

**THE MINUTES OF THE 759TH STATED MEETING OF THE  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2025, 9:00 A.M.  
ROOM 18-029, 1515 ARCH STREET, WITH REMOTE OPTION ON ZOOM  
ZACHARY FRANKEL, CHAIR**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:00:00**

Mr. Frankel, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and announced the presence of a quorum. The following Commissioners joined him:

| <b>Commissioner</b>                                                         | <b>Present</b> | <b>Absent</b> | <b>Comment</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Zachary Frankel, Chair (Real Estate Developer)                              | X              |               |                |
| Kimberly Washington, Esq., Vice Chair (Community Development Corporation)   | X              |               | Arrived 9:14am |
| Kareema Abu Saab (Commerce Department)                                      | X              |               |                |
| Donna Carney (Philadelphia City Planning Commission)                        | X              |               |                |
| Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Committee on Historic Designation Chair (Historian) | 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             |                |
| Franz Rabauer                                                               |                | X             |                |
| Robert Thomas, AIA (Architectural Historian)                                | X              |               |                |
| Matthew Treat (Department of Planning and Development)                      | X              |               |                |

The meeting was held in person at 1515 Arch Street, with the option for applicants and the public to participate via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director  
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III  
Kristin Hankins, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner III  
Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department  
Josh Schroeder, Historic Preservation Planner I  
Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the meeting in person:

Juan Tejedor, Voith & Mactavish Architects  
Kimberly Haas, Hidden City Philadelphia  
Marcie Turney  
Matthew McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr  
Meredith Trego, Esq., Ballard Spahr  
Scott O'Barr, Voith & Mactavish Architects  
Stephen Varenhorst  
Steven Peitzman  
Valerie Safran

The following persons attended the meeting on Zoom:

Allison Weiss, SoLo Germantown Civic Association  
Amelia Otto  
Cookie Jones  
Craig Marvel  
Daniel Pearson, Philadelphia Inquirer  
David Breiner, Thomas Jefferson University  
David Fecteau, Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
David Traub, Save Our Sites  
Eunbee Kang  
Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance  
J.M. Duffin  
Jake Blumgart  
Jay Farrell  
Jennifer Robinson, Preservation Alliance  
Jingyi Luo  
Julia Hayman  
Kevin Brett  
Kevin King  
Lori Arnold  
Mary McGettigan  
Michael Markovitz  
Michael Phillips, Esq., Klehr Harrison  
Nancy Pontone  
Nicholas Covolus  
Oliver Otto  
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society  
Pamela Bracey, SoLo Germantown Civic Association  
Rafael A. Torres  
Raymond Rola  
Sam Xu  
Samuel A. Pickard  
Stanley Ellenberg, Esq.  
Stephanie M. Pennypacker  
Suzanna Barucco  
Suzanne Ponsen

## **ADOPTION OF MINUTES, 758TH STATED MEETING, 10 OCTOBER 2025**

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:04:20

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Frankel 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 758<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting, held 10 October 2025. No comments were offered.

**ACTION:** Mr. Frankel moved to adopt the minutes of the 758<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 10 October 2025. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

| <b>ITEM: Adoption of the Minutes of the 758<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the PHC</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>MOTION: Adopt minutes</b>                                                           |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOVED BY: Frankel</b>                                                               |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>SECONDED BY: McCoubrey</b>                                                          |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>VOTE</b>                                                                            |     |    |         |        |        |
| Commissioner                                                                           | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Frankel, Chair                                                                         | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Washington, Vice Chair                                                                 |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Abu Saab (Commerce)                                                                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Carney (PCPC)                                                                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Cooperman                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Holloman (City Council)                                                                | X   |    |         |        |        |
| O'Connor (DPP)                                                                         | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Lech (L&I)                                                                             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| McCoubrey                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Michel                                                                                 |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Rabauer                                                                                |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Thomas                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Treat (DPD)                                                                            | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                  | 10  |    |         |        | 3      |

## **REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 28 OCTOBER 2025**

### **ADDRESS: 1221 PINE ST**

Proposal: Replace bays; install roof deck, window in doorway, and basement stair

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 1221 Pine 1 LLC

Applicant: Scott O'Barr, Voith & Mactavish Architects

History: 1825

Individual Designation: 3/27/1962

District Designation: Washington Square West Historic District, Contributing, 9/13/2024

Staff Contact: Josh Schroeder, [joshua.schroeder@phila.gov](mailto:joshua.schroeder@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to make several exterior alterations to 1221 Pine Street, an 1820s building that has been vacant for many years. The house was individually designated in 1962 and is Contributing to the Washington Square West Historic District. The original building, constructed in the late 1820s, is a four-story brick house on the corner of Pine and S. Camac Streets. Attached to the rear is a three-story brick, late nineteenth-century addition. The building's primary use has been residential, although various stores and shops occupied the first floor on the corner of Pine and Camac Streets, as evidenced by the storefront bay windows on the south and west sides of the house.

The application proposes to replace deteriorated front and side bay windows in kind and install a painted wood bulkhead door to replace a missing door to the basement. At the side yard facing S. Camac Street, the application proposes to remove the metal fence and gate and replace it with a red brick wall with painted wood gate to match the existing wall. The application proposes to remove a basement window, currently facing a recessed well, and replace it with a new painted wood basement entry door. Stairs will be installed leading to the new basement entrance in the side yard and will be hidden behind the extended brick wall. The application also proposes removing the door into the side yard, facing S. Camac Street, to allow for installation of a new six-over-six, painted wood double-hung window to match the appearance and alignment of the adjacent windows, which were installed in 2021. Finally, the application proposes to install a roof deck and enclosure to keep new condenser units out of public view. Wood modular roof pavers will be installed over the existing rear flat roof and a painted wood railing will be installed. The existing roof access door at the rear dormer will remain.

### **SCOPE OF WORK:**

- Replace front and side bay windows; install bulkhead door in front; replace door into side yard with window; replace basement window with door; install steps to basement; replace iron fence with brick wall and wood gate; install deck.

