

ACTIVITIES OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF JUNE 2024

DESIGN REVIEW

Design review continues to be the staff's primary task, with all staff members collaborating on the processing of building permit applications. The permit reporting utility in eCLIPSE shows that 166 permit applications were approved, 61 with conditions, for historically designated properties in June 2024. An additional 17 permit applications were returned to applicants in eCLIPSE with requests for revisions and/or additional information. The staff conducted 5 adjacent property reviews in eCLIPSE. The Historical Commission staff conducted an additional 48 detail reviews outside of eCLIPSE.

DESIGNATION

Designation tasks occupy much of the staff's time. Nearly all staff time not devoted to design review is dedicated to designation-related tasks.

The reviews of the following nominations have been continued by the staff.

Address	Name	Continued From	Continued To	Total Duration
5209-13 Germantown Ave	St. Stephens/Servants of Christ United Methodist Church	5/22/2024	7/17/2024	2 months
1039 Chestnut St	Union Republican Club	5/10/2024	8/9/2024	3 months
700-34 Race St	Roundhouse	10/13/2023	9/13/2024	12 months
8527-29 Germantown Ave	Germantown Trust Co.	5/10/2024	11/8/2024	6 months

The staff administered the reviews of designation matters at the 14 June 2024 meeting of the Historical Commission. At that meeting, the Historical Commission took the following actions on designation matters:

- Continued the review of one nomination: Washington Square West Historic District to the July 2024 meeting of the Historical Commission.
- Individually designated one property: 3343 W. School House Lane, Samuel Tobias Wagner House.
- Individually designated one interior: 1424-26 Chestnut Street, Jacob Reed's Sons' Store, Main Sales Floor.

The Committee on Historic Designation met on 26 June 2024. At that meeting, the Committee offered recommendations on the following matter:

- One historic district nomination: Spruce Hill Historic District, Southeastern Quadrant.

Laura DiPasquale completed the review of a historic district nomination proposing a Washington Square West Historic District and the Historical Commission issued notice to the property owners in the proposed district on 21 March 2024. The Committee on Historic Designation reviewed the nomination on 22 May 2024. The Historical Commission will review it on 12 July 2024.

Kim Chantry completed the review of a historic district nomination proposing a Spruce Hill Historic District and the Historical Commission issued notice to the property owners in the proposed district on 14 February 2024. The Committee on Historic Designation reviewed the nomination on 17 April 2024 and 26 June 2024. The Historical Commission will review the nomination on 12 July 2024.

Kim Chantry and Alex Till are discussing a potential Tulpehocken Historic District with the West Central Germantown Neighbors community association.

Heather Hendrickson is working with community members on a potential Yorktown Historic District.

Ted Maust is working on a Northwest Philadelphia Apartment House Thematic District with West Mt. Airy Neighbors.

The staff is working on several individual nominations.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

The Committee on Financial Hardship did not meet in June 2024.

SURVEY

The staff continues to add documents, photographs, data, and metadata to the City's Arches installation. The department of Planning and Development recently hired an archivist, and the staff is working with the archivist to develop a plan to digitize the Historical Commission's archives and store the documents in Arches. Philadelphia's installation of Arches has been named PlatForm for the first map of the City of Philadelphia, which William Penn called a "Plat-Form." Arches is an open source, web- and geospatially based, customizable information system that was purpose-built by the Getty Conservation Institute and World Monuments Fund to inventory and manage immovable cultural heritage.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION – TREASURE PHILLY!

Mses. Garrison and Hankins and Mr. Korostoff are working on the Historical Commission's Treasure Philly! project. The Department of Planning & Development received a grant of \$250,000 from the William Penn Foundation to develop and pilot a historic resource survey program. Since 2022, the survey plan and pilot project has been exploring ways to engage with populations and histories not currently reflected in the properties listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Through the project, the Department of Planning and Development is expanding the traditional understanding of preservation to include a wider range of tools and more comprehensive understanding of cultural heritage. The goal is the development of a survey methodology that will ensure a more inclusive accounting of the city's diverse historic and cultural resources and set forth a sustainable plan for staff to conduct ongoing survey work. The pilot project is nearly complete. A draft final report for the project was reviewed recently and is currently being finalized. Once the pilot is complete, the staff will expand the program into a citywide survey using the methodologies developed during the pilot.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCENTIVES

The Historical Commission's staff issued one zoning incentive letter in June 2024, for 2028-32 Fairmount Avenue for CMX-3 uses.

APPEALS

The following permit decisions are or were under appeal at the Board of License & Inspection Review (BLIR):

- 1435-41 Walnut Street
 - At its September 2021 meeting, the Historical Commission denied an application to enlarge window openings at 1435-41 Walnut Street. The property owner

appealed the decision to the BLIR. The Historical Commission submitted its official record to the BLIR on 3 December 2021. The appellant and the Law Department have agreed to remand the matter to the Historical Commission for a second review, which will be conducted at an upcoming meeting of the Historical Commission.

- 156 W. School House Lane
 - The Historical Commission designated 156 W. School House Lane on 12 March 2021. The property owner, the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, appealed the designation to the Court of Common Pleas. The Historical Commission's staff submitted the record of the designation to the Court on 19 January 2022. The court continued the case to give the appellant an opportunity to have the Historical Commission consider a financial hardship and necessary in the public interest application. The appellant submitted the application to the Historical Commission and the Architectural Committee reviewed it in August 2022. The Committee on Financial Hardship reviewed it on 16 October and 28 November 2023. The Historical Commission considered the matter on 8 December 2023 and approved the application. A neighbor who opposed the application appealed the approval to the BLIR. The Historical Commission produced its record of the review on 22 February 2024. The BLIR scheduled a hearing on 20 June 2024, but then rescheduled it for 30 July 2024.

