

**PUBLIC COMMENT FOR
428-34 N 4TH ST**



PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

for greater philadelphia

March 26, 2026

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: 428–34 N. 4th Street

Dear Commissioners,

The Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia is writing to express concern regarding the letter submitted by Gift of Life Donor Program in opposition to the designation of 428–34 N. 4th Street. We recognize and respect the vital mission of Gift of Life and the important services the organization provides. However, the arguments presented in their letter raise broader procedural concerns that we urge the Commission to carefully consider in its evaluation of this nomination.

Most notably, Gift of Life does not own the subject property. Their letter states that they entered into an agreement to acquire the site, but it does not indicate when that agreement was executed, whether it predates the Commission's notice of intent to designate, or whether the agreement remains contingent on due diligence or other termination provisions. As such, the existence of an agreement alone does not provide assurance that the proposed acquisition or any associated project will ultimately occur.

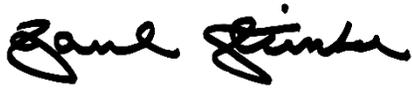
This distinction is critical. If the Commission were to decline designation based primarily on the intentions of a prospective purchaser who does not yet hold fee title and whose plans remain conceptual and unfunded it could create a precedent whereby property owners seek to avoid designation through contingent agreements unsupported by concrete development commitments.

In addition, the Gift of Life letter does not present specific development plans for the subject property, nor does it identify funding, timelines, or design proposals that would necessitate demolition. Rather, it expresses general aspirations for future expansion. While such aspirations may be genuine, they do not constitute the kind of documented hardship or demonstrated public necessity contemplated by the Ordinance.

It is also worth noting that this parcel and the Gift of Life's existing campus include surface parking that may present opportunities for expansion without requiring demolition of a historically significant resource. The nomination materials make a case for the significance of 428–34 N. 4th Street, and should remain the primary basis for the Commission's determination.

We are concerned by the limited evidence presented to support the claims made in opposition to designation, and we respectfully urge the Commission not to allow speculative or contingent future plans to take precedence to the arguments for designation contained in the nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Steinke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Steinke
Executive Director



December 15, 2025

Zachary Frankel, Chair
Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: 428-34 N. 4th Street, Philadelphia, PA

Dear Chairman Frankel:

My name is Richard Hasz and I am the President & CEO of Gift of Life Howie's House. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization located at 401 Callowhill Street. For close to 15 years, Gift of Life Howie's House has served as a home away from home for transplant patients and their families by providing temporary, affordable lodging and supportive services to those traveling to Philadelphia for organ transplant related care. The House, along with Gift of Life Transplant Foundation, are non-profit affiliates of Gift of Life Donor Program (collectively "Gift of Life"), also a Philadelphia-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit that operates as one of the most active organ procurement organizations ("OPOs") in the United States. Gift of Life Donor Program serves more than 11.3 million people across the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and Delaware and serves as a critical link between individuals and families who make the generous and lifesaving decision to donate organs and tissues, and those that need an organ or tissue transplant. Gift of Life Donor Program has coordinated more donors and organs for transplant than any other organ procurement organization in the country since the inception of the national system. Since 1974, Gift of Life Donor Program has coordinated more than 63,000 organs for transplantation and more than two million life-enhancing tissue transplants.

On behalf of Gift of Life, I am writing to request that the proposed historic designation of the property located at 428-34 N. 4th Street (the "Rubin Property") be denied.

Gift of Life Howie's House is the adjacent property to the immediate south of the Rubin Property. Gift of Life Howie's House opened its doors in 2011 and currently provides temporary lodging within its thirty-two (32) family guest rooms. In addition to a place to stay, through the efforts of its committed staff and hundreds of dedicated volunteers the House provides home cooked meals in its large communal kitchen, a fully stocked pantry, an indoor family room, dedicated fitness room, laundry facilities, shuttle transportation to and from area hospitals, and on-site social workers to assist families during their transplant journey. The House is a place for families undergoing similar experiences to have essential overnight lodging and supportive services and share time together while their loved ones await, undergo, or recover from



life saving organ transplant surgery. Since 2011, the House has provided over \$16.7 million in subsidized services to transplant patients and their families. There is no other independent transplant focused hospitality house in the United States serving the number of transplant centers and providing the range of services that are offered at the House.

Families staying at the House have travelled from all over the region, country and internationally and have a family member being treated at one of the Philadelphia area transplant centers (Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Temple University Health, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, and Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia). Without the House, many families would simply not be able to access the care necessary to save their loved ones' lives. Since opening, more than 113,000 nights of lodging have been provided for families in need. In addition, Gift of Life Howie's House has on site social workers to provide critical navigational support and information for families going through the transplant process - a team that works in collaboration with and the transplant social worker teams to provide resources to families at the House and support those transitioning home.

In recent years, demand for House services has increased dramatically. The House has been at capacity on more than 280 occasions over the past 24 months and has not been able to accommodate all of the families needing services on site. In light of this increased demand, as well as our continued evaluation of program and service expansion in support of the community, Gift of Life has recently entered into an agreement of sale to purchase the Rubin Property from its current owner, Mark Rubin. Due to its direct proximity, the Rubin Property is uniquely situated to support the future growth and development of Gift of Life Howie's House and its affiliates and advance the organization's ability to serve families coming to this region for their transplant care. However, historic designation would preclude such an opportunity given the associated limitations on development.

On behalf of Gift of Life Howie's House, I therefore respectfully request that the Historical Commission recognize the prevailing public interest and public benefits to be gained through Gift of Life's acquisition and redevelopment of the Rubin Property and deny the proposed historic designation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Hasz
President & CEO
Gift of Life Howie's House
Gift of Life Transplant Foundation
Gift of Life Donor Program