### **STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:**

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

- *Standard 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
  - The brick wall extension and new wood gate to replace the existing metal fence will match the existing brick wall in appearance and match a configuration that existed just prior to designation, retaining the buildings historic character and satisfying Standard 2.
- *Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced.*

*Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

- The in-kind replacement of the front and side bay windows, as well as new bulkhead doors to replace missing doors, will match the historic design, satisfying Standard 6.
- *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 added stairs and new basement door will be obscured from view by the extended brick wall. The new window, replacing a door to the side yard on the addition, will match the existing fenestration pattern and match recently replaced adjacent windows, satisfying Standard 9.
  - The deck will be on the rear addition roof. A screened enclosure will hide mechanical equipment from view and will itself be partially blocked from view by the new deck railing. The new deck will be compatible with, but distinguished from, the rear addition of the building, satisfying Standard 9.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 6, and 9.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of replacing the door with a window, provided the window is installed in the existing door opening, the doorway features are retained, and the exterior wall is not altered; and approval of all other aspects of the application, provided the roof-deck railing aligns with the exterior wall below, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 6, and 9.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:05:10

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Schroeder presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Architects Scott O'Barr and Juan Tejedor represented the application.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.

**HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The Historical Commission found that:

- The existing masonry openings in the rear addition facing Camac Street should be retained and no new openings made.
- The existing door in the rear facing Camac Street is not original or historic.
- The current cornice on the rear addition is not original or historic.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The application satisfies Standards 2, 6, and 9, provided the proposed window is installed in the existing masonry door opening. The door and door frame with transom may be removed for the new window but features of the doorway should be

documented before they are removed and the door should be retained for future reinstallation.

- The proposed roof deck railing's alignment is compatible with the property's historic character.

**ACTION:** Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, provided the proposed window is installed in the existing masonry door opening, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 6, and 9. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

| ITEM: 1221 Pine St<br>MOTION: Approval of revised application<br>MOVED BY: McCoubrey<br>SECONDED BY: Thomas |     |    |         |        |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                        |     |    |         |        |        |
| Commissioner                                                                                                | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Frankel, Chair                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Washington, Vice Chair                                                                                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Abu Saab (Commerce)                                                                                         | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Carney (PCPC)                                                                                               | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Cooperman                                                                                                   | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Holloman (City Council)                                                                                     | X   |    |         |        |        |
| O'Connor (DPP)                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Lech (L&I)                                                                                                  | X   |    |         |        |        |
| McCoubrey                                                                                                   | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Michel                                                                                                      |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Rabauer                                                                                                     |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Thomas                                                                                                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Treat (DPD)                                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                       | 11  |    |         |        | 2      |

**ADDRESS: 614 PINE ST**

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Qian Jin Real Estate LLC

Applicant: Sam Xu, Constrecture, LLC

History: 1925

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Society Hill Historic District, Contributing, 3/10/1999

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, theodore.maust@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes an addition on the two-story portion of the rear ell of 614 Pine Street, with a roof deck over the entire rear ell serviced by two pilot houses. Window openings on the rear of the main block and rear ell would be altered, and two skylights are proposed for the rear slope of the gable roof. The proposed work would not be visible from Pine Street but would be from Waverly and Addison Streets as well as a pedestrian greenway which runs from Pine Street to Addison Street.

The Architectural Committee reviewed previous versions of this application and voiced concerns about the intersection of the front pilot house with the roof of the main block as well as the

proposed use of metal panel cladding. The Committee asked that the fenestration be revised to something more compatible with the existing windows.

This application responds to previous feedback by proposing the entire addition be clad in brick. The fenestration plan now features one-over-one double-hung windows on the rear ell, with some windows enlarged and others relocated to match the window openings on the second and third floors. After the staff recommendation was completed, the applicant submitted the window plan for the rear of the main block, which is unchanged from the previous submission.

#### **SCOPE OF WORK:**

- Construct addition on two-story portion of rear ell.
- Construct roof deck and two pilot houses.

#### **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 will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
  - The addition will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment, provided the pilot-house cladding and main-block windows appropriate, and therefore satisfy Standard 9.
- *Roofs Guideline | Recommended: Designing rooftop additions, elevator or stair towers, decks or terraces, dormers, or skylights when required by a new or continuing use so that they are inconspicuous and minimally visible on the site and from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining historic features.*
  - The roof deck and pilot house would require the demolition of a small portion of the roof of the main block, though the amount of demolition is reduced compared to the original proposal.
  - The proposal depicts the pilot houses clad in metal panels or stucco. Metal panels would not be compatible with the historic resource and would be highly visible from the pedestrian path and other public views. Appropriate cladding materials include stucco and fiber-cement siding.
  - The roof deck with pilot houses would be inconspicuous and minimally visible from the public right-of-way and would not damage or obscure character-defining historic features, provided the cladding material is compatible.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval, provided the pilot-house cladding and main-block windows are compatible, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:17:10

#### **PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Maust presented the application to the Historical Commission.

- Architect Sam Xu represented the application.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.

**HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The Historical Commission found that:

- The revised proposal is a significant improvement on the original submission and responds to the Architectural Committee's concerns about the material palette and details of the roof access. The single pilot house will have no impact on the main block of the house and a reduced visual impact on the building as seen from public rights-of-way.
- The staff should carefully review permit drawings to ensure that the roof elements and pilot house will drain water effectively.
- The altered condition of the window openings on the rear of the main block, including openings below the windows to accommodate air conditioning units, makes the enlargement of those openings an acceptable compromise.
- The east wall of the pilot house could be clad in stucco if brick presents construction difficulties in that location.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The revised scheme showing a single pilot house reduces the impact on the historic resource and satisfies Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline.

**ACTION:** Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application with the single pilothouse, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9 and the Roofs Guideline. Ms. Carney seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

| <b>ITEM: 614 Pine St</b><br><b>MOTION: Approval of revised application</b><br><b>MOVED BY: McCoubrey</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: Carney</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                                                   |     |    |         |        |        |
| Commissioner                                                                                                                           | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Frankel, Chair                                                                                                                         | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Washington, Vice Chair                                                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Abu Saab (Commerce)                                                                                                                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Carney (PCPC)                                                                                                                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Cooperman                                                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Holloman (City Council)                                                                                                                | X   |    |         |        |        |
| O'Connor (DPP)                                                                                                                         | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Lech (L&I)                                                                                                                             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| McCoubrey                                                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Michel                                                                                                                                 |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Rabauer                                                                                                                                |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Thomas                                                                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Treat (DPD)                                                                                                                            | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                                                  | 11  |    |         |        | 2      |



## **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION, 15 OCTOBER 2025**

### **ADDRESS: 5001-11 LANCASTER AVE**

Name of Resource: The Manufacturing Building of the United Lutheran Publication House

Review: Designate

Property Owner: Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania

Nominator: Oscar Beisert

Staff Contact: Josh Schroeder, [joshua.schroeder@phila.gov](mailto:joshua.schroeder@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5001-11 Lancaster Avenue, the Manufacturing Building of the United Lutheran Publication House, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The two-story rectangular manufacturing building composed of brick, reinforced concrete, and structural steel with a brick façade containing limestone features was constructed from 1929 to 1930. The building's exterior generally retains its original appearance, with infilled windows, doorways, or bays consisting of the most significant alterations.

