THE MINUTES OF THE 745TH STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

FRIDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2024, 9:00 A.M.
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
ROBERT THOMAS, CHAIR

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:00:00

Mr. Thomas, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and announced the presence of a quorum. The following Commissioners joined him:

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Comment
Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair (Architectural Historian)	X		
Kimberly Washington, Esq., Vice Chair (Community Development Corporation)	X		
Kareema Abu Saab (Commerce Department)	X		
Labaron Lenard-Palmer (Philadelphia City Planning Commission)	X		
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Committee on Historic Designation Chair (Historian)	X		
Zachary Frankel (Real Estate Developer)	X		
Thomas Holloman (City Council)	X		
Kyle O'Connor (Department of Public Property)	X		
John P. Lech (Department of Licenses & Inspections)	X		
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Architectural Committee Chair (Architect)		X	
Stephanie Michel (Community Organization)	X		Arrived 9:34
Franz Rabauer	X		
Matthew Treat (Department of Planning and Development)	X		

The meeting was held remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:
Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kristin Hankins, Historic Preservation Planner I
Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
Izzy Korostoff, Community Initiatives Specialist
Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner III
Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department
Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:
Alison Weiss, SoLo Germantown Civic Association

Aaron Moselle, WHYY
Alexander Roederer
Ann Marie Dimino
Anthony Masters
Barbara Arvanitis
Barry Hoffman
B. Novak
C. Lee
Caitlin Carmody, Esq., City of Philadelphia Law Department
Carolyn Klepser
Charlie Bell
Chwen-Ping
Colin Murphy
Daniel Trubman
David Fecteau, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
David Gest, SquareSide LLC
David Lo
David Traub, Save Our Site
Dennis Carlisle
Diane Pyfer
Drew Moyer
Duncan Adkins
Dustin Dove
Eileen Harris
Eugene Desyatnik
Francine Sandrow
Frazar Thomas
Georgia Faino
H. Lee
Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Harrison Finberg
Hillary Wittich
Ian Kettlewell
Jacalyn Ashford
James Byrne
Jay Farrell
Jay Ifert
Jeffrey Saunders
Jim Duffin
Joel Cohen
John Smith
John Walsh
Jon Cooper
Jonathan Broh, AIA
Jonathan Hessney
Joseph Jancuska
Joshua Zugerman
Justin Jordan
Katie Low
Kevin Levy
Kevin McMahon

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Kimberly Haas, Hidden City Philadelphia
Larry Goldfinger
Lee Begelman, Esq., City of Philadelphia Law Department
Lewis Checchia
Lynn Landes
Marisa Shaaban
Mark Dichter
Matt Genstein
Matt Knol
Matthew McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Maureen Gavin
Michael Cunningham
Michael Ramos
Michaelle Bond
Nick Lobuglio
Nithin Vejendla
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia
Pamela Beasley
Paul Boni, Esq.
Paul J. Lorenz
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Peter Coë
Robert Hotes
Robert Sher
Ruth El
Ryan Kiger, Esq., City of Philadelphia Law Department
Scott Paymer
Sherman Aronson
Stephanie Pennypacker
Suzanna Barucco
Thomas Gugliuzza, Esq.
Todd Pitock
Will Tung
Zak Kneeland

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ADOPTION OF MINUTES, 744TH STATED MEETING, 9 AUGUST 2024

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:05:21

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners, staff, and members of the public if they had any suggested additions or corrections to the minutes of the preceding meeting of the Historical Commission, the 744th Stated Meeting, held 9 August 2024. No comments were offered.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to adopt the minutes of the 744th Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 9 August 2024. Ms. Washington seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Adoption of the Minutes of the 744TH Stated Meeting of the PHC **MOTION: Adopt minutes** **MOVED BY: Thomas** **SECONDED BY: Washington**					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Abu Saab (Commerce)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Frankel	X				
Holloman (City Council)	X				
O'Connor (DPP)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
McCoubrey					X
Michel					X
Rabauer	X				
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	11				2

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES

ADDRESS: 700-34 RACE ST

Name of Resource: Roundhouse, Philadelphia Police Headquarters
Proposed Action: Designate
Property Owner: City of Philadelphia
Nominator: Preservation Alliance/Docomomo Philadelphia
Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property known as the Roundhouse, the former Philadelphia Police Headquarters at 700-34 Race Street, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Philadelphia architectural firm Geddes Brecher Qualls & Cunningham (GBQC) and engineer August Komendant designed the Roundhouse in 1959 and its construction was completed in 1962. The building is composed of approximately 1,000

precast concrete units. The nomination argues that the Roundhouse reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style, the Expressionist style, satisfying Criterion for Designation C, and embodies distinguishing characteristics of that style, satisfying Criterion D. The nomination contends that the Roundhouse embodies distinguishing characteristics of an engineering specimen with its architectural precast concrete and state of the art post tensioning, also satisfying Criterion D. The nomination highlights the collaboration between the prominent Philadelphia architectural firm GBQC, engineer August Komendant, and general contractor Sovereign Construction Company and asserts that they were designers and builders whose work significantly influenced the development of the city, state, and nation, satisfying Criterion E. The nomination claims that the Roundhouse contains elements of design, detail, materials, and craftsmanship that represent significant innovations, satisfying Criterion F. The nomination asserts that the Roundhouse satisfies Criterion H, owing to its unique siting and location. Finally, the nomination contends that the Roundhouse satisfies Criterion J because it exemplifies the progressive period in Philadelphia under Mayors Clark and Dilworth.

The proposed boundary for the designation includes the northern portion of the site with the building but not the surface parking lot to the south. The boundary also excludes a small parcel at the northwest corner of the site that is owned by the Delaware River Port Authority, not the City of Philadelphia. The nomination identifies the concrete perimeter wall as a non-contributing feature, owing to the expectation that any redevelopment of the site will require its demolition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 700-34 Race Street, the Roundhouse, satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, E, F, H, and J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 700-34 Race Street, the Roundhouse, satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, E, F, H, and J.

SEE BELOW.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:05:49

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Historical Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

ACTION: Mr. Thomas moved to continue the review of 700-34 Race Street to the October 2024 meeting of the Historical Commission. Ms. Washington seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Continuance MOTION: Approve continuance MOVED BY: Thomas SECONDED BY: Washington					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Abu Saab (Commerce)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Frankel	X				
Holloman (City Council)	X				
O'Connor (DPP)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
McCoubrey					X
Michel					X
Rabauer	X				
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	11				2

REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 27 AUGUST 2024

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 248 N LAWRENCE ST

Proposal: Construct 5-story condo building on vacant lot
Review Requested: Review and Comment
Owner: Gianni Pignetti
Applicant: Joseph Jancuska, j2a Architects
History: Vacant Lot
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Old City Historic District, Non-contributing, 12/12/2003
Staff Contact: Heather Hendrickson, heather.hendrickson@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to construct a five-story condominium building with pilot house and roof deck on a vacant lot at 248 N. Lawrence Street in the Old City Historic District. This lot was vacant when the Old City Historic District was designated in 2003 and was classified as non-contributing. It is an undeveloped site. In cases such as this, the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission have "review and comment" jurisdiction only.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct five-story condo building on vacant lot

