

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**WEDNESDAY, 18 MARCH 2026
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Chair	X		
Suzanna Barucco	X		
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.	X		
Bruce Laverty	X		
Debbie Miller	X		
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.	X		

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

The following staff members were present:

- Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
- Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Joshua Schroeder, Historic Preservation Planner I
- Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

- Adrian Trevisan
- David Traub, Save Our Sites
- Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance
- Harrison Haas, Esq., Morgan Lewis
- Henry Cieplinski
- Jay Farrell
- Ken Weinstein
- Michaëlle Bond
- Nancy Pontone
- Steven Peitzman

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 1018 S 2ND ST

Name of Resource: Andrew Nebinger Jr. House

Proposed Action: Designate

Property Owner: Henry A. Cieplinski

Nominator: Historical Commission

Staff Contact: Heather Hendrickson, heather.hendrickson@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1018 S. 2nd Street in the Southwark or Queen Village neighborhood and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination asserts that the building's early history is associated with prominent medical doctor Andrew Nebinger Jr. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the property's funeral home use, dating back to 1898 and extending through 2026, exemplifies the cultural, social, and historical heritage of the Southwark community as part of a broader pattern of neighborhood-based, family-operated funeral establishments deeply embedded in South Philadelphia's social fabric.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that 1018 S. 2nd Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:06:11

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Hendrickson presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Henry Cieplinski represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Barucco expressed strong support for the nomination. She shared a personal anecdote about living near N. 19th and Spring Garden Streets, recalling a nearby casket maker, which illustrated how funerary services were once neighborhood-based enterprises. Ms. Barucco commended Mr. Cieplinski's effort to add the property to the Philadelphia Register, calling the nomination a worthy and well-prepared document.
- Ms. Milroy agreed that the nomination tells a fascinating story and suggested that funerary businesses often clustered near cemeteries. She noted N. 19th and Spring Garden Streets' proximity to Monument Cemetery. She asked how the nominated property relates to nearby burial sites, noting this as a contextual observation rather than a requirement.
 - Mr. Cieplinski responded that he has conducted many burials at Old Swedes Church and the surrounding area, confirming a historical connection to local cemeteries. Mr. Cieplinski also noted that caskets were historically made on the third floor of the property. He mentioned that he had a book containing drawings of the caskets, but it was unfortunately stolen during building renovations.
- Ms. Cooperman noted her appreciation for the nomination's discussion of women's roles in caring for the dead and the role cabinetmakers played in funerary practice, specifically referencing Jacob Knorr's cabinet shop in Germantown. She noted that the nomination effectively illustrates these professional and social networks. Ms.

Cooperman raised a minor issue regarding incomplete deed references, recommending that future nominations include full citations including the deed book and page numbers. She recommended that they be added to this nomination before the Historical Commission reviews it.

- Mr. Lavery strongly supported the nomination, stating that either the association with Dr. Nebinger or the building’s use as a funeral home would justify designation independently. He emphasized the added significance of the property’s proximity to Civil War era institutions that influenced the professionalization of the funeral industry. Mr. Lavery also praised the inclusion of the 1870 aerial photograph taken from Shot Tower.
- Mr. Cohen echoed support, noting the educational value of the nomination and how funeral homes often help preserve historic buildings. He commended the staff’s efforts and affirmed the property’s eligibility.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- There is strong justification for nomination. Both the property’s association with Dr. Andrew Nebinger Jr. and its long-standing use as a funeral home independently meet some criteria for designation, and together they provide a compelling, multifaceted story of historical significance.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion A for its association with Dr. Andrew Nebinger Jr.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion J as exemplifying the cultural, social, and historical heritage of the Southwark community as part of a broader pattern of neighborhood-based, family-operated funeral establishments deeply embedded in South Philadelphia’s social fabric.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1018 S. 2nd Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

ITEM: 1018 S 2nd St					
MOTION: Satisfies Criteria A and J					
MOVED BY: Lavery					
SECONDED BY: Cohen					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, Chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 601 W GODFREY AVE

Name of Resource: Carl Metz House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: William Freeman Jr. and John D. Mitchell

Nominator: Historical Commission

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 601 W. Godfrey Avenue, known as the Carl Metz House, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination asserts that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D as delineated in Section 14-1004(1)(a) of the Philadelphia Code. The nomination contends that the Carl Metz House reflects the environment characterized by a distinctive architectural style, the “Spanish type architecture” style, and embodies distinguished characteristics of that style, satisfying Criteria C and D. Constructed by real estate developer Carl Metz to designs by his son, Carl Metz Jr., in 1927, when the Spanish Colonial Revival style was at the apex of its popularity in the Philadelphia region, the Carl Metz House is the finest single-family residential example of the style in the City of Philadelphia and therefore merits designation as a historic landmark.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 601 W. Godfrey Avenue, known as the Carl Metz House, satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D as delineated in Section 14-1004(1)(a) of the Philadelphia Code.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:18:35