The proposal argues that the Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building satisfies Criterion J because it is representative of Philadelphia's historical prominence as a center of the United States' publishing and printing industry. The proposal further argues the building's historic significance for its connection to Philadelphia's once-vibrant religious print industry. Finally, the nomination highlights the building's connection to the Lutheran denomination in Philadelphia, whose origins are traced to seventeenth-century Swedish colonists predating the city's founding.

The proposal also contends that the Lutheran Publication House Manufacturing Building satisfies Criterion E as representative of the work by Harris & Richards, Architects and Engineers, a prominent firm known for designing industrial and institutional buildings during the interwar period. Harris & Richards was the successor to Wilson, Harris & Richards, a continuation of Wilson Bros. & Co., one of the most important architectural and engineering firms of the late nineteenth century.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the property at 5001-11 Lancaster Avenue satisfies the Criteria for Designation E and J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5001-11 Lancaster Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:33:45

#### **PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Schroeder presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.

**HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The Historical Commission found that:

- Harris & Richards, Architects and Engineers, is part of Wilson Bros. & Co.'s lineage, a significant architectural and engineering firm.
- West Philadelphia's historical development included small-scale industry.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The building at 5001-11 Lancaster Avenue is representative of the work of Harris & Richards, Architects and Engineers, a successor to Wilson Bros. & Co., satisfying Criterion E.
- The building at 5001-11 Lancaster Avenue is representative of West Philadelphia's industrial heritage and representative of the presence of the print industry and Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion J.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5001-11 Lancaster Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

| <b>ITEM: 5001-11 Lancaster Ave</b><br><b>MOTION: Designate</b><br><b>MOVED BY: Cooperman</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: Thomas</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                                       |     |    |         |        |        |
| Commissioner                                                                                                               | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Frankel, Chair                                                                                                             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Washington, Vice Chair                                                                                                     | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Abu Saab (Commerce)                                                                                                        | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Carney (PCPC)                                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Cooperman                                                                                                                  | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Holloman (City Council)                                                                                                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| O'Connor (DPP)                                                                                                             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Lech (L&I)                                                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| McCoubrey                                                                                                                  | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Michel                                                                                                                     |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Rabauer                                                                                                                    |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Thomas                                                                                                                     | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Treat (DPD)                                                                                                                | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                                      | 11  |    |         |        | 2      |

**ADDRESS: 723 CHURCH LN**

Name of Resource: T. Ellwood Zell House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Francis L. Bruno II

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Alex Till, [alexander.till@phila.gov](mailto:alexander.till@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 723 Church Lane and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The two-and-a-half-story Wissahickon schist residential building was constructed in 1866 as the home of Lt. Col. T. Ellwood Zell. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, I, and J.

The nomination argues that the house reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style and embodies many of the distinguishing characteristics of early Victorian Romantic architectural styles as seen on residential buildings, blending elements of the Gothic and Italianate, satisfying Criteria C and D. The nomination also contends that the property satisfies Criterion I. The nomination asserts that the parcel is largely undisturbed land that may contain archaeological resources that may yield information important to history, specifically related to the Battle of Germantown, which occurred during the American Revolution in 1777. However, the nomination proposes a Period of Significance of 1866 to 1905, which does not include the Battle of Germantown of 1777. Finally, the nomination contends that the property satisfies Criterion J for its association with T. Ellwood Zell whose work and life impacted the economic, political, social, and historical heritage of the community.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the property at 723 Church Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, I, and J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 723 Church Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, I, and J.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:40:30

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Till presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Suzanne Ponsen of West Central Germantown Neighbors commented in support of the nomination.
- Allison Weiss of SoLo Germantown Civic Association commented in support of the nomination.

**HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The Historical Commission found that:

- The T. Ellwood Zell House was owned by Lt. Col T Ellwod Zell, who was an influential citizen of Germantown and Philadelphia.
- The T. Ellwood Zell House is a good example of mid nineteenth-century Victorian Romantic architectural styles featuring both Gothic and Italianate details.

- The nomination provides evidence that there is a likelihood of intact archaeological remains at the site. The Historical Commission's staff provided additional evidence to support this claim.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criteria C and D in that the house reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style and embodies many of the distinguishing characteristics of early Victorian Romantic architectural styles as seen on residential buildings, blending elements of the Gothic and Italianate
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion J for its association with T. Ellwood Zell, whose work and life impacted the economic, political, social, and historical heritage of the community.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion I in that it may contain human remains associated with the Battle of Germantown.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 723 Church Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, I, and J and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Lech seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

| <b>ITEM: 723 Church Ln</b><br><b>MOTION: Designate</b><br><b>MOVED BY: Cooperman</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: Lech</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                             |     |    |         |        |        |
| Commissioner                                                                                                     | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Frankel, Chair                                                                                                   | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Washington, Vice Chair                                                                                           | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Abu Saab (Commerce)                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Carney (PCPC)                                                                                                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Cooperman                                                                                                        | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Holloman (City Council)                                                                                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| O'Connor (DPP)                                                                                                   | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Lech (L&I)                                                                                                       | X   |    |         |        |        |
| McCoubrey                                                                                                        | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Michel                                                                                                           |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Rabauer                                                                                                          |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Thomas                                                                                                           | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Treat (DPD)                                                                                                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                            | 11  |    |         |        | 2      |

**ADDRESS: 419 W CLAPIER ST**

Name of Resource: Service Buildings for the Dodge Estate

Review: Designate

Property Owner: Shelby Lane LLC

Nominator: SoLo Germantown

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 419 W. Clapier Street, near McKean Avenue in southwest Germantown, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the property satisfies Criteria A and J, owing to its association with the Dodge family, which included mechanical engineers and an artist. The nomination describes four structures at the site, referred to as a “gardener’s cottage” and the interconnected “garage,” “stone building,” and a “solarium.” The structures were service buildings associated with the Dodge family, who resided in a large house at 5000 McKean Avenue, adjacent to the property in question. The house and service buildings once stood on the same parcel, but it was subdivided into 5000 McKean Avenue and 419 W. Clapier Street in the mid-1950s. The property with the Dodge family house is not designated and but was proposed for designation on 7 October 2025, after the current review process was underway.

