. I am enthusiastic about this idea, and I would like to receive updates from your office. My email is

marygrant48@gmail.com.

Thank you,

Mary Grant

1111 Locust Street, #5G

Philadelphia 19107

Re: Support for the Washington Square West Historic District

Deborah Kahn <debkahn09@gmail.com>

Tue 5/21/2024 11:42 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Cc: Tobey Dichter <tobeydichter@gmail.com>

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Dear Commissioners,

I moved with my family to Washington Square West from San Antonio, Texas in 2021.

When choosing a Philadelphia home my husband and I dreamed of the large stately 19th century homes of the city. We looked at new construction, too, but found it dull, cookie cutter, comfortable but lacking the historic charm we associate with Center City Philadelphia.

We ask that you consider the immense value that the historic homes and buildings provide to our community. There needs to be thought and care in maintaining the treasured aspects of our city.

I support the proposal to designate a Historical District for Washington Square West.

Sincerely,

Deborah Kahn
1008 Clinton Street
Philadelphia PA 19107
267-250-9292

On Thu, May 16, 2024 at 9:51 AM <tobeydichter@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Commissioners,

As resident of Wash West for 55 years, I urge you to approve the proposed designation of **Historic District for Washington Square West**. We live on Clinton Street, which Louis Kahn said was the only street he'd live on in Philadelphia. It and the surrounding area are quintessential olde Philadelphia and represent for generations to come the look and feel of our history.

I understand that the district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, which include social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological histories. The Washington Square West Historic District illustrates the development of Philadelphia's residential and commercial core over more than two centuries. It is a gem worth preserving!

I urge the Historical Commission to approve the Washington Square West Historic District.

Thank you!!

Tobey Gordon Dichter

[1017 Clinton Street](#)

[Philadelphia PA 19107](#)

215 922 1633

Philadelphia Historic Commission
1515 Arch St.
13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

May 20, 2024

Re: Proposed Washington Square West Historic District

Dear Commissioners,

My husband Greg Hardes and I are homeowners living with our children at 1119 Lombard Street. We understand that the Commission is considering the designation of a large portion of the Washington Square West neighborhood as a Historic District. We have reviewed the nomination, have serious concerns about it, and oppose its designation.

The section of Philadelphia Code that governs historic designation requires that a district be a geographically defined area with a significant concentration of historic buildings that are linked by past events, a shared plan, or similar physical development. The checked criteria in the Washington Square West nomination refer to “an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style,” innovative design elements, or that “exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.” We do not believe the proposed district, and our inclusion within it, meet these requirements.

The time period covered by the nomination is hardly “an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style.” The proposed district includes almost 1,500 properties, and a period of 1740 to the 1980s – almost 250 years! It includes properties of many eras and disparate historic, political, and social events. If this nomination meets the Philadelphia Code requirements, a historic district designation could just as easily be proposed for the footprint of our entire city. There may be smaller portions of our neighborhood that reflect specific social histories, such as the LGBTQ+ community, but they should be carefully identified and demarcated.

Until we saw the nomination, we believed our house was built in the 1960s, as it exactly matches other houses in the vicinity that were built in the 1960s. One of the reasons we chose to buy this home was because it was not historically certified, and we understand how financially burdensome such a certification can be on a homeowner. We now learn that it was built in the 1830s, but it has been significantly renovated and altered over almost 200 years, including the addition of a floor. It is classified as “contributing,” and there are almost no original elements. If it is to be included, the only portion of it designated as “contributing” should be the front façade up to the cornice line. The rest should be excluded.

Thank you,



Andrea Korb and Greg Hardes

Support for the Washington Square West Historic District

Robert Tunick <bobtunick@gmail.com>

Tue 5/21/2024 12:51 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed historic district in Washington Square West. Originally proposed in 2009, it's high time to recognize the significance of approximately 26 city blocks.

The district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, which include social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological histories. The Washington Square West Historic District illustrates the development of Philadelphia's residential and commercial core over more than two centuries.

I hope that if Wash West becomes an historic district, we will never have a repeat of the Jeweler's Row debacle. Toll Bros proposed to demolish several buildings along Sansom Street in Jewelers Row to construct a high-rise apartment building. Absolutely no one wanted this to happen (except for the owners of the properties, who wished to sell them), but absolutely nothing could be done to stop it. The buildings were demolished several years ago, but Toll Bros. lost interest and pulled out. We now have a vacant lot. Had the neighborhood been certified as an historic district, this disaster would not have happened. We need to protect what remains of Jewelers Row, plus the 700 block of Chestnut Street, plus the scores of beautiful townhouses on Spruce, Pine, Clinton, Quince, Camac, etc..