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be*

differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

- The proposed building would be more compatible with the Old City Historic District if the primary façade color is changed from white to red to reflect the brick red in the area, the height of the front of the building is more in keeping with the neighboring historic building and another material instead of vinyl siding was chosen for the side elevations such as cement fiber board, brick veneer, or a dark stucco.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff comments that the proposed construction at 248 N. Lawrence Street should be revised as suggested to be compatible with the Old City Historic District, pursuant to Standard 9.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee commented that they would recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:07:39

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Hendrickson presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Joseph Jancuska represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas noted that there is a mix of building types from across time periods in Old City, which would support the design of the proposed building. He also noted that the blank vinyl-clad south side wall would be objectionable were it not for the possibility of future development on the adjacent site. On the other hand, he noted that the north facade party wall which would extend back from the adjacent historic structure would be visible for a much longer time and suggested that the color be changed from white to a darker color.
  - Mr. Jancuska noted that they were not planning to use white, but a darker colored vinyl.
- Ms. Cooperman noted that it appeared the new building would sit forward of the adjacent historic building, which would be problematic.
  - Mr. Jancuska clarified that the shadow line in the rendering is an error and that, in reality, the new building would be in line with the adjacent historic building.
- Mr. Frankel commented that he believed vinyl should not be used on the northern facade of the building, where the new construction would extend past the historic building. He noted that there were other cost-effective materials that could be used that would be more contextual with the historic structure such as Hardie siding.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites commented that the proposed new construction was not compatible with the historic street or the Old City Historic District. He noted that it would be possible for the building to be modern while relating to the surrounding context.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society commented that he did not find the design of the proposed building to be objectionable, although noted that if the windows had a more traditional design, the building would better relate to its surroundings.

OLD BUSINESS

ADDRESS: 1423 SPRUCE ST

Proposal: Demolish non-contributing building; construct seven-story building
Review Requested: Final Approval
Owner: K of C Federal Credit Union
Applicant: David Lo
History: 1980; K of C Federal Credit Union; Arthur Basciano, architect
Individual Designation: None
District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District, Non-contributing, 2/8/1995
Staff Contact: Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, daniel.shachar-krasnoff@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application seeks final approval for the construction of a seven-story, mixed-use building with ground floor commercial space and apartments on floors two to seven. The existing two-story building was constructed in 1980 and is non-contributing to the Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District. Demolition of the existing building can be approved without a finding of financial hardship or public necessity. The Historical Commission has full jurisdiction over the proposed construction.

The Historical Commission has considered proposals for this project twice. At the January 2024 meeting the Commission concluded that a seven-story height was appropriate with sufficient setbacks, light-colored cladding of upper stories, and compatible design details. The proposed eight-foot setback from the fourth to the seventh stories was deemed insufficient. The Historical Commission denied the most recent proposal at its May 2024 meeting due to incompleteness.

The Architectural Committee recommended denial of proposals at the September, October, and December 2023 meetings. The applicant withdrew the September and October proposals prior to Historical Commission's meeting at which they would have been reviewed.

The revised proposal presented at the July 2024 Architectural Committee meeting again called for a 75-foot-tall building and pilot house. The design featured graduated setbacks increasing with each story beginning at 10 feet on the fourth story to 25 feet at the seventh story. The ground floor commercial storefront was contemporary in design and the façade was brick, unlike previous versions with a metal system.

The Architecture Committee recommended denial of the proposal at its July 2024 meeting. The applicant has revised the plans based upon the Committee's feedback. Changes include:

- Set back of the fourth story to align with the fifth story
- Extension of the ridge of the roof slope towards the rear
- Matching the brick colors of the neighboring building to the west
- Changing the color of the side panels to all grey
- Adding definition to the front façade, including a canopy over the commercial space
- A case study of the Historical Commission's approval for 262 S. 16th Street

All buildings on the north side of the 1400 block of Spruce Street and the south side of the 1400 block of Bach Place, except for the easternmost parcel, are within the Rittenhouse Fitler Historic District and all but one is contributing. These buildings are three-and-one-half stories tall, except for the western-most structure, which is 19 stories tall. At the east end of the block, the 20-story Atlantic Building is not within the historic district. The contemporary Kimmel Center on the south

side of Spruce Street is also not within the district. There is little historically significant context fronting Bach Place; only one building's primary facade fronts this street.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct seven-story building.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
  - The Historical Commission's guidance is addressed with the significantly increased setbacks of the upper stories.
  - The use of red brick, fenestration pattern and matching cornice on the first three stories creates compatibility with the block's contributing buildings.
  - The contemporary design of windows on the first three stories, storefront design and metal panels on the upper stories of the east and west facades clearly differentiates the building from contributing buildings on the 1400 block of Spruce Street. The application meets Standard 9.

- *Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment will be unimpaired.*
  - The proposed building could be removed from the historic site in the future, leaving all surrounding contributing structures intact; therefore, the proposal meets Standard 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends approval, pursuant to Standard 9.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:18:54

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the revised application to the Historical Commission.
- Developer David Lo and architect Chwen-Ping represented the revised application.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert commented in opposition to the application.
- Paul Steinke, representing the Preservation Alliance, commented in support of the application.
- Alexander Roederer, a near neighbor, commented in support of the application.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The existing two-story building was constructed in 1980 and is non-contributing to the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District. Demolition of the existing building

can be approved without a finding of financial hardship or public necessity. The Historical Commission has full jurisdiction over the proposed new construction.
- The application has been revised numerous times based on continued comments from the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission.

The Historical Commission concluded that:
- The Historical Commission's guidance is addressed with the significantly increased setbacks of the upper stories. The use of red brick, fenestration pattern and matching cornice on the first three stories creates compatibility with the block's contributing buildings. The revised application meets Standard 9.

ACTION: Mr. Lech moved to approve the revised application, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 1423 Spruce St **MOTION: Approval** **MOVED BY: Lech** **SECONDED BY: Cooperman**					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Abu Saab (Commerce)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman	X				
Frankel	X				
Holloman (City Council)	X				
O'Connor (DPP)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
McCoubrey					X
Michel					X
Rabauer	X				
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	11				2

WASHINGTON SQUARE WEST HISTORIC DISTRICT
Proposed Action: Designation
Property Owner: Multiple
Nominator: Washington Square West Civic Association and Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes designating a historic district comprised of 1,441 resources spanning approximately 26 city blocks in the Washington Square West neighborhood of Center City Philadelphia. The nomination ascribes various types of significance to the district, including social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological significance, arguing that the district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J. The nomination contends that the proposed Washington Square West Historic District illustrates the development of Philadelphia's

residential and commercial core over more than two centuries, from the establishment of the Mikveh Israel Cemetery in 1740 until the solidification of the neighborhood as an LGBTQ+ community in the 1980s.

The Historical Commission issued the notice to owners of properties in the proposed historic district on 21 March 2024.

The Philadelphia City Planning Commission reviewed the nomination for the Washington Square West Historic District at its monthly public meeting on 18 April 2024 and found that the proposed historic district is aligned with city plans for the area.

The Committee on Historic Designation reviewed the nomination at a public meeting on 22 May 2024 and voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the Washington Square West Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J.

On 7 June 2024, the Historical Commission's staff issued a memorandum with suggested revisions to the classifications of vacant lots in the Washington Square West Historic District. The staff recommended changing all but two classifications of vacant lots from Contributing to Non-contributing owing to deficiencies in the nomination's section on Criterion I, the archaeology criterion.