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farnham asked if anyone in the audience represents the property owner.
 - No one responded.
 - Mr. Farnham stated for the record that the requisite notice letters had been mailed and that neither letter was returned as undeliverable. He concluded that the Historical Commission satisfied its obligations to provide the property owner with notice of the proposed designation.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the nomination was well researched and written.
- Ms. Miller asked how Carl Metz obtained the financial backing to start his real estate development career.
 - Mr. Farnham stated that he was unable to find any information about Metz’s financing beyond that provided in the nomination.
- Mr. Laverty stated that the nomination chronicles Metz’s progression in the real estate business from the construction of two or three houses at a time to 50 or so a year. He praised the nomination for documenting the evolution of Metz and his development model.
- Ms. Miller stated that she was impressed by all of the information in the nomination.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the nomination tells the story of a remarkable immigrant who succeeded.
- Ms. Milroy asked Mr. Farnham if he was able to find any information about the architectural training of Carl Metz Jr.
 - Mr. Farnham replied that he was unable to find anything about his education.

- Ms. Barucco asked why the house was not proposed for designation under Criterion A. She noted that Carl Metz left an imprint on the city with his developments.
 - Mr. Farnham replied that the Metz family was not the largest or most important developer in the city at the time. They operated at a smaller scale than many. To satisfy Criterion A, a resource must have citywide, state, or national significance.
- Mr. Lavery discussed some of the Metz competitors, including Alfred P. Orleans and Hyman Korman.
- Mr. Cohen stated that the nomination gave him a greater appreciation of the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture and of the role of the real estate developer as an agent of change in the city.
- Mr. Lavery noted that even though the building types constructed by Metz and his competitors were fairly standardized, developers still had a chance to individualize the houses that they built. He noted that the use of the Spanish Colonial Revival style provided Philadelphians with architecture that was exotic and aspirational, that tied them to Florida and Hollywood.
- The Committee members marveled that Carl Metz Jr.'s real estate business survived the Great Depression.
 - Ms. Cooperman noted that small-scale developers may have had an advantage because their projects required less capital.
- Mr. Lavery questioned the nomination's claim that this house was the finest Spanish Colonial Revival house in the city.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination and suggested that other sites in East Oak Lane should be designated. He stated that it is a very distinctive neighborhood.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- Carl Metz constructed the Spanish Colonial Revival style house at 601 W. Godfrey Avenue in 1927.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the Carl Metz House at 601 W. Godfrey Avenue reflects the environment characterized by a distinctive architectural style, the "Spanish type architecture" style, and embodies distinguished characteristics of that style, satisfying Criteria C and D.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 601 W. Godfrey Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

ITEM: 601 W Godfrey Ave					
MOTION: Satisfies Criteria C and D					
MOVED BY: Barucco					
SECONDED BY: Miller					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, Chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 119 E GOWAN AVE

Name of Resource: Mount Airy Train Station

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

Nominator: Andrian Trevisan, Powers & Co., Inc

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 119 E. Gowan Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The two-story brick and frame Stick style building was designed by Architect Frank Furness and constructed in 1883 as one of a series of station buildings for the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, often referred to simply as the Reading Railroad. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation A as an example of the development of the Mount Airy neighborhood and for its association with Franklin B. Gowan. It also contends that the property is significant under Criterion E as Frank Furness was a notable architect whose work significantly influenced the architectural development of the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the property at 119 E. Gowan Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A and E.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:42:17

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Till presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Adrian Trevisan represented the nomination.
- Ken Weinstein represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Trevisan commented briefly on the nomination. He mentioned it was a pleasure to work on the nomination, and that Franklin B. Gowan, who was the president of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad, is a fascinating figure. He added that working on a nomination for a Frank Furness building was a pleasure and offered to answer any questions.
- Mr. Weinstein commented that he was initially surprised to find out that this train