I urge the Historical Commission to approve the Washington Square West Historic District.

Robert Tunick
Pres., Portico Row Unit Owners Association
912 Spruce St.

Proposed Washington Square Historic District

volm matthew <mattvw@gmail.com>

Mon 5/20/2024 5:05 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Sirs,

I am writing to voice my support for the proposed Washington Square West Historic District. I live at 311 S. Fawn St. in a house that was built in 1875 and is located in the proposed district. Almost all of the houses on my block are already designated historic buildings, but for some reason my house and several others on the block were never designated. I would like to see our entire block protected, and so I strongly support the proposed Washington Square West Historic District.

I think historic preservation is much more meaningful and effective when it is applied to an entire neighborhood rather than piecemeal to individual properties. I hope that the unique historic character of my block and neighborhood will be preserved for many years as part of the Washington Square Historic District.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matthew Volm
311 S. Fawn St.
Philadelphia, PA

Owner of 246 s. 11th St Philadelphia PA

sashimi717 <sashimi717@gmail.com>

Wed 3/27/2024 2:21 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

 1 attachments (5 MB)

20240327_141606.jpg;

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Hi my name is Min fei huang owner of 246 s. 11th Street, Philadelphia PA. I have received the letter regarding my property to be included in the historic district. My question is do I get a choice or vote on it, if I don't want to be included should I do anything. I am an investor from Harrisburg PA and this is the first time we run into this, I have called and Left couple messages and no one called back. Thank you and please contact me via email or my cell 717-503-7380.

Sincerely
Min fei huang

Sent from my Galaxy

Support for the Washington Square West Historic District

Hwittich <hwittich@gmail.com>

Tue 5/21/2024 7:25 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

As owners of 231 and 233 S. Jessup St., our homes already fall under the purview of the Historical Commission's Registry of Historic Places. We have lived in our home on Jessup St. for over 30 years and are very familiar with what it means to live in a historically designated home. It can take extra time and money to go thru the historical approval process, but we believe it is well spent because it helps protect what we find so amazingly special about living on our little slice of history here in Wash. West.

As recently as December 2020, we participated in the request for approval of proposed construction renovations planned for the Quince St. property that backs onto Jessup St., just across from our front doors. This review was held by the Architectural Committee of the Philadelphia Historical Commission as an opportunity for the neighbors and other interested parties to weigh in on the review of the property owner's proposed changes.

We had the opportunity to express our concerns over the need for design changes that would be more in scale with the adjacent houses and more compatible with the historic character of our special neighborhood, such as:

- the inappropriateness of some of the types of materials proposed (such as cementitious siding rather than stucco or masonry), the use of strip windows, and the configuration of other openings which we felt were incongruous with the surrounding houses;
- our concerns over the proposed shed dormer, which pitched up from the roofline, would have increased the back wall to a height out of scale with the rest of the house, making the house appear large and bulky from Jessup St.;
- our opinion that we thought the 3rd floor addition was more appropriate for a beach house at the Jersey Shore than an early nineteenth century house in our historic neighborhood.

We would not have had this opportunity to have our opinions heard if this house had not already been designated for historic preservation. There are other small streets in Wash. West that are just as charming (ok – almost as charming) as Jessup St. and the neighbors living on these streets should have as much of a right to protect what makes their neighborhood special to them as we do.

Therefore, we support moving forward with the creation of the Washington Square West Historic District.

Hillary and Mike Wittich
231 and 233 S. Jessup St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107

comments and request to speak at May 22 meeting

Lynn Landes <lynnlandes@gmail.com>

Tue 5/21/2024 4:36 PM

To:preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

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This is my request to speak at tomorrow's 9:30 am meeting, per PHC instructions --
<https://www.smallstreetsphilly.org/CHD-5-22-2024-FAQs.pdf>

Lynn Landes, 217 S. Jessup Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107

I would also like my comments sent to the PHC Commission:

We would like to show the PHC our block (200 block of S. Jessup Street) to see for themselves the issues at hand (photos below), but in the meantime, please **pause** the historic designation process of Washington Square West by the Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) until property owners can meet with the PHC in a public forum to discuss this situation.

We only received official notice of this process in a March 2024 letter by the PHC, which included a warning that anything we may do to the exterior of our houses might need to be undone, if Wash West receives historical designation as the result of the approval of a committee of PHC on May 22, and the approval of the PHC on June 14. To many, this decision already appears to be a "done deal".

It should be said that many property owners support the banning of any more demolition in Washington Square West without the approval of the Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC). In fact, some of us believe that PHC should have rights of review for the demolition of any property in Philadelphia that could be considered historic.