At its 14 June 2024 meeting, the Historical Commission continued the review of the nomination for the Washington Square West Historic District to its 12 July 2024 meeting. At that time, the Historical Commission simply rescheduled the review; it did not consider the merits of the nomination or accept any comment on it.

At its 12 July 2024 meeting, the Historical Commission continued the review of the nomination for the Washington Square West Historic District to its 13 September 2024 meeting. At that time, the Historical Commission simply rescheduled the review; it did not consider the merits of the nomination or accept any comment on it.

The Historical Commission has posted all written comment from the nominators, property owners, and public on the Washington Square West Historic District on its website.

The Historical Commission has received three requests to continue (postpone) the review of the nomination for the Washington Square West Historic District until specific actions have been taken and/or specific conditions have been met. The requests are documented in a file on the Historical Commission's website. The staff suggests that, during its review of the nomination, the Historical Commission address the continuance requests first before addressing the merits of the nomination and a potential designation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Washington Square West Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the Washington Square West Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:37:51

RECUSAL:

- Ms. Cooperman recused from the review, owing to her role in preparing the nomination.

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Hanna Stark and Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and Drew Moyer of the Washington Square West Civic Association represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION OF CONTINUANCE REQUESTS:

- Ms. Washington chaired the first section of the review. Mr. Thomas was unable to participate because he was having technical difficulties and had to leave the Zoom meeting.
- Mr. Farnham explained that three groups of property owners had submitted requests to continue or postpone the review of the nomination for the Washington Square West Historic District until specific actions have been taken and/or specific conditions have been met.
- Jonathan Hessney of the Alder Court Homeowners Association objected to the way in which the Historical Commission notified property owners that it would consider the historic district and requested that the Historical Commission table the matter until new notice was provided to property owners.
- Joshua Zugerman, who owns a property on Quince Street, claimed that the nomination was deficient and should not be reviewed at this time. He objected to the classifications of properties in the inventory. He also suggested that Commissioners Thomas, Cooperman, and McCoubrey should recuse because they are members of the Preservation Alliance, which collaborated on the nomination.
- Frazar Thomas stated that his house was built in 1978 and has no significance. It needs repair. Designating it as historic will make the repairs more expensive.
- Drew Moyer, a member of the Board of the Washington Square West Civic Association, disagreed with the complaints about the notifications to property owners. He stated that the proposed historic district was discussed at 24 public meetings over the last four years and five months. He listed several meetings at which the district was discussed. He stated that the meetings were broadly advertised on social media.
- Lynn Landis stated that she is a member of the Jessup Street Parking Lot Association, which was not notified of the designation. She stated that property owners are confused about the meaning of the designation.
- Colin Murphy asserted that there has been a lack of notice and awareness of the Washington Square West Civic Association meetings. He stated that he was unaware of the civic association until he received the notice letter from the Historical Commission regarding the designation in March 2024. He contended that the civic association has a responsibility to inform all community members about its initiatives, but it is not doing that.
- Jeffrey Saunders disagreed with the commenters who opined that the notice was insufficient. He stated that he owns a property at 250 S. 13th Street and had received two letters and several emails. He noted that he, in fact, received too many emails. He added that he had also received information about the district at a street fair.
- Kevin Hoekzema stated that he owns the property at 825 Lombard Street. He stated that the first time he heard about the proposed historic district was in March 2024,

when he received the Historical Commission's notice letters. He stated that the civic association should have informed him earlier.

- Attorney Matt McClure stated that he represents the owners of 219 S. 13th Street and 1235 Locust Street. He stated that he is a resident of Philadelphia and has as much standing in this matter as Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance, who does not live in the proposed district. Mr. McClure stated that notice of the consideration of a historic district must come from the government, not a third party. He claimed that the nomination is not correct and complete because it has a period of significance that is 245 years long, which is too long. He asserted that the preservation ordinance does not permit a period of significance of that length.
- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance stated that his organization prepared the nomination in collaboration with the Washington Square West Civic Association. He stated that it is his understanding that the Historical Commission followed the same procedures when providing notice for this historic district that it has followed for all others in the past. He noted that it is illegal for government agencies to put flyers in mail slots. Regarding the claim that Commissioners Thomas and McCoubrey should recuse from the review because they are members of the Preservation Alliance, Mr. Steinke stated that his organization has never discussed the nomination with either of them. He noted that the review has been continued multiple times and all property owners in the district have had an opportunity to learn about the district and the Historical Commission. He defended the long period of significance and explained that it extends into the twentieth century to include the neighborhood's LBGTQ history. He asked the Historical Commission to reject the requests for continuances and noted that this historic district has been in the works since 2009.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society noted that his house was recently nominated, and he did receive the notice letters, which arrived in generic City of Philadelphia envelopes that might go overlooked. He asserted that Washington Square West has an incredible mix of architecture and is the Greenwich village of Philadelphia. He objected to any additional delays of the review and suggested compromises related to parking lots and twentieth-century houses.
- Todd Pitock of 318 S. 12th Street objected because he did not receive any notice of the proposed historic district until he received the Historical Commission's letters in March 2024. He stated that he did not otherwise receive any notice of the proposed district. He concluded that he did not receive any notice, except the notice letters from the Historical Commission.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites opposed the requests for a continuance.
- Ms. Washington asked Mr. Farnham to respond to the comments.
    - Mr. Farnham stated that the assertion that the Commissioners who are members of the Preservation Alliance must recuse from the review is unfounded. First, two of the three, Ms. Cooperman and Mr. McCoubrey, are not participating in the review. Second, the Law Department has opined many times that Commissioners do not need to recuse if they are members of an organization that has a matter before the Historical Commission unless they are part of the leadership of that organization, for example, a board member directly involved in decision making or a staff member. Mere members who are not making the day-to-day decisions for the organization do not need to recuse from Historical Commission's reviews involving that organization. He stated that he verified this assertion with the Historical Commission's attorney, Leonard Reuter, moments earlier.

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- Mr. Farnham stated that, regarding notice, it is the staff's position that the notice requirements in the City's historic preservation ordinance were fully satisfied for this historic district. The Historical Commission is a government agency and has obligations to notify property owners before it does anything to restrict their rights regarding their properties. The Washington Square West Civic Association and the Preservation Alliance are private nonprofit organizations, and they do not have the same notice requirements. There was no legal requirement for the Washington Square West Civic Association, for example, to notify people within the proposed area. There are about 1,400 buildings and an additional 1,000 condominium units in the historic district. The Historical Commission sent two letters for each of those 2,400 properties, one to the property owner at the address that the property owner has provided to the City's property tax agency, and one directly to the property. The Historical Commission sends two letters for each property to provide redundancy because not every letter will arrive. He explained that the Historical Commission itself did not mail the letters. The City's mailroom, which handles mailings for all City agencies, collated and folded the letters, stuffed them in the envelopes, and mailed them. The City mail room mails letters on behalf of the City all day every day, including important materials like water bills and notices of violation. Mr. Farnham reported that he confirmed with the City post office that all 5,000 or so of the Washington Square West letters were mailed. He added that a couple of minutes ago a speaker said that he did not become aware of the proposed historic district until his notice letters from the Historical Commission dated 21 March 2024 arrived at his house. Mr. Farnham concluded that that is exactly how the notification system is supposed to work. Mr. Farnham explained that the Historical Commission is also required to put posters up in the neighborhood. The preservation ordinance does not specify how many posters or where they are to be located within the proposed district. In this case, the Historical Commission put up four posters within the neighborhood, with the understanding that the Washington Square West Civic Association and Preservation Alliance were also taking extensive steps to notify property owners. Mr. Farnham explained that the Historical Commission is obligated to put an advertisement with details about the review in a newspaper of general circulation. Through the City's Procurement Department, the Historical Commission placed an advertisement in the *Daily News*. The advertising group in the Procurement Department places legal notices in newspapers nearly every day for myriad City agencies. Mr. Farnham stated that he confirmed with the Law Department that the *Daily News* satisfies the requirement of a newspaper of general circulation. He reiterated that the Historical Commission satisfied the notice requirement to the full extent of the law.
- Mr. Farnham noted that the Historical Commission's Rules and Regulations require the staff to determine that a nomination is correct and complete before it issues the notice to the property owners and puts the nomination before the Committee on Historic Designation and the Historical Commission. He stated that correct and complete does not mean that the district should be designated, or that there could not have been more information provided in the nomination. It simply means that all of the required pieces and parts of the nomination like a boundary description, physical description, statement of significance, and an inventory are provided in the nomination and that there is enough factually correct information in the nomination for the Historical Commission to decide whether or not a case is made for designation. It is not the staff's responsibility or obligation, or even privilege, to decide whether a nomination should be adopted