- station was not already on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. He observed that he has taken on 99-year leases for five SEPTA train stations in Northwest Philadelphia and this was the only one not designated. He personally used this station to travel into the city for years and stated he is looking forward to restoring it.
- Ms. Milroy stated that she thinks the station is a wonderful building and is also surprised it is not already designated. She added that it is nice to see a Furness building recognized and expressed an interest in going to visit it. She referred to the nomination's point about the extended roofline referencing coal mines and thought the point was fascinating. She added that the nomination makes a reference to the name of the neighborhood, Mount Airy, stating that it took the name from Franklin Gowan's father's estate. She clarified that Gowan's estate took its name from the earlier house of William Allen that was built in the area in the eighteenth century.
 - Mr. Trevisan responded that Gowan named his estate after Allen's.
 - Ms. Milroy added that Allen built his country house on Germantown Avenue and that is where the name originates.
 - Ms. Cooperman added that Allen's house dates to approximately 1751.
 - Mr. Cohen complimented the nomination as well-written and researched. He added that he appreciates the argument that this station was particularly special since it was so close to Gowan's house.
 - Ms. Cooperman agreed about the extent to which Furness's distinct personal visual language is expressed in this building.
 - Mr. Cohen went on to say that even with some later modifications like the raised platform, the building retains its distinctive sharp angles and "not quite Stick style." He remarked that he is glad to see it preserved.
 - Ms. Miller complimented the nomination and the railroad. She noted that she uses this railroad line every day and thinks that people often do not realize how old it really is and the impact it has had on the development of this area of the city stretching back even to the 1840s and 1850s. She went on to highlight the unique sloped roofs of this station building and was intrigued by the comparison of its design to that of coal breakers, which she is familiar with from her childhood.
 - Ms. Barucco asked if the applicants knew why Gowan was eventually forced out of his position at the Reading Railroad.
 - Mr. Lavery commented that he had not known that Gowan had committed suicide.
 - Ms. Cooperman commented the same.
 - Mr. Trevisan responded that he did not go into detail in the nomination as he felt it was not relevant but that the company did go bankrupt twice under Gowan's management and they likely were looking for a steadier leader.
 - Ms. Barucco wondered whether his death might have been connected to his testifying in Washington.
 - Mr. Trevisan agreed that there were many rumors and theories surrounding his death.
 - Ms. Milroy commented that, at the time, the Reading Railroad was one of the largest corporations in the world.
 - Mr. Trevisan commented that they also got into the coal mining business under Gowan even though doing so violated a state law.
 - Mr. Cohen recommended that the applicants look up a dissertation written by Preston Thayer that is focused on Frank Furness's railroad stations. He also picked up the design links to coal breakers with this station.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia commented in support of the nomination and stated that she looks forward to seeing the building brought back to life.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The railroad station building at 119 E. Gowan Avenue was designed by architect Frank Furness for the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad.
- The station is an important example of those built for the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad and contributed to the early development of the Mount Airy neighborhood.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion for Designation A as an example of the development of the Mount Airy neighborhood and for its association with Franklin B. Gowan.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion for Designation E as Frank Furness was a notable architect whose work significantly influenced the architectural development of the city.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 119 E. Gowan Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A and E.

ITEM: 119 E Gowan Ave					
MOTION: Satisfies Criteria A and E					
MOVED BY: Miller					
SECONDED BY: Cohen					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, Chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 701 W JOHNSON ST

Name of Resource: Blue Bell Mission

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Real Estate Appreciation, LLC

Nominator: Keeping Society

Staff Contact: Josh Schroeder, joshua.schroeder@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 701 W. Johnson Street, known as the Blue Bell Mission, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places under Criterion J. The Blue Bell Mission is a one-story wood frame building that sits on a schist foundation. The original portion of the mission is recognizable as a simple chapel with a

basic rectangular shape with steep gabled roof and a brick vestibule entrance centered on the primary elevation. A small cupola once existed at the front of the main roof. Three additions of varying size and configuration are at the rear. The mission was constructed in 1879 as a Methodist mission chapel on the site of what is now 6244 Wissahickon Ave before it was physically moved to its present location in 1922. The proposed period of significance spans from the chapel's construction in 1879 until the end of its affiliation with the Methodist church in 2013 when it was sold to the Mt. Airy United Fellowship Church, who used the building for another several years. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criterion J for its tenure as a religious and community centerpiece of the Blue Bell Hill neighborhood and as one of the remaining "mission chapels."

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the property at 701 W. Johnson Street satisfies Criterion J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:54:22

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Schroeder presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Ken Weinstein represented the nomination and property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cohen complimented the nomination for highlighting the mission chapel genre of religious buildings and noted that the nomination effectively centered the chapel in the history of one of the city's less prominent neighborhoods.
- Ms. Milroy stated that the surrounding neighborhood's history deserved additional research.
 - Ms. Milroy also noted that the Parks and Recreation Department has adjusted names and that the park near the chapel is no longer considered part of Fairmount Park and is presently known as Wissahickon Valley Park.
- Mr. Laverty wondered if the chapel appeared in Benjamin Price's 1876 architectural pattern book with plans of churches for purchase, as the Blue Bell Mission's historical context and design was similar to others found in Price's book as well as similar publications.
 - Ms. Cooperman agreed with Mr. Laverty and noted several similar publications.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia noted the building's unusual history and supported the nomination.
- Steven Peitzman spoke in favor of the nomination. He suggested the surrounding Blue Bell neighborhood could constitute a historic district.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites spoke in favor of the nomination and suggested some of the historic architectural details could be restored by Mr. Weinstein.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The Blue Bell Mission is an example of a so-called "mission chapel," a type of church building that was not intended to be permanent.
- The Blue Bell Mission is one of the few surviving mission chapels in Philadelphia.
- The Blue Bell Hill neighborhood is underappreciated and more research into it should be undertaken.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the Blue Bell Mission at 701 W. Johnson Street had been a significant religious and social institution in the Blue Bell Hill neighborhood since 1879 and therefore exemplifies the social and historical heritage of that community, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 701 W. Johnson Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J.

ITEM: 701 W Johnson St					
MOTION: Satisfies Criterion J					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, Chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	6				

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:07:23

ACTION: The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

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

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

§14-1004. Designation.

(1) Criteria for Designation.

A building, complex of buildings, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for preservation if it:

- (a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth

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