

Public Comment Regarding the Nomination of

5604 N 5th St

to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

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Theodore Maust

From: STEPHEN PERZAN <sperzan@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, June 8, 2026 5:56 PM
To: preservation
Subject: 5604 N. 5th Street Nomination

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Dear Mr. McMahon:

Thank you for the nomination of 5604 N. 5th Street for placement of the building on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. As a long-time resident of the Olney area, I vigorously support this nomination. It is important to see historical nominations outside the famously historic areas of Old City - Independence Hall area, Germantown, and the Frankford section of Philadelphia.

All of Philadelphia's history across all of its neighborhoods needs continual watch and effort to preserve it. This is a right guaranteed to us as citizens of this city and the State of Pennsylvania, by our constitution:

Act 1, Section 27: *The people have a right* to clean air, pure water, and *to the preservation of* the natural, scenic, *historic and esthetic values* of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. **As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people."**

"As trustee" - The PA Supreme Court made it clear in a court ruling that this is a real and enforceable fiduciary obligation. All branches of Pennsylvania government - executive agencies, the General Assembly, and local governments are trustees and must uphold our state constitution. The Historical Commission is the City of Philadelphia's historic regulatory agency. It, too, must act as trustee of our city's historic collection of buildings, sites, and places. It must do so in a fiduciary manner in service to the people of this city, and not act in any manner that protects the primary interest of private industry, or for short-term revenue, or for political expediency.

As demolition by neglect and other illegitimate excuses continue to eat away at our trove of historical buildings, the Historical Commission must genuinely employ its obligation as trustee to save our historical heritage for the present generation and for those yet to come, for the benefit of all people.

It is not for this building only that I offer my concern, but for the many worthy buildings that come before you, and the proper recognition of the ***citizens' right to the preservation of historic and esthetic values***. Although not a law in our **Philadelphia Code, Chapter 14-1000**, I believe a part of that code should state: All buildings in the City of Philadelphia 100 years or older should qualify as an historic building. Any owner who wishes to demolish it, or when in a **Historic District** seeks to alter it, must show why it is not historical before demolishing/changing the building or site. It should be the duty of the owner to do the basic work of documenting the history of ownership and attest that no person of recorded historical note, popular fame, or other notable incidence lived there and/or that the building is not of architectural historic significance, that it should be placed on the ***official list*** of the Philadelphia Register of Historical Properties. ***As trustee***, the Historical Commission must eventually rule. Nevertheless, the right to nominate any building, site, etc., of any age or era is not revoked or impinged upon in any way and serves as the surest way to preserve our history.

Thank you,
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