and a district designated. That is the Historical Commission's job. The Historical Commission can reject a correct and complete nomination. Mr. Farnham stated that he disagrees with the claims that the notice should not have been sent because the nomination was not correct and complete. It was correct and complete in that all of the requisite pieces of the nomination and sufficient factually correct information were provided for the Historical Commission to consider the nomination and make a decision on the district.

- Mr. Farnham stated that he wanted to address the memorandum he wrote regarding the classifications of the parking lots. He stated that staff member Laura DiPasquale, who no longer works at the Historical Commission, reviewed the nomination very carefully with the Washington Square West Civic Association and Preservation Alliance for at least one year before determining that it was correct and complete. She looked at every single property. Mr. Farnham reported that, after several property owners objected to some contributing classifications for parking lots owing to Criterion for Designation I, the archaeology criterion, during the early stages of the Historical Commission's review, he reviewed the nomination again and concluded that there was not a sufficient justification in the statement of significance for the classification of several properties as contributing under Criterion I. He stated that he discovered that Criterion I was discussed in one single very short paragraph in the nomination. The other criteria were discussed across many, many pages. The claims about Criterion I in the nomination related to very specific types of occupants of the properties, but only two properties were occupied by such people. He concluded that no basis to justify the other classifications under Criterion I was provided in the nomination. He noted that he disagreed with the staff member who initially reviewed the nomination regarding Criterion I and issued a memorandum to the Historical Commission that is advisory only; it is non-binding. Finally, Mr. Farnham rejected the claim that the staff scrutinized the parking lots carefully but overlooked the other types of properties. With the reconsideration of the parking lots, the staff reviewed every property carefully.

- Ms. Washington called upon several people who had already spoken to offer brief responses.
  - Mr. Zugerman stated that it clear that he and others who have spoken received notice of the review in one form or another because they are in attendance today. He stated that he wanted to speak for those who did not receive notice and therefore were not in attendance today. He asserted that they had a right to be heard as well. He then objected to the fact that the Historical Commission only placed four posters in the neighborhood and claimed that the Commission relied on the civic association and others to spread the word. He claimed that the Historical Commission did not follow its usual procedures and relied on others to do the government's work.
  - Mr. Hessney stated that he had never spoken with Mr. Steinke about the historic district, even though Mr. Steinke claimed that he had spoken with everyone who raised objections. He also objected to Mr. Steinke's characterization of the Historical Commission's review requirements provided at one of the civic association's meetings. He stated that Mr. Steinke is deceptive. Mr. Hessney acknowledged that Mr. Farnham stated that the notice letters were mailed but asserted that there is no documentary proof that they were mailed. He stated that he has been objecting to the way in which the Historical Commission notified property owners of the proposed district from the very beginning. He asserted that the *Daily News* is not a real newspaper and asked the Historical Commission

to renotify all property owners before commencing with the review. Mr. Hessney objected to the staff's recommendations and claimed that properties suffered from disparate treatment. He stated that the properties at Alder Court are not visible from the public right-of-way. He stated that there is no way to know why many of the properties are considered significant.
    - Ms. Landes stated that she had never seen any posters hanging in the neighborhood.
    - Mr. Steinke acknowledged that he had never spoken to Mr. Hessney. He disagreed with Mr. Hessney's characterization of the Historical Commission's review requirements that he provided at one of the civic association's meetings. He concluded, saying that it is clear that the Historical Commission followed its notice procedures and that property owners received the requisite notice.
    - Mr. Farnham adamantly disagreed with Mr. Zugerman's claim that the staff did not follow its usual process regarding the notification posters. He stated that the staff did follow the usual process. He concluded that notice is not an end in and of itself. The notice is intended to invite people to participate in the deliberations, and the people objecting to the notice have been participating since the very beginning of process. The Historical Commission is required to give 60 days of notice; owing to the earlier continuances, it has given nearly 180 days of notice. It is the staff's position that the notice requirements were satisfied.
- Mr. Lech asked Mr. Farnham to respond to the claim that owners did not know what Criteria for Designation their properties satisfied.
    - Mr. Farnham responded that a historic district nomination typically indicates that the proposed district satisfies a series of Criteria for Designation that may be related to persons, events, architectural significance, and cultural, social, and community significance. The district inventory does not typically specify which property in a district is associated with which criteria but instead essentially asserts that the group of properties that make up the district collectively satisfy the cited Criteria. Every property in the district that is classified as contributing or significant plays into the satisfaction of the Criteria. However, Criterion I, the archaeology criterion, is very different from the other Criteria. When a property satisfies Criterion I, a determination has been made that the specific property is likely to hold significant material artifacts underground that would contribute to the understanding of the prehistory or history of the area. No other Criteria, other than Criterion I, is that specific. Criterion I is unusual and is treated differently. It is the only Criterion that is typically specifically called out in an inventory for specific properties.
- Ms. Washington stated that she concluded that the Historical Commission's staff provided sufficient public notice. She noted that property owners have acknowledged receiving the notice letters in March 2024. With the continuances, owners have had much more than 60 days of notice. She acknowledged that the US Postal Service is not perfect but opined that the assertion that the Historical Commission mailed some letters and not others is implausible. She stated that there is no requirement that the Historical Commission send the notice letters by certified mail and no minimum number of posters to be hung in the proposed district. She also observed that the system is redundant to overcome problems, and, on top of the official notice, the Historical Commission and nominators provided additional unofficial notice. She also pointed out that the nominators held several public meetings to discuss the nomination. Ms. Washington stated that several of the people who have objected to the notice process have been participating in the Historical Commission's deliberations from the beginning. She observed that it is hard to believe claims of a

lack of notice from people who have been participating in the process for more than 60 days. Those people have had adequate time to prepare their responses to the proposed historic district.