The nomination provides very little information about the design, construction, dates, or uses of three of the four structures at 419 W. Clapier Street. The nomination reports that the cottage was designed by architect J.L. Connaroe and erected in 1923 for use by a gardener. The nomination speculates that the garage “may contain a workshop or other non-car storage functions in addition to car storage.” It notes that “the date of construction is unknown, but the building appears in a 1930 photograph.” The nomination observes that “the construction date or purpose of the [stone] building is unknown, but it was likely a barn or carriage house.” The nomination proposes that the structure called a solarium “was likely constructed sometime in the early twentieth century... The building’s purpose is unknown but it could have been a solarium and/or artistic studio.”

The nomination asserts that the property is significant owing to its connection to the Dodge family, husband and wife James Mapes Dodge and Josephine Kern Dodge and their son Kern Dodge. The nomination states:

The Dodge family made international impacts in engineering and children’s literature. James Mapes Dodge and his wife Josephine owned 5000 McKean Avenue (then including the subject property of 419 W. Clapier Street) from 1890 to 1954; their son Kern Dodge lived at 425 W. Clapier until 1958.

The nomination is unclear about several key facts. For example, the Dodges purchased the property on 19 September 1891, not 1890 as the nomination claims. Husband James died in 1915. Wife Josephine died in 1953. James and Josephine did not own the property in 1954, as the nomination claims. Son Kern resided at 5000 McKean Avenue from 1891 until 1901, when he graduated from the Drexel Institute. No records indicate that Kern lived at the property in question after 1901, when he would have been 21 years of age. Kern purchased 5135 Pulaski Avenue, several blocks away, in 1906, and records indicate that he resided there during the formative years of his career until he sold the property in 1922, but this fact is not mentioned in the nomination. Kern eventually moved to 425 W. Clapier Street, a property adjacent to the nominated property. The nomination implies that Kern moved directly from his childhood home to the adjacent property at 425 W. Clapier Street; he did not. Kern did not live at the nominated property as an adult. Moreover, his residence at 425 W. Clapier Street does not bestow any

significance on the nominated property at 419 W. Clapier Street.

The nomination documents the Dodges' neighbors and neighborhood as well as their family members and business associates in great detail. The nomination provides a biography of the mother of James, Mary Mapes Dodge, who was a prominent children's author and editor, but who resided in New Jersey, not at the property. The nomination provides information on the careers of James and Kern, who were engineers, but fails to document or explain how the service buildings might relate to their engineering careers. Kern lived at the property for approximately one decade, from age 11 to 21, before he launched his engineering career. After his mother's death in 1953, when he was about 73 years of age, Kern inherited the property at 5000 McKean Avenue, subdivided it into two properties including the property in question, and sold them. If any significance vests in a property owing to its association with James and Kern Dodge, it is the house at 5000 McKean Avenue, where James lived from 1891 to his death in 1915 and where Kern lived during his teen years until 1901, not the service buildings at 419 W. Clapier Street including the gardener's cottage built in 1923.

The nomination provides little information about the service buildings, when and why they were built, and how they were used, but implies that they represent the extended Dodge family and their network of friends, associates, and neighbors and convey the historical significance of the disparate group of people.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 419 W. Clapier Street satisfies any Criteria for Designation.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 419 W. Clapier Street satisfies any Criteria for Designation, with no prejudice toward a possible resubmission of a revised nomination.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:50:30

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Allison Weiss of SoLo Germantown Civic Association represented the nomination.
- Attorney Michael Phillips and property owner Shelby Lane LLC partner Craig Marvel represented the property owner.

**MORE DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Weiss stated that her organization wants to emphasize that it stands by its nomination. She observed that SoLo Germantown nominated the service buildings because the organization believes that they are historic. She stated that the property and buildings are worthy of designation and the protection designation offers. She claimed that it is one of the most comprehensive collections of outbuildings to survive in Germantown. The greenhouse alone is a remarkable survivor and representative of a community once filled with similar structures. The buildings together represent an estate that was once owned and occupied by significant members of the Dodge family and it represents the suburban and country house ideal that embodies much of Germantown's history. Many community members contributed their time and research to this nomination. She asserted that the nomination provides ample information to determine eligibility. She stated that her organization is willing to

improve the nomination and perhaps add another criterion or make revisions. She asked the Historical Commission to provide the organization with more time if the nomination needs to be improved. She noted that she had provided an addendum, which the staff declined to accept. She added that her organization is presently working on a nomination for the main house at 5000 McKean Avenue.

- Mr. Phillips stated that his client, the property owner, agrees with both the Committee on Historic Designation and the Commission's staff that this property does not merit designation. He quoted Debbie Miller of the Committee on Historic Designation, who he said acknowledged that the nomination was well-researched and included a lot of facts, but concluded that the facts and research do not really relate to the buildings. The nomination discusses the surrounding area and the Dodge family but does not explain why these buildings are worthy of historic designation. The Dodge family's business successes do not automatically convey significance to these buildings. He stated that the nomination fails to provide a basis for why these buildings merit designation and why the Commission should compel the preservation of these buildings without any real knowledge about what they were used for, when they were built, who built them, or how they were used. He asserted that the nomination provides no context whatsoever. He concluded that the nomination is insufficient and should not be used to obstruct the use and future development of this property. He stated that the proposal by Ms. Weiss to delay a vote on this matter to give her time to amend the nomination was inappropriate. He contended that the nomination is woefully deficient and the Commission should reject it.
- Ms. Cooperman clarified a statement by Mr. Phillips, saying that the Committee on Historic Designation recommended that the nomination failed to provide evidence for significance under any of the Criteria for Designation. The nomination did not provide enough evidence of significance to warrant a designation.
- Mr. Thomas stated that he agreed with Ms. Cooperman. He stated that, had the light bulb been invented in the garage, then these buildings might have sufficient significance to be designated on their own.
- Mr. Farnham explained that the nominator submitted a nomination for the house at 5000 McKean Avenue after the Committee on Historic Designation meeting. It was essentially the same nomination as the one being reviewed today for 319 W. Clapier Street. He noted that it appeared to have been prepared very hastily, and it had some fundamental problems. Owing to the problems, the staff returned it to the nominator with a request for revisions.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Pamela Bracey stated that she is a founding member of Solo Germantown Civic Association. She stated that her organization would seek to correct the nomination for 5000 McKean Avenue.
- Suzanne Ponson, the president of West Central Germantown Neighbors, asked the Historical Commission to delay deliberations on this matter until SoLo Germantown Civic Association had an opportunity to correct the nominations for 419 W. Clapier Street and 5000 McKean Avenue. She suggested that the civic association should be given extensions to improve the nominations.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society, agreed that the nomination could be improved, but he asserted that it contained enough information to designate the property. He noted that the property includes a carriage house, which speaks to the economic status of the people who lived in the house. The property also includes a greenhouse and a chauffeur's or gardener's cottage. He noted that the nomination includes