That said, we have serious complaints about the Philadelphia Historical Commission's (PHC) past and present behavior. For many decades, the PHC has been insensitive to the concerns and the complaints of property owners whose buildings have been "historically designated". One reason for this situation could be that the PHC is not accountable to any City Council committee, which automatically eliminates an important opportunity for public comment. Another reason is that at the PHC public meetings, public comments are restricted to "agenda items only"; which is also unfortunately true for City Council, its committees, and many of the city's departments, commissions, agencies, etc.. It should be noted that most municipal governments view restricting public comments to "agenda items only" for regular public meetings, as a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution and the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act.

The PHC has placed large swathes of historic Philadelphia under its authority by creating historic districts. Again, we support and applaud saving our historic treasures, however it has come at an unnecessarily high cost to property owners, which has negatively affected the diversity of population, income, architecture, and personal expression. It doesn't have to be this way. We believe that we can preserve the past while living fully in the present to everyone's benefit, if we open a meaningful and ongoing dialogue with the PHC.

Currently, there has been little dialogue with most of the affected Wash West property owners since the inception of this process, which began in earnest 3 years ago. A community dialogue was and is the responsibility of the PHC. However, there was no meaningful attempt to even contact the affected property owners until March of 2024, when the decision was all-but-made. Those supporting this proposal, The Historic Preservation Alliance and Wash West Civic (who represents less than 400 members), have also not alerted all of the affected property owners. And although this was not their responsibility, per se, they are assuming the role of representing the community, which they may or may not.

An obvious indicator of public support would be for the affected properties to be given the opportunity to vote for or against this proposal. But frankly, there is no need for the effected Wash West property owners to take a vote, because property owners already have voted in a manner of speaking. If property owners wanted a historic designation, they could have applied for it for their own homes. The problem with this designation is that it is being forced onto property

owners with inadequate information on the PHC website as to what a historic designation actually means and what property owners' options are available. In fact, there appears to be no key for the designations, per the following PHC report about Washington Square West: <https://www.phila.gov/media/20240510111039/Historic-District-Wash-West-1.pdf>

It has not been helpful that misinformation has also been told to the public by the Preservation Alliance representative, Paul Steinke, who has publicly said on at least two occasions that PHC will not get involved unless a permit is required, which is incorrect. Non-designated property owners do not need a permit to paint the exterior of their buildings, however historically designated property owners do need the approval of the PHC. And that is a very big deal to many property owners.

PHC's color restrictions can have a harmful effect on individual property owners and entire neighborhoods. Many streets are very narrow and dark, as a result many property owners paint their exteriors lighter colors to brighten the area, if not lift the mood. Under current PHC policy, if property owners want to paint their homes, PHC limits the color selection to "red brick", even though in the past PHC offered a selection of "historic" colors. And if property owners want to plaster their exterior walls for structural or insulation purposes, those requests may also be denied.

PHC can and does deny adding or enlarging windows on walls that the public can see from the street or sidewalks, as well as glass inserts for doors. Many people want and need light to enhance their physical and mental health, as well as prevent mold and mildew. They should not be stuck in a historical time warp to their own detriment. There are corner buildings in Wash West that are a solid wall of brick, yet the PHC would not approve additional windows. The traditional 6-paneled door can also be altered to allow light in, but the PHC has denied those requests, as well.

Another common complaint is the high cost of new windows and other historic alterations, which has opened the PHC to criticism of encouraging gentrification and discouraging home owners who need affordable housing. It has come to our attention that affordable wood windows could be made for as little as \$200, but that PHC requirements may be keeping the price of new windows artificially high, to as much as \$4000, by requiring certain specifications that are made by only a few window companies. We would like to see the PHC involved in the establishment of one or more local window and trim makers who can manufacture these products at a reasonable price. For example, the windows could be the wood double-paned and insulated variety, but they could also be the more traditional wood true-divided windows with a wood framed storm window.

Adding to the list of complaints, it appears that only full-glass storm doors are allowed by the PHC, which do not provide effective security, while window shutters may or may not be allowed, even though they are great energy savers, particularly in the summer. Most of this information is not on the PHC website so that property owners are not informed about what their options are.

The "crown jewel" of the 200 block of S. Jessup Street is the late-Diane Fertik's house, which was redesigned in the 1930's and includes elaborate balconies, additional windows and doors, and a huge rose window. It was historically certified in the 1960's. Under current PHC's historic designation, those wonderful improvements would, most likely, not be permitted. Many other "historically designated" properties have also benefitted from past alterations that would not now be, in general, allowed for current property owners of historically designated homes.

There appears to be little accommodation by the PHC for what "looks good, works well, affordable, and is in keeping with the historic flavor" of our neighborhoods. Do we want a community where individuality, design, and artistry are completely sacrificed at the altar of historic preservation of a particular moment in time? Or should we meet together with full information and an open mind in order to achieve an agreement that will benefit our entire community?