- Ms. Washington asked Mr. Farnham if the staff investigated buildings that were constructed late in the period of significance to see if they in fact contributed to the proposed Washington Square West Historic District.
  - Mr. Farnham replied that it is unfortunate that Laura DiPasquale is not here at the meeting today. She undertook most of the review of this nomination and could better speak to the specifics of her review. Ms. DiPasquale was very careful in ensuring that properties that were classified as contributing deserved to be classified as contributing. The staff routinely reviews district nominations looking for properties that might be on the edge of contributing and non-contributing and always errs on the side of caution. A questionable classification may lead to an appeal after a designation. The staff was conservative in its review of the classifications in this inventory and did reclassify several properties from contributing to non-contributing during the review.
- Ms. Washington agreed to hear an additional person who raised his hand late.
  - Dustin Dove noted that he does not live in the proposed historic district and stated that the Historical Commission should take the notice complaints at face value and reevaluate the ways in which it provides notice.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The Historical Commission provided the 60-day notice to the property owners and the public as required in Section 14-1004(2)(b) of the Philadelphia Code.
- The Historical Commission and nominators provided additional informal notice.
- Owing to two earlier continuances, property owners and the public have had nearly 180 days of notice in advance of this meeting.
- The Historical Commission's staff reviewed the nomination and found it to be technically and substantively correct and complete as required in Section 5.8.a of the Historical Commission's Rules and Regulations.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- Additional continuances are unnecessary because the claims alleging that the notice was flawed and that the nomination is incorrect or incomplete are not persuasive. Interested parties have had nearly 180 days to prepare for the review of the nomination.

ACTION: Mr. Lech moved to deny the continuance requests. Mr. Treat seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 10 to 0.

DRAFT

ITEM: Continuance requests for the Washington Square West Historic District **MOTION: Deny the requests** **MOVED BY: Lech** **SECONDED BY: Treat**					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Abu Saab (Commerce)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (PCPC)					X
Cooperman				X	
Frankel	X				
Holloman (City Council)	X				
O'Connor (DPP)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
McCoubrey					X
Michel	X				
Rabauer	X				
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10			1	2

DISCUSSION OF NOMINATION:

- Mr. Thomas, who had had technical difficulties and returned to the meeting during the discussion of the continuance requests, resumed chairing the meeting.
- Hannah Stark, the Director of Policy and Communications at the Preservation Alliance, spoke of behalf of the nominators and noted that the Preservation Alliance co-sponsored the nomination with the Washington Square West Civic Association. She summarized the statement of significance in the nomination, which explains how the neighborhood satisfies the Criteria for Designation cited in the nomination.
- Paul Steinke, the Executive Director of the Preservation Alliance, spoke of behalf of the nominators. He noted that the first nomination for the Washington Square West Historic District was submitted in 2009 but was not processed. Work on the current nomination began several years ago and was directed by the author of the original nomination, a professional historian. Several interns from Jefferson University's graduate program in historic preservation updated the inventory. The Preservation Alliance and the Washington Square West Civic Association collaborated in a robust program of civic engagement and community outreach. He advocated for the designation of the historic district.
- Drew Moyer spoke on behalf of the Washington Square West Civic Association. He spoke about the community engagement process that the civic association undertook to inform community members about the proposed historic district and the compelling reasons for designation of the district. He commented on the importance of designating historic districts in addition to individual sites and advocated for the designation of the Washington Square West Historic District.
- Mr. Thomas invited property owners to speak about the nomination.
- Georgia Faino stated that the Civic Association undertook a large amount of work to nominate the historic district, but it did not reach out to all the property owners in an appropriate time period. She stated that she was in shock when she received her notice letters. She stated that she did not understand why the proposed district was

so large. She objected to the historic district and stated that she did not want the neighborhood to be frozen in time like Society Hill. She stated that she was confused by the process.

- Frazar Thomas stated that he owns a house at 12th and Waverly Streets. He stated that he purchased his house because the neighborhood is vibrant and populated by interesting people. He stated that Washington Square West is the Greenwich Village of Philadelphia and is one of the more relatively affordable parts of Center City. He stated that designating the district risks pricing interesting people out of the area.
- Barbara Arvanitis stated that she owns the property at 216 S. Jessup Street. She stated that she cares deeply about preservation and is in favor of the proposed Washington Square West Historic District. She stated that she lived in Greenwich Village in New York City before moving to Philadelphia. She stated that the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission has protected Greenwich Village. She asked the Historical Commission to designate the proposed Washington Square West Historic District and protect its unique character like the New York agency protects Greenwich Village.
- Jonathan Broh stated that he is a homeowner in Washington Square West, an architect, and has been the chair of the Zoning Committee of the Washington Square West Civic Association for the past 10 years. He states that he strongly supports the proposed designation of the Washington Square Historic District. He stated that he has worked with the Historical Commission several times and the process has always been quick and efficient. He reported that he used off-the-shelf products which are readily available to the public for the work to his own designated house. He stated that repairs approved by the Historical Commission are sometimes more costly because they are better served to protect the historic properties. He claimed that the designation will not limit the design or construction of new buildings within our community. Historic designation is not a deterrent for knowledgeable developers and architects. Designation encourages thoughtful contextual development. He noted that, as the chair of the zoning committee, he has worked with several neighbors and community members on numerous projects that have helped to develop the fabric of Washington Square West. He concluded that there is no better way to preserve the character of the neighborhood than the historic designation of Washington Square West.
- Lynn Landes stated that she is the owner of 217 S. Jessup Street. She stated that she opposes the designation because it is overreaching and vague. She claimed that the Historical Commission has a longstanding reputation of making arbitrary and illogical decisions. Its regulations and policies are vague. Designation will result in higher costs. She complained that her neighbors had not been allowed to paint their brick houses and called it censorship. She objected to the fact that the Historical Commission limits comments at its public meetings to agenda items. She stated that she was not allowed to raise other matters at the meetings. She claimed that that was a denial of her First Amendment free-speech rights.
- Jacalyn Ashford stated that she has owned her properties at 261 S. 9th Street and 226 S. Schell Street since 1978. She stated that the designation will become a bureaucracy that will encumber property owners and have a negative impact on them by imposing bureaucratic encumbrances. She claimed that most of the properties in the area have no historical significance. She stated that she does not want to have to obtain permission to paint her door a particular color. She asserted that obtaining approval would be an emotional hardship. She stated that she has been trying to resolve tax issues with the City of Philadelphia for years. She

suggested that individual designations would be better than a historic district designation.