photographs of the cars that the owners drove. He remarked that this is a remarkable collection of outbuildings.

- David Traub of Save Our Sites reported that the gardener's cottage is the centerpiece of the property. The gardener's cottage is a gable front and wing style building with a distinctive character. It really is a lovely building. If it were restored, it would really sparkle in delight. It is framed by the newel posts of the expressive bounding wall that surrounds the property.
- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance stated that the Preservation Alliance would like to see these outbuildings and the main house at 5000 McLean Avenue designated but acknowledges the current deficiencies in the nomination. She asked the Commissioners to find a way to give the nominators the opportunity to update the nomination and include the main building without risking the demolition of the outbuildings.
- Jim Duffin stated that this property is very significant in terms of representing a transitional period in Germantown's history in the 1840s and 1850s, when Germantown became a true suburb of Philadelphia. He stated that the development around the McKean family estate of Fernhill was an important part of that development. These outbuildings in this particular assemblage, combined with the house itself, are a rare surviving example of that particular type, he claimed. He asked the Historical Commission to do nothing to prejudice any future nominations or presentations regarding the significance of the property.
- Steven Pietzman stated that he sometimes walks around this part of southwest Germantown. He stated that the outbuildings deserve preservation.

#### **MORE DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Thomas asked if it would be prudent to continue the matter to allow the nomination to be revised or expanded.
- Ms. Cooperman replied that the matter is before the Historical Commission today and the Commission should make a decision based on the information before it. She added that that would not preclude the submission of a later nomination.
- Mr. Frankl stated that the Historical Commission should not retain jurisdiction over this property with the hope of receiving information later that might justify a designation. He asserted that the Commission must decide based on the facts before it. There is no basis for retaining jurisdiction.
- Ms. Washington asked about the supplemental information that was received. She asked if it demonstrated that the property satisfied any of the Criteria, even if it was not submitted in a timely fashion.
- Mr. Farnham responded that the supplemental information was submitted a few days before the Committee on Historic Designation meeting with a request for it to be appended to the nomination. Mr. Farnham stated that the staff, after consultation with the Law Department, declined to provide it to the Committee, owner, or public because it would have rendered the 30-day notice period irrelevant. Mr. Farnham opined that the supplemental information was essentially a restatement and a reordering of information that was already in the nomination. Some minor additional information was included in response to the staff recommendation, but none of the information convinced the staff that property satisfied any of the Criteria for Designation. Mr. Farnham stated that he was familiar with the persons discussed in this nomination, owing to research that he had done into Frederick Winslow Taylor, the founder of the Scientific Management movement. He acknowledged that the Dodges were relatively prominent engineers and businessmen at the time, but the



same could be said for many men living in Germantown at the time. Responding to Mr. Beisert's assertion that the Commission's staff should have worked with the nominator to improve the nomination, he asserted that such an effort would have been futile because, in the staff's estimation, no amount of information would demonstrate that these buildings warrant designation.

- Ms. Cooperman stated that there may be other arguments for the significance of the property. A potential nomination may demonstrate that the property meets one or more of the Criteria for Designation.
- Mr. Thomas suggested that perhaps the property could be included in a historic district.

#### **HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The Historical Commission found that:

- The nomination fails to provide sufficient information about buildings at 419 W. Clapier Street. It fails to provide information on who occupied the buildings and how they used them. It fails to put the buildings in context by comparing them to similar service buildings in the area. It fails to explain how the purported significance of the members of the Dodge family is reflected in the buildings. It fails to provide information about earlier owners of the property, who may have constructed some of the buildings.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 419 W. Clapier Street satisfies any Criteria for Designation.
- A new and different nomination may demonstrate that the property meets one or more of the Criteria for Designation.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 419 W. Clapier Street satisfies any Criteria for Designation and to decline to designate it as historic. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

| <b>ITEM: 419 W Clapier St</b><br><b>MOTION: Decline to designate</b><br><b>MOVED BY: Cooperman</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: McCoubrey</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                                                |     |    |         |        |        |
| Commissioner                                                                                                                        | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Frankel, Chair                                                                                                                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Washington, Vice Chair                                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Abu Saab (Commerce)                                                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Carney (PCPC)                                                                                                                       | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Cooperman                                                                                                                           | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Holloman (City Council)                                                                                                             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| O'Connor (DPP)                                                                                                                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Lech (L&I)                                                                                                                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| McCoubrey                                                                                                                           | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Michel                                                                                                                              |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Rabauer                                                                                                                             |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Thomas                                                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Treat (DPD)                                                                                                                         | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                                               | 11  |    |         |        | 2      |

**ADDRESS: 4024-34 APALOGEN RD**

Name of Resource: Tulipwood

Review: Designate

Property Owner: Valerie Safran & Marcie Turney, Northwestern Revocable Trust

Nominator: East Falls Historical Society

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 4024-34 Apalogen Road and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the property with the Modernist house known as Tulipwood satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and D. The introductory paragraph in the Statement of Significance announces that the property “meets Criteria A & C” but does not mention Criterion D; however, Criterion D is checked on the form and mentioned elsewhere in the nomination. Architect Elizabeth Hirsh Fleisher designed the house in the Mid-century Modern style in collaboration with her landscape architect and husband Horace Teller Fleisher as their residence in retirement and constructed it in 1954. They lived in the house until his death in 1964 and hers in 1975.