The following appeals to the Court of Common Pleas and Commonwealth Court are in process:

- 1424-26 Chestnut Street
 - The property owner of the recently designated Jacob Reed's Sons' Store interior appealed the designation to the Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 220602004. The Law Department agreed to vacate the designation and remand the nomination to the Historical Commission and Committee on Historic Designation for a de novo review. The Committee on Historic Designation conducted a new review at its 30 November 2022 meeting and the Historical Commission conducted a new review and redesignated the interior at its meeting 14 June 2024.
- 4501 Poplar Street
 - The property owner of the recently designated infirmary building at the former Stephen Smith Home appealed the designation. The Court of Common Pleas issued a scheduling order for Case No. 221201025. The Historical Commission submitted its record on 14 April 2023. The appellant's brief was due on 7 August 2023. The appellee's brief was due on 6 September 2023. Oral arguments were scheduled for after 19 October 2023. On 30 November 2023, the Court of Common Pleas denied the appeal. On 28 December 2023, the appellant appealed the lower court's decision to the Commonwealth Court.
- 7200-04 Cresheim Road
 - An attorney representing the owner of the recently designated property at 7200-04 Cresheim Road appealed the designation to the Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 230401333. The Historical Commission submitted its record on 12 July 2023. Oral arguments took place on 9 January 2024. The Court denied the appeal and affirmed the Historical Commission's designation on 16 January 2024. The appellant is in the process of appealing the lower court's decision to the Commonwealth Court.
- 5920 Greene Street
 - An attorney representing the owner of the property at 5920 Greene Street

appealed the Historical Commission's designation of the property, Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 230702782. The court denied the appeal on 26 April 2024. The appellant appealed the denial to the Commonwealth Court on 24 May 2024.

- 2100 Diamond Street
 - On 1 June 2023, Judith Robinson of the 32nd Ward RCO appealed the Historical Commission's approval of the application for the construction of a new public safety building at 2100 Diamond Street to the BLIR. The BLIR held a hearing on 21 November 2023 and voted unanimously to deny the appeal. Mr. Reuter argued the case and Mr. Farnham testified on behalf of the Historical Commission. The appellant subsequently appealed the BLIR's decision to the Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 231201850. Oral arguments are scheduled for 18 July 2024.
- 4641 E. Roosevelt Boulevard
 - At its July 2023 meeting, the Historical Commission approved an application to demolish a building and approved in concept an application to construct a City health center on the campus of Friends Hospital, 4641 E. Roosevelt Boulevard. The Preservation Alliance and some neighborhood partners appealed the approval of the demolition. The BLIR held the hearing on 12 and 19 October 2023 and voted unanimously to deny the appeal. One of the neighborhood appellants appealed the BLIR decision to the Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 231200824. On 22 January 2024, the Court of Common Pleas quashed the appeal with prejudice. On 20 February 2024, attorney Samuel Stretton appealed the Court of Common Pleas decision on behalf of the neighborhood appellant to the Commonwealth Court.
- 26-34 Church Lane
 - At its February 2024 meeting, the Historical Commission designated the Germantown Urban Village Historic District. The owner of the properties at 26-34 Church Lane and 36 Church Lane appealed the decisions to include the properties as contributing to the district, owing to the likelihood of archaeological resources, to the Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 240400193 and 240300194. A scheduling order was issued on 24 May 2024. The Historical Commission's records are due by 5 August 2024. The appellant's brief is due by 3 September 2024. The appellee's brief is due by 7 October 2024. Oral argument will take place any time after 4 November 2024.

ENFORCEMENT

With the Law Department and Department of Licenses & Inspections, the staff is pursuing numerous enforcement cases for unpermitted work, non-compliant work, and failure to maintain in good repair.

UNSAFE AND IMMINENTLY DANGEROUS CASES

No cases are currently open.

SECTION 106

Mses. Garrison and Hankins are conducting federally mandated Section 106 reviews for the DHCD undertakings assisted by HUD. The Historical Commission has assumed all Section 106 reviews for the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) as part of a larger Department of Planning & Development effort to assume all responsibility for PHA's federal environmental reviews.

OFFICE

The City of Philadelphia closed all non-essential City offices in March 2020, owing to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Historical Commission's staff was assigned to work remotely from home. The Historical Commission's offices reopened on 1 February 2022; all in-person, in-office interaction with applicants are on an appointment-only basis. Appointments are being scheduled with an automated online software system. The Historical Commission's staff will transition to full-time work in the office on 15 July 2024. All public meetings are being held remotely at least through the summer of 2024.

STAFFING

Izzy Korostoff, the Historical Commission's new Community Initiative Support Specialist started his employment on 10 June 2024 and will initially work on the Treasure Philly! Initiative. The Historical Commission is very excited to have Mr. Korostoff join the staff.

Laura DiPasquale, who has worked at the Historical Commission for more than 10 years, submitted her resignation. She and her family are moving to the Washington DC area. Her last working day was 14 June 2024 and her last day on the City payroll was 21 June 2024. Ms. DiPasquale has made many, many significant contributions to the work of the Historical Commission over the past decade and will be keenly missed.

OTHER

Ms. Chantry and Mr. Farnham provided an introduction to the Historical Commission and historic preservation to the Department of Planning and Development's press intern on 25 June 2024.