- Robert Hotes stated that he is the owner of a house in the proposed Washington Square West Historic District and a practicing preservation architect with almost 30 years of experience. He added that he was one of the original committee members of the group that nominated the Washington Square West Historic District in 2009. He remarked that he heartily supports the proposed Washington Square West Historic District. He stated that the area is unique for its heterogeneity. He reported that he has worked with historic district guidelines in numerous cities and worked with the Historical Commission many times. He contended that it is not the purpose of a historic district to preserve a neighborhood in amber or fix it in time. Historic district designation is a tool to help guide development so that it is sensitive and compatible with the character of its neighborhood.
- Joshua Zugerman stated that he submitted a letter detailing the legal infirmities of the proposed designation. He noted that the letter is part of the record so he would not belabor the points raised therein. He contended that the designation should be rejected for failing to satisfy the criteria for historic district designation as laid out in historic preservation ordinance. The nomination relies on only a tiny subset of properties to individually satisfy the criteria. Many of those properties are already designated historic on an individual basis and cannot support the designation of district as a whole. He asserted that the nominated district lacks any structure that holds it together as a unified historic district. The period to significance of 250 years of history is too long. This is the grab bag approach to historic districts. Using this nomination, one could simply nominate all of Philadelphia as a historic district and be done with it. He noted that 53% of the properties in the proposed district are already individually designated. The district does not need to be created to protect the LGBTQ history in the area. He reported that his property at 409 Quince Street and those from 409 through 419 Quince Street were built in 1963, and are classified as contributing in the inventory despite having no known architect, builder, or historical function. He asked the Historical Commission to reject the entire designation or, at a minimum, classify the properties in his row as non-contributing. He asked the Historical Commission to reconsider all classifications in the proposed district.
- Colin Murphy stated that designating such a large swath of properties across a period of time that is almost as long as the age of this nation is an egregious and irresponsible overstep. He claimed that the criteria for determining how properties are classified are arbitrary. The neighborhood has seen significant change over the decades and does not have a continuous theme. Age and style vary street to street. He remarked that two-thirds of his building is classified as contributing and the remaining one-third is classified as non-contributing. He stated that, if the district is intended to protect LGBTQ+ sites, then it should not encompass the entirety of Washington Square West. He stated that the area should be resurveyed. He described a case heard by the Historical Commission over the summer in which the nominator withdrew a nomination because the property owner sought to preserve the building without it being historically designated. He concluded that there are ways to protect buildings without burdening owners with designation.
- Attorney Matthew McClure stated that he represents the owners of 219 S. 13th Street and 1235 Locust Street. He noted that he submitted a letter in opposition to the proposed historic district. He observed that the Historical Commission's staff recommended amending some classifications of some properties in the historic district to non-contributing. He remarked that there is a general opposition to the

historic district. He asked the Historical Commission to adopt the staff's recommendations if it does decide to designate the historic district.

- Jonathan Hessney stated that he submitted a letter opposing the historic district. He claimed that the nominators were clear that they are seeking to take control over the area between Society Hill and Rittenhouse. He contended that there is no unifying theme for the historic district other than controlling the area between the other districts. He asserted that, if this area can be designated, the entirety of Philadelphia can be designated. He asked about the limits of the Historical Commission's authority to designate. He objected to the length of the period of significance of 240 years. He claimed that the Historical Commission is taking very large chunks out of the city. He questioned whether the authorizing statute is clear enough in providing direction to the Historical Commission as to what can and cannot be designated. He stated that there are not clear guidelines. The authority is vague and improperly delegated. It has virtually no limit. Mr. Hessney stated that he is the president of homeowners' association at Alder Court and asked the Historical Commission to decline to designate the historic district or, at a minimum, to reclassify the Alder Court properties from contributing to non-contributing because most of the properties are not visible from the public right-of-way. He stated that the only photographs of the Alder Court properties in the inventory are aerial photographs. He said that there is no basis for classifying them as contributing. He claimed that the neighborhood is overwhelmingly opposed to this nomination. He opined that 133 owners oppose this nomination, and only 23 want it. The designation is supported by a narrow group of people from the historic preservation community, mostly from outside this district.
- Duncan Adkins stated that he is a resident of the area and a member of the Center City Residents Association. He reported that he is against the establishment of the district. He remarked that the entire district designation is not needed to complete the stated goals of preserving the important properties protecting the LGBTQ history in the area. Over 600 properties within the district are already historically protected. A designation will freeze the area in amber. He said that there is no reason to create an overlay for the other properties in the area that have not already been designated as historic. He said that he is familiar with similar historic districts in places like San Francisco that are extremely onerous for property owners. Individual designation would do a much better job of satisfying the desired goals of historic preservation. He opined that it would simplify things for everyone to just individually label each building that is historic and allow the rest of the Washington Square West area to grow.
- Kevin Hoekzema, the owner of 825 Lombard Street, reported that he made sure his house was not historically designated when he bought it 20 years ago. He stated that he wants to be able to make changes to his house easily and economically. He stated that he is opposed the creation of the historic district. He concluded that it is unfair.
- Wesley Parrott spoke in favor of this historic district, where he has lived for more than 30 years. He stated that he wants the appearance, charm, and human scale of the area preserved. He forecast that this area would be wiped clean in time by developers lacking respect for our city's rich history if it is not designated.
- Jon Cooper, who owns 424 S. 11th Street, stated that he is in opposition to the designation for many reasons presented already. He observed that the district is unique in its diversity, which sets it apart from other districts that have been designated. He noted that he does not like the Historical Commission's attitude that people who are in opposition to the designation are skeptics, which he called "an

offensive term." He stated that the property owners in the area should be trusted to make appropriate decisions. The Historical Commission should allow the neighborhood to grow and evolve. He stated that he strongly opposes a designation for such a large area with such a long period of significance. He stated that there is no way to regulate an area with such a range and diversity of architectural styles. It would be a "useless task" to try.

- David Traub of Save Our Sites expressed his support for the designation of the Washington Square West Historic District.
- Nithin Vejendla stated that he is a renter who lives in outside the proposed historic district. He stated that renters form 46% of the city's residents. He opposed the designation of the historic district and claimed that its motivation is to restrict the construction of new housing. He listed some housing projects recently reviewed by the Historical Commission. He stated that underserved populations have lived in Washington Square West because housing is cheaply and widely available. Establishing a historic district will increase housing prices and cause gentrification. He advocated for a study to ensure that Washington Square West would continue to be a vibrant, economically diverse, racially diverse, and socioeconomically diverse neighborhood for the future.
- Jeffrey Saunders stated that he is a homeowner in the district and strongly supports designation. He stated that he is aware of situations when the Historical Commission's review significantly lowered renovation costs. He offered an example of a slate roof repair in which the Historical Commission's assistance resulted in a less expensive repair. He noted that the Historical Commission realizes that the district includes many architectural styles and will work to maintain that diversity. He reported that he is in favor of the designation of the historic district because it will protect property owners from the gradual destruction of the neighborhood from insensitive restorations and renovations. He objected to the claims that designation of an historic district will result in higher housing prices. He observed that the neighborhood is relatively affordable now but will not be if the historic buildings are replaced with towers.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society stated that he supports the designation of the Washington Square West Historic District. It is the Greenwich Village of Philadelphia. He noted that 133 property owners have expressed opposition to the district, which is only 12% of the total number of owners. People who oppose the creation of historic districts are much more likely to participate in the reviews than those who support them. This is an area that should have been designated a long time ago. He objected to the assertion that the Historical Commission should only individually designate in the area. He asserted that the point of the district is to ensure that the cohesive quality of the district and the area is maintained. He argued that West Washington Square West is very much intact compared to maybe other adjacent neighborhoods. He asked the Historical Commission to protect this area.
- Katie Lowe stated that she is a Washington Square West resident, a board member of the Washington Square West Civic Association, its community engagement coordinator, and a member of the Historic Preservation Committee for the Civic Association. She noted that she is a renter. She stated that the neighborhood deserves protections. She contended that this area should be a new type of historic district, not a traditional historic district. She remarked that Washington Square West is an important neighborhood. She objected to the claim that preservation stifles development. She asked the Historical Commission to consider protections for the neighborhood that are an alternative to the standard historic district.