The nomination provides biographies of Elizabeth Hirsh Fleisher and Horace Teller Fleisher and a brief discussion of the design of the house and the development of Apalogen Road. The nomination notes that architect Thaddeus Longstreth and artists Wharton Eshrick, Paul Evans, and Phillip Lloyd Powell contributed to the house, but does not catalogue their contributions except to mention Eshrick’s fireplace surround, which has been removed from the house. The nomination never explicitly indicates how the property satisfies Criterion A. If the association with architect Elizabeth Hirsh Fleisher is the basis for the claim of the satisfaction of Criterion A, then Criterion E, the work of an influential architect, may be more appropriate.

The current property owner purchased this property in June 2024. At the time of the sale, the City of Philadelphia issued a Property Certificate indicating that the properties were not designated as historic. After purchasing the property, the owner engaged numerous consultants to plan for the redevelopment of the property including the demolition of the existing structure and the construction of a new dwelling. The property owner has spent \$436,000 in addition to the land acquisition costs to date preparing for the redevelopment. The property owner has submitted an affidavit to the Historical Commission attesting to these facts. The nomination was submitted to the Historical Commission on 8 September 2025. The Historical Commission issued its notice letters announcing the consideration of the nomination on 11 September 2025.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends to the Committee on Historic Designation that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4024-34 Apalogen Road satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E, but not Criterion A, for which no clear argument is articulated.

The staff recommends that the Historical Commission acknowledge the significance of the property but decline to designate it. The uncontested record clearly shows that the property owner made a significant material commitment to the redevelopment project before the issuance of the notice letters. A designation at this point in the redevelopment process would unjustly frustrate the owner's investment-backed expectations for the property and open the City to potential liability.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4024-34 Apalogen Road satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and E.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 01:25:43

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Steven Peitzman of the East Falls Historical Society represented the nomination.
- Attorneys Matthew McClure and Meredith Trego, and property owners Valerie Safran and Marcie Turney represented the property.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Peitzman stated that his organization, the East Falls Historical Society, nominated the property at 4024-34 Apalogen Road, known as Tulipwood, after learning about its impending demolition. He asserted that it is an important house in the unique Apalogen Road enclave of Modernist houses and its architect, Elizabeth Hirsch Fleischer, is significant. He noted that Philadelphia does not have a demolition delay, so the nomination had to be written quickly, before a demolition permit application was submitted. He noted that the Committee on Historic Designation concluded that the property satisfied the Criteria for Designation and he added that several people have commented in support of a designation. He asserted that Elizabeth Hirsch Fleischer was a truly admirable woman and citizen. He reported that she served on the board of the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania for over 30 years. Mr. Peitzman observed that the new owners have spent money on aspects of the property, such as the septic system and removing diseased trees, but they would presumably do that even if maintaining the existing house. He asserted that renovating the house, and perhaps expanding it, would cost less than demolishing it and building a new house. He urged the Commissioners to vote to

designate the property.

- Mr. McClure introduced himself, his colleague Ms. Trego, and his clients, the property owners. He stated that this matter really comes down to fairness and playing by the rules. He claimed that the nomination has been used as a spear to specifically interfere with an ongoing development project that the nominator was aware of. He noted that the nominator just admitted to being aware of the plan to redevelop the property when the nomination was prepared.
- Ms. Safran stated that she was nervous and emotional. She stated that she is facing health issues and purchased the property to ensure that her family had a home if something happened to her. She stated that she just wants to build a house. She stated that their intention was to make a home for their family, not to anger the community.
- Ms. Trego remarked that the Historical Commission can acknowledge the significance of the property but still decline to designate it because the record clearly shows that the owners made a significant material commitment to the redevelopment of the property before the Historical Commission's issuance of the notice letters, starting its jurisdiction. A designation at this point in the redevelopment process would unjustly frustrate the owners' investment-backed expectations. The owners purchased the property, which is 2.37 acres, in June 2024 for more than \$1.8 million. At the time of their purchase, the property was not designated as historic and had not been nominated for designation. There are no houses on Apalogen Road that are designated as historic; there is no precedent for designation on the street. The owners' architect, Steven Varenhorst, verified that the property was not nominated or designated when they purchased it. At the time they bought it, significant changes had already been made to the building, including that the entire exterior had been just painted black. They purchased the property for the land itself with an intent to demolish it and build a new house close to their daughter's school and the park. In July 2024, they had the site surveyed and signed a letter of engagement with the architect. Mr. Varenhorst recommended to them that there were a few significant artifacts within the house including a Wharton Esherick-designed fireplace, Paul Evans wall-mounted cabinet, Lloyd Powell wall-mounted credenza. All three pieces were removed and sold at auction. Over the 14-plus months since they bought the property, the owners engaged an interior design firm, architect, civil engineers, landscape architect, septic contractor, kitchen designer, structural engineer, geotechnical engineer, MEP engineer, general contractor, and environmental testing agency, all for the redevelopment of this property. They submitted multiple plans and reviews to the City of Philadelphia, all of which contemplated on their face the demolition of the building. Those included a site survey completed in August 2024, schematic design completed in February 2025, septic design and soils testing completed in March 2025, landscape plans completed in March 2025, conceptual stormwater management plans submitted to the Water Department in April 2025, and septic design submitted to the Philadelphia Department of Health in June 2025. They had the final design of the new house completed in July 2025, issuance of a septic permit from the Department of Health in July 2025, Act 537 exemption submitted to the Water Department in July 2025 and approved right before the notice letters were sent. The geotechnical report was completed in July 2025, an arborist report completed in August 2025, an environmental report in August 2025, and a Streets Department pre-zoning approval issued in September of 2025. Plans that were drawn up, applications made, approvals and permits granted, in advance of the Historical Commission notifying the owners that it would consider a designation. The zoning and building plans, including the demolition plans, were completed just two

weeks after the owners received the notice letters. From the purchase of the property to receiving the notice letters, the owners spent \$436,000 planning for the new house. Ms. Trego recalled that the nominator noted that the Historical Commission can consider the development plans in place at the time the notice letters are mailed, and she urged the Commissioners to do that. Designating now, after all the work and money, would, without a doubt, frustrate the owners' investment-backed expectations, and simply would be unfair, given what has transpired. Ms. Trego then claimed that the photographs in the nomination were obtained by illegal trespass. The photographs are dated to August 29, 2025. Someone came onto the property, and they took photographs of the house, which is not visible from the street and is set back on a wooded lot. Someone trespassed onto the property, including going up into a fenced backyard, onto a deck that is gated, on top of the deck, and underneath the deck. She urged the Historical Commission to not accept nominations that are clearly put together using photographs and documentation that is obtained by illegal trespass. She noted that very similar photographs are available to the public on online real estate websites, so the illegal trespass, potentially criminal trespass, was completely unnecessary. Concluding, she respectfully requested that the Historical Commission decline to designate this property.