Please allow time for a meaningful dialogue and alteration of PHC policies to allow for the benefit of all concerned.

Respectfully yours,

Lynn Landes, Founder
Philadelphia Society of Small Streets
<https://www.SmallStreetsPhilly.org>
714-204-2690
LynnLandes@gmail.com

Photos of some of PHC'S questionable decisions:

Second house from left was not allowed by the PHC to install shutters on the second floor because the owner could not produce a photo and PHC could find no evidence of shutter "stays".



Blank wall that PHC refused to allow the homeowner to add windows despite all the windows on the other side of the street for the same period house.



A non-designated front door with 4 out of 6 panels converted to windows, versus a PHC-approved front door, whose home owner requested to put 2 windows in the top two panels to bring more light into the house, but was denied by PHC.



The late-Diane Fertik's home at Irving and Quince Streets, was remodeled in the 1930's to include the rose window, French doors, balconies, and three windows on second floor of one house. None of those improvements would be allowed under current PHC policies.





Why has the PHC's historic designation not saved this house on Pine Street in Society Hill from obvious and serious decay? Where is L&I, who oversees PHC?



Why has the PHC historic designation of the 200 block of Quince Street (which is all-but-impassable) and other historically designated streets across Philadelphia not resulted in a timely restoration?

May 21, 2024

Via E-mail

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph. D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Jon.Farnham@phila.gov

Re: 219 S. 13th Street and 1235 Locust Street (collectively, the “Property”)
Proposed Washington Square West Historic District Inventory

Dear Dr. Farnham:

We represent Parkway Corporation (“Parkway”), the owner of the Property, located at the northeast corner of 13th and Locust Streets. We understand that the Washington Square West Civic Association and Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia submitted a nomination application (the “Nomination”) for the creation of the Washington Square West Historic District (the “Proposed District”). We further understand that the Property was identified as a “contributing” property in the Proposed District’s inventory.

The Property is currently a surface parking lot. It has been such for decades. Parkway is not aware of any archaeological significance to the Property, nor does the Nomination set forth such evidence. Moreover, other than a generalized statement covering the entire Proposed District (one-half mile in area) which would be applicable to much of Philadelphia, there is no mention of any specific archeological significance in and around 13th and Locust Streets. Accordingly, we request that the Historical Commission revise the Proposed Nomination’s inventory to identify the Property as “non-contributing”.

The Nomination’s Attempt to Regulate Archeological Resources

The Nomination includes the following generalized statement about a potential for archeological resources in the Statement of Significance (page 19):

As noted above, the District includes multiple lots that have not seen redevelopment that has entailed extensive subsurface disturbance since the removal of buildings constructed before the twentieth century. Many of these are the site of dwellings or secondary buildings associated with residents of lesser means who would not have left a written record of their lives, and sub-surface remains are likely to yield important information about their lives that

cannot be recovered by other means. The District also includes the sites of institutions associated with the District's Black history. Particularly notable among these are the site of St. Thomas at 203-209 S. 12th Street.

Other than the statement regarding sites of institutions associated with the District's Black History, this statement could be made about almost anywhere in Center City Philadelphia and adjacent neighborhoods. There is nothing specific in the Statement of Significance that links these particular properties together as a district for archeological purposes.

The Property's Proposed Inventory Designation Conflicts with the Statement of Significance.

For a property to be "contributing" to a historic district, its inventory designation must demonstrate how it "reflects the historical or architectural character of the district, as defined in the Historical Commission's designation." *See* Phila. Code § 14-203(78). Here, the proposed Inventory claims that Property should be contributing for reasons other than is stated in the Nomination's Statement of Significance. That is beyond the power of the Historical Commission.

Here, as stated above, the Nomination does not contain any information supporting the assertion that the Property is of archaeological significance – let alone falling within the required regulatory boundaries of a historic district. The Nomination simply proclaims that there is "archaeological potential" at the site because a portion of the Property may have housed the College of Physicians and the central branch of the Free Library at some point in time. The Nomination provides no further information about either institution or their combined significance to the Proposed District; even further, the Nomination's Statement of Significance contains no mention of the College of Physicians or the Free Library. Given the above, the Nomination provides no evidence that the Property reflects the character of the Proposed District as set forth in the statement of significance. As such, the Property fails to meet the definition of "contributing" and more accurately should be labeled as "non-contributing". Accordingly, we ask that the Historical Commission list the Property as "non-contributing".

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph. D.
May 21, 2024
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Thank you for your consideration, and please let us know if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew N. McClure', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew N. McClure

MNM/mpg