- Carolyn Klepser noted that she has lived in a rental apartment on Clinton Street for the past seven years. Before that, she lived in Miami Beach, Florida for more than 20 years, where she was involved in the historic preservation. She observed that most of Miami Beach is now historic district. The oldest building in Miami Beach dates to 1915. She stated that she is dismayed to hear so much opposition and so much alarmism from her neighbors. She stated that they are fearing what they do not understand. She stated that designation will protect owners from inappropriate alterations at neighboring properties. She concluded that she strongly supports the designation of her neighborhood.
- Jim Duffin observed that Washington Square West has a deep and very broad significance. It is the cultural history of Philadelphia. He observed that there is a very rich history of an African American presence in this neighborhood. It also represents the city's LGBTQ history. It is architecturally and economically diverse. Mr. Duffin stated that he lives in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District and is also a member of the board of the Center City Residents Association. That historic district was created nearly 30 years ago, and it has proved to be significant in maintaining the unique qualities of the neighborhood, as well as allowing for growth and providing housing that people can afford. Historic districts allow for new construction and new buildings. A historic district does not preserve historic buildings in amber. He also noted that historic designation and districts add an important extra level of review and community engagement. They provide an opportunity for community input on new development that is not available through the regular zoning process.
- Alexander Roederer stated that he owns and lives at 412 S. Carlisle Street, which is one block away from the proposed historic district. Historic districts are meant to preserve areas with specific unifying historic themes. Washington Square West does not have a specific theme. It is an ensemble. A designation of the district is going to drive up cost of living in the heart of Philadelphia. The cost of living in this area is already high, and living in a historic district is more expensive. It increases property values and rents. It increases the cost of repairs. People will be unable to afford to live in the area. He stated that he supports preserving cities without freezing them in time. He stated that designation increases costs. He stated that new buildings must be built. He stated that he supports designated individual buildings as appropriate, but not an entire district. About 53% of the buildings in the district are already designated. He asked the Historical Commission to vote no on the district.
- Mark Dichter stated that he has been a resident of Washington Square West since 1969. He reported that he enthusiastically supports the creation of the historic district. He asserted that the suggestion that individual designations would be sufficient is untrue. Many historic buildings have been demolished because of the lack of a historic district in the neighborhood. He noted that he has owned historically designated buildings and contended that the Historical Commission's regulation has not been a burden and has been useful over the years. He then asserted that the neighborhood offers rental apartments for people of modest means. He urged the Historical Commission to preserve the wonderful neighborhood.
- Jay Ifert stated that he is a property owner in the proposed district. He stated that he is opposed to the creation of an historic district, but not to individual designation. He claimed that 85% of the property owners who expressed an opinion are against this designation. He stated that a district designation would open the City to possible litigation and lawsuits.
- John Smith stated that there are problems with the nomination. Properties have been incorrectly classified. He stated that the period of significance is too long. The

Historical Commission wants to stop change and lock the area in place, which will be a burden on property owners. Current property owners bought their houses without a designation. The historic district will add cost and time to construction projects. He stated that the Historical Commission does not have the capacity to handle this type of designation. If this district can be designated, any part of the city can be designated. It will set a dangerous precedent. The neighbors and the owners do not want this designation, and it should not be approved.

- Alison Weiss of SoLo Germantown opined that the nomination was very well done. She stated that the area is very deserving and should be added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.
- Colin Murphy requested that, if the designation does move forward today without any modifications to it, the Historical Commission reclassify his building as non-contributing. He noted that it is currently two-thirds contributing and one-third non-contributing. He asserted that the classification is not logical. He stated that he is open to having a narrower historic district that strictly highlights properties that do hold historical value or areas that have historical significance. He objected to the "blanket approach."
- Mr. Thomas stated that historic districts have benefits that individual designations do not. Historic districts protect the buildings between the highly significant buildings. They allow for the preservation of the overall fabric, of the streetscape. If only the most important buildings are individually designated, the others will be demolished and replaced with towers, and the significant buildings will lose their context. He noted that the designation of a historic district does not freeze that area in amber, as some have said, but instead creates a mechanism for managing change and growth. He stated that he believes that the nomination demonstrates that the Washington Square West Historic District deserves designation.
- Mr. Farnham suggested that the Historical Commission consider reclassifying most of the properties that are classified as contributing under Criterion I because they are not at all addressed in the statement of significance in the nomination. The statement of significance only discusses people of lesser means and the Black community in Washington Square West in relationship to Criterion I. Only two sites classified as contributing under Criterion I are associated with those groups. There is not a basis in the statement of significance for classifying the others as contributing.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- The 240-year-long period of significance stipulated in the nomination for the Washington Square West Historic District is not unprecedented as many claimed. The Society Hill Historic District has a 300-year-long period. The Old City Historic District has a 250-year-long period. The Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District has a 200-year-long period.
- The designation of the Washington Square West Historic District will not freeze the area in amber as many have claimed. Historic district designation is a tool for managing change, not preventing it.
- Nothing in the City of Philadelphia's historic preservation ordinance, the Historical Commission's Rules and Regulations, or other applicable law or regulation precludes the Historical Commission from designating or regulating the exterior envelopes of historic resources that are not visible from the public right-of-way.

The Historical Commission concluded that the Washington Square West Historic District satisfies:

- Criterion A for its associations with Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ community in the twentieth century and the city's Black community east of Broad Street in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; as a representative of an important period in the development of the city; and for its concentration of social and professional clubs.
- Criterion C for the representative and well-preserved examples of the Federal, Greek Revival, Second Empire, late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Revival, and Modernist architectural styles throughout the district.
- Criterion E for the many buildings that are representative and important examples of designs by significant architects across the period of significance from Robert Mills to Oscar Stonorov.
- Criterion F for the significant innovation represented by the origins and development of speculative rows of houses in the area at the end of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century.
- Criterion I for the sites that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important documenting persons of lesser means and institutions associated with the area's Black history.
- Criterion J for the sites that exemplify the heritage of European immigrants to the city in the period of its substantial growth and development of the neighborhood from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

ACTION: Ms. Washington moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the Washington Square West Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, with the reclassifications recommended in the staff memorandum on Criterion I dated 7 June 2024. Ms. Michel seconded the motion, which was adopted by a vote of 10 to 0, with one abstention.

ITEM: Washington Square West Historic District **MOTION: Designate, Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J, with reclassifications** **MOVED BY: Washington** **SECONDED BY: Michel**					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Abu Saab (Commerce)			X		
Lenard-Palmer (PCPC)	X				
Cooperman				X	
Frankel	X				
Holloman (City Council)	X				
O'Connor (DPP)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
McCoubrey					X
Michel	X				
Rabauer	X				
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10		1	1	1

COMMENT ON NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

ADDRESS: 400 MARKET ST

Resource: Continental Building
Owner: LAK 400 Owner LLC
Nominator: Kevin McMahon, Powers & Co.
Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 400 Market Street located in the Old City neighborhood of Philadelphia and historically known as the Continental Building. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission's meetings.