- Mr. McClure stated that the Historical Commission should not designate a property that was nominated through criminal trespass. He added that his clients followed the rules and did everything in accordance with the law. The nominator did not.
- Mr. Frankl stated that he is convinced of the architectural significance of the house. He reported that his family's real estate development firm built Parkway House, designed by Elizabeth Fleisher and Gabriel Roth, and owned it for a long time. Parkway House is her most important design. He acknowledged the significance of the Fleisher house and Fleisher's architectural work in and around Philadelphia. He indicated, however, that the timing of this nomination presents a hurdle that he cannot get over. He stated that historic designation should not be wielded as a weapon to threaten a property owner's rights.
  - Mr. Thomas agreed and acknowledged that the architect and house are significant but pointed out that the effort to redevelop the property has been ongoing for a long time and a significant financial investment has been made. He asserted that nominators need to be out ahead of redevelopment projects and not nominating properties when owners have made significant commitments to redevelopment. He stated that this is an issue of fairness. He stated that he would vote to decline to designate this property.
  - Ms. Carney agreed with Messrs. Frankl and Thomas and stated that she was offended by this nomination, owing to its timing, the fact that the nominator was aware of the ongoing redevelopment project, and the further expense it caused the property owner.
  - Mr. Frankl agreed with Ms. Carney and stated that the Historical Commission's powers should not be weaponized.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the situation was a shame. She agreed with Ms. Trego that nominators should not trespass. She reported that the Committee on Historic Designation determined that the property satisfied several Criteria for Designation. She stated that she wished that she could set the clock back to a time before the planning of the redevelopment project. She noted, however, that the clock cannot be turned back. She asked the owners if architectural drawings of the Fleisher house exist.
  - Ms. Turney responded that she has original drawings of the house that she

- would be willing to donate to a repository.
  - Ms. Cooperman recommended that she consider donating them to the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania or the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Kevin Brett stated that he is less interested in the specific than the general and wants to ensure that the Historical Commission acts in accordance with law and regulation. He stated that the owners' attorney is citing a regulation from Section 6 of the Historical Commission's Rules and Regulations that involves the review of building permit applications to justify declining to designate the property, but the Commission is not reviewing a building permit application. The designation regulations fall under Section 5 of the Rules and Regulations. He stated that referencing the U.S. Constitution is "kind of a fear-mongering tactic." He asserted that the threshold for a takings case is very high. The owner would have to prove that they have lost all financial value in the property, and that is not the case here. He urged the Historical Commission to follow the rules as they are written and also not litigate issues that are not appropriate to litigate.
- Mr. McClure responded that the owners' argument does not rely solely on the Rules and Regulations, which must be interpreted based upon Pennsylvania law, federal law, and the constitutions as well as case law. He asserted that Mr. Brett's characterization of the standard for a regulatory taking is incorrect. He observed, however, that the most important issue is the fundamental fairness of the Historical Commission. Doing something that is fundamentally unfair would undercut historic preservation.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society objected to nominators being made to feel guilty for submitting nominations. He asserted that nominators have every right to file nominations, and filing a nomination does not evidence ill will. He contended that "it's pretty pathetic, and quite frankly it's just wrong." He added that "it's pretty clear what's going on. It's outrageous."
- Julia Hayman asserted that, despite claiming ignorance to the fact that the house is significant, the current owners knew that it was significant because the real estate listing when they purchased the property made it explicitly clear. She noted that Ms. Cooperman might not be willing to accuse the owners of wrongdoing, but she was willing to accuse them. She contended that the nomination process for this property has exemplified the ways in which patronage and capitulation to corruption have completely eroded the integrity of the Historical Commission. She claimed that the Committee on Historic Designation unanimously recommended that the Historical Commission designate this property. She claimed that a refusal to designate the property would show the Historical Commission's commitment to protecting wealthy and entitled Philadelphians, not to fulfilling the Commission's mandate to further historic preservation in the City of Philadelphia. She urged the members of the Commission to designate the property and protect it from demolition.
- Lori Arnold introduced herself and stated that she is with the School District of Philadelphia. She asserted that the chair of the Historical Commission was acting inappropriately. She claimed that he should be neutral. She claimed that it is a well-known fact throughout the preservation world in the United States that the Philadelphia Historical Commission "smacks of corruption" because it declined to designate the Roundhouse. She stated that she could not believe that the Commission would permit the demolition of a Wharton Esherick fireplace.

- o Ms. Cooperman corrected Ms. Arnold of the School District of Philadelphia. She stated that the Wharton Esherick fireplace surround and other significant artifacts in the house have been removed and would not be demolished. She also observed that the Historical Commission does not have the legal authority to designate the interiors of private residences. Therefore, the Commission would have been unable to protect the fireplace surround even if it were still in the house.

#### **HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The Historical Commission found that:

- Section 14-1004 of the City's historic preservation ordinance authorizes the Historical Commission to designate a property as historic if it finds that the property satisfies one or more of the Criteria for Designation, but it does not ever obligate the Historical Commission to designate a property. The ordinance stipulates that the Commission "may" designate. The Historical Commission enjoys broad discretion when deciding whether to designate properties that satisfy one or more of the Criteria for Designation.
- The property owners of 4024-34 Apalogen Road have spent \$436,000 in addition to the acquisition cost on design and consulting services moving forward with a planned redevelopment of the property since July 2024.
- The nominator was aware of the planned redevelopment of the property at the time that the nomination was submitted.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The property satisfies one or more of the Criteria for Designation but should not be designated as historic because the property owner has invested significant time and money in planning the redevelopment of the property that includes complete demolition of the existing structure. To designate the property at this time would be unfair to the property owner, who has planned the redevelopment in good faith.