Constructed in 1970 and designed by architects Berger and Caltabiano, the nomination proposes that the Continental Building is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture. The building is a major example of the precast concrete architecture that appeared in the United States beginning in the 1950s due to improved concrete casting techniques. Cast concrete, particularly in the form of prefabricated wall panels, was key in the emergence of the Brutalist style that dominated corporate and institutional architecture in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. Brutalism relied on the sculptural forms and textural effects made possible by the material, and the architects utilized these attributes to highlight depth and dimensionality present in the Continental Building's design. The period of significance is 1970, when construction was completed on the building. The property at 400 Market Street is not listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:59:56

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Preservation consultant Kevin McMahon represented the nomination.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jay Farrell stated that he enjoys the presentations of the National Register nominations to the Historical Commission. He said that often these nominations signal a precursor to a Federal Historic Tax Incentives application for a rehabilitation project and are almost always done at the behest of the building owners.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman said that 400 Market Street is worthy of listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and she is pleased to see the nomination. She pointed out that calling this a Brutalist building is a stretch, but she understands there is not a

better name for the architectural style. Ms. Cooperman added she is pleased to see buildings of this period being recognized.
- The Commissioners supported the nomination for listing 400 Market Street on the National Register of Historic Places.

ADDRESS: 1900 S 16TH ST
Resource: St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church
Owner: 1900 S 16th Owner LLC
Nominator: Kevin McMahon, Powers & Co.
Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 1900 S. 16th Street located in South Philadelphia and historically known as St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission's meetings.

This nomination proposes that St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church is significant in the area of religion as the church most closely associated with the Reverend R. Percival's Anglo-Catholic Movement which sought to align the Protestant Catholic Church more closely with the beliefs and practices of Roman Catholicism beginning in the 1880s. Reverend Percival founded St. Elisabeth's in 1889 with construction of the church complex beginning at this time. The nomination contends the church complex is also significant in the area of architecture as a major example of the Early Christian or pre-Romanesque style of church architecture in Philadelphia. The complex includes the church (1897-1898), clergy house (1897-1898), parish house (1889), and bell tower (1902). The prominent firm of Bailey & Truscott designed the church, clergy house, and bell tower. The parish house, which was designed in the Gothic Revival style, is also architecturally significant as a work by William M. Camac while he was a partner in the firm of Furness, Evans, & Company. The period of significance is 1890 to 1908, beginning with the year that the first parish building was completed and ending with the year St. Elizabeth's clergymen resigned to join the Roman Catholic priesthood and concluded the church's association with the Anglo-Catholic movement. St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church was individually listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1967.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 04:05:39

PRESENTERS:
- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Preservation consultant Kevin McMahon represented the nomination.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman said 1900 S. 16th Street is a complex of buildings worthy of listing on the National Register of Historic Places. She observed that Philadelphia has long recognized the importance of this complex of buildings, which was locally designated in 1967.
- Mr. Farnham reminded the Commissioners they approved an adaptive reuse project for housing for this location during the past year. He pointed out that the owner is taking advantage of a local zoning benefit for historic properties on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.
- The Commissioners supported the nomination for listing 1900 S. 16th Street on the National Register of Historic Places.

ADDRESS: 2421 MARTHA ST AND 2423-39 AMBER ST
Resource: Weisbrod & Hess Brewery
Owner: 2403 Martha LLC/Amber + Adams Street LLC
Nominator: Kevin McMahon, Powers & Co.
Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 2421 Martha Street and 2423-39 Amber Street located in the Kensington neighborhood of North Philadelphia and historically known as Weisbrod & Hess Brewery. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission's meetings.

Founded in 1882, the history of Weisbrod & Hess Brewery reflects the evolution of beer brewing in Philadelphia from the late nineteenth century through the early years of prohibition in the 1920s. The nomination proposes significance under Criterion A in the areas of industry and social history as one of Philadelphia's most prominent beer breweries of this era. The nomination also contends that it is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a fine example of Philadelphia architect and engineer Adam C. Wagner's work. Wagner was nationally recognized for designing breweries in the *Rundbogenstil* style, reflecting the German origins of the brewing industry. Weisbrod & Hess Brewery is the best and most complete example of the architect's work in Philadelphia. Wagner is credited with designing at least 15 breweries in the city, most of which are not extant. The brewery originally included ten buildings, seven of which survive and are proposed for designation in this nomination. The period of significance is 1885-1940, beginning with the construction of the oldest extant building and ends with the company's closure following years of decline that began with Prohibition. A portion of this site, 2421 Martha Street, was listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 2017. The local nomination includes the Boiler House and Storage House buildings.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 04:09:08

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Preservation consultant Kevin McMahon represented the nomination.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman stated she is pleased to see the full complex nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. She appreciated the recognition of Philadelphia's brewery architects. She pointed out the significant aesthetic details that survive on the buildings.
- The Commissioners supported the nomination for listing 2421 Martha Street and 2423-39 Amber Street on the National Register of Historic Places.

ADDRESS: 411-419 N 9TH ST
Resource: Willow Steam Plant
Owner: 500 Loft LLC
Nominator: Kevin McMahon, Powers & Co.
Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 411-419 N 9th Street located in the Callowhill neighborhood of Philadelphia and historically known as the Willow Steam Plant. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission's meetings.

Built in 1927, the Willow Steam Plant was a significant achievement by the Philadelphia Electric Company, whose goal was to establish a modern district steam heating system for large commercial buildings in Center City. Using an extensive underground network of pipes, steam heating was considered at the time to be one of the most efficient means of heating large buildings in a dense urban area. During this period, Philadelphia's steam system became the fifth largest the United States. The nomination proposes significance at the local level under Criterion A in the area of engineering. It also states it is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an important example of power plant design during the 1920s. The steam plant was designed by the prominent local firm of John T. Windrim, the architect of numerous buildings for the Philadelphia Electric Company during this period. The period of significance begins with the building's construction in 1927 and ends in 1959, when

the plant's status was superseded by newer steam plants. The Willow Steam Plant ceased operations in the 1970s and has been vacant since. This property is not listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 04:12:19

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Preservation consultant Kevin McMahon represented the nomination.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jay Farrell said that the Willow Stream Plant is a "fan favorite" for those interested in industrial and commercial architecture. He noted that there been rumors that the building would be rehabilitated into apartments. Mr. Farrell said he looks forward to this building moving forward to an adaptive reuse project.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman said she is happy to the building proposed for designation to the National Register of Historic Places and hopes it will be part of a future adaptive reuse project.
- Mr. Thomas commented that the architect contributed to the design of a number of Philadelphia Electric Company buildings including the Delaware Power Station, which recently underwent an extensive rehabilitation and reopened as The Battery Hotel.
- The Commissioners supported the nomination for listing 411-419 N. 9th Street on the National Register of Historic Places.

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 04:16:58

ACTION: At 1:48 p.m., Mr. Lech moved to adjourn. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

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ITEM: Adjournment **MOTION: Adjourn** **MOVED BY: Lech** **SECONDED BY: Cooperman**					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Washington, Vice Chair	X				
Abu Saab (Commerce)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (PCPC)					X
Cooperman	X				
Frankel	X				
Holloman (City Council)	X				
O'Connor (DPP)	X				
Lech (L&I)	X				
McCoubrey					X
Michel					X
Rabauer	X				
Treat (DPD)	X				
Total	10				3

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and its advisory committees are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the video recording for this meeting. The start time for each agenda item in the recording is noted.
- Application materials and staff overviews are available on the Historical Commission's website, www.phila.gov/historical.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

§14-1004. Designation.
(1) Criteria for Designation.
A building, complex of buildings, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for preservation if it:

(a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
(b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
(c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
(e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation;
(f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;
(g) Is part of or related to a square, park, or other distinctive area that should be preserved according to a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;

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(h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
(i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
(j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

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