**ACTION:** Mr. Thomas moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4024-34 Apalogen Road satisfies some of the Criteria for Designation but to decline to designate it. Mr. Lech seconded the motion, which was adopted by a vote of 10 to 0 with one abstention.

| <b>ITEM: 4024-34 Apalogen Rd</b>    |     |    |         |        |        |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>MOTION: Decline to designate</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOVED BY: Thomas</b>             |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>SECONDED BY: Lech</b>            |     |    |         |        |        |
| VOTE                                |     |    |         |        |        |
| Commissioner                        | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Frankel, Chair                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Washington, Vice Chair              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Abu Saab (Commerce)                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Carney (PCPC)                       | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Cooperman                           |     |    | X       |        |        |
| Holloman (City Council)             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| O'Connor (DPP)                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Lech (L&I)                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| McCoubrey                           | X   |    |         |        |        |

|             |    |  |   |  |   |
|-------------|----|--|---|--|---|
| Michel      |    |  |   |  | X |
| Rabauer     |    |  |   |  | X |
| Thomas      | X  |  |   |  |   |
| Treat (DPD) | X  |  |   |  |   |
| Total       | 10 |  | 1 |  | 2 |

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **ADDRESS: 1629-37 S 28TH ST**

Proposal: Legalize removal of and remove remaining stained-glass windows; install windows

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 1629-37 S 28th Street, LLC

Applicant: Raymond Rola, Raymond F. Rola, Architect

History: 1902; John Chambers Memorial Presbyterian Church; T.P. Lonsdale, architect

Individual Designation: 7/6/1972

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to remove the stained-glass windows on the north, east, and south elevations of the church building at 1629-37 S. 28<sup>th</sup> Street and install new aluminum framed windows in their places. The new windows will fill the existing masonry openings and be comprised of various combinations of fixed pane, sash, and awning windows all with clear glass. New wood brickmolds that will approximate the general proportions and appearance of the historic ones will also be installed. Located at the southwest corner of S. 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Morris Street, the former John Chambers Memorial Presbyterian Church historically featured wood-framed, stained-glass windows with Gothic arches and tracery. In July 2025, the historic stained-glass windows were removed from the side elevations of the church as part of a project to convert it into apartments as the windows were deteriorated and not compatible with the new intended use of the building. This removal occurred without review by the Historical Commission. Historic stained-glass windows with wood brickmolds and gothic tracery remain in the rear elevation openings, though in a deteriorated condition.

In addition, historic stained-glass windows were also removed from the front façade of the property in approximately 2014 without the Historical Commission's review or approval and were replaced with a combination of inappropriate new vinyl windows and infill panels. The Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) issued a violation for that work in 2017 at the request of the Historical Commission. The violation remained unresolved, and records indicate that L&I closed it in January 2025 owing to its age, though no attempts were ever made to correct the incompatible windows and infill. The current building owner did not own the property in 2017 when the violation was issued but did purchase the property in 2022, when the violation was still open. Property certificates PC-2022-017337 and PC-2024-009874, issued in 2022 and 2024 respectively, did document the open violations for the illegal windows and infill. The current application does not address the non-compliant front windows and infill panels.

### **SCOPE OF WORK:**

- Remove historic stained-glass windows.
- Install new windows.

### **STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:**



- *Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
  - The new windows will fit the existing masonry openings, and the arches will be filled with fixed pane arched windows to match, but the proposed arrangement of sashes and panes does not closely match the design of the historic windows. The new windows could satisfy Standard 6, provided the design of the panes is simplified and more closely aligns with that of the historic windows and new brickmolds are made to match the surviving ones in the rear openings. In addition, the surviving stained-glass windows should be salvaged and stored in a safe location and, if possible, one window with brickmolds and tracery should be restored and left in place.
- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
  - The new windows will be differentiated from the old and are compatible with the materials, features, size, scale, and proportions of the historic building, satisfying Standard 9.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval, provided that the details are updated to more closely align with the historic design, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9. Approval of this application will not legalize the non-compliant windows at the front section of the building.

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided the details of the windows are adjusted to more closely align with the historic design and that photographs of the surviving window details taken after the grates are removed are submitted to the Historical Commission, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 02:05:35

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Till presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Raymond Rola represented the application.
- No one represented the property owner.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None

**HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The Historical Commission found that:

- The historic stained-glass windows are incompatible with a new residential use of the property.
- The applicants have documented the details of the existing wood trim elements and will replicate them on the new windows.

- Historic stained-glass windows were removed from the front façade in the past by a previous owner and this application will not legalize those changes.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The proposed new windows respect the overall dimensions and arrangement of the originals, satisfying Standard 6
- The new windows are differentiated from the old and are compatible with the materials, features, size, scale, and proportions of the historic building, satisfying Standard 9.
- An approval of this application will not legalize the non-compliant windows at the front section of the building.

**ACTION:** Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9. Mr. Lech seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

| <b>ITEM: 1629-37 S 28th St</b><br><b>MOTION: Approval of revised application</b><br><b>MOVED BY: McCoubrey</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: Lech</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                                                       |     |    |         |        |        |
| Commissioner                                                                                                                               | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Frankel, Chair                                                                                                                             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Washington, Vice Chair                                                                                                                     |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Abu Saab (Commerce)                                                                                                                        | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Carney (PCPC)                                                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Cooperman                                                                                                                                  | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Holloman (City Council)                                                                                                                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| O'Connor (DPP)                                                                                                                             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Lech (L&I)                                                                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| McCoubrey                                                                                                                                  | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Michel                                                                                                                                     |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Rabauer                                                                                                                                    |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Thomas                                                                                                                                     | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Treat (DPD)                                                                                                                                | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                                                      | 10  |    |         |        | 3      |

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:14:47**

**ACTION:** At 11:28 a.m., Mr. Thomas moved to adjourn. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous consent.

| <b>ITEM: Adjournment</b><br><b>MOTION: Adjourn</b><br><b>MOVED BY: Thomas</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: Cooperman</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                           |     |    |         |        |        |
| Commissioner                                                                                                   | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Frankel, Chair                                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Washington, Vice Chair                                                                                         |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Abu Saab (Commerce)                                                                                            | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Carney (PCPC)                                                                                                  | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Cooperman                                                                                                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Holloman (City Council)                                                                                        | X   |    |         |        |        |
| O'Connor (DPP)                                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Lech (L&I)                                                                                                     | X   |    |         |        |        |
| McCoubrey                                                                                                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Michel                                                                                                         |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Rabauer                                                                                                        |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Thomas                                                                                                         | 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](http://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;

- (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.

DRAFT