

Public comment received for 520 Queen Street



PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

for greater philadelphia

July 16, 2026

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

Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

The Preservation Alliance respectfully urges the Commission to deny the request to rescind the historic designation of 520 Queen Street.

We find the circumstances surrounding this property to be troubling. The historic building was not lost through an unforeseen destructive event, such as a fire. Rather, its demolition resulted from illegal and destructive construction activities undertaken despite repeated warnings. These ultimately led the Department of Licenses & Inspections to order demolition to protect public safety.

To remove the property's designation under these circumstances would signal that owners who illegally destroy designated historic resources may ultimately be granted relief from the obligations that accompany designation. Historic designation is intended to protect resources that contribute to Philadelphia's architectural and cultural heritage. While the physical building has now been lost, rescinding the designation in response to its unlawful demolition would effectively reward conduct that undermines the Commission's mission and degrades our city's historic built environment.

Maintaining the designation preserves the Commission's jurisdiction over future construction on the site and ensures that any redevelopment remains subject to public review and appropriate design standards. Although the original historic fabric can no longer be recovered, the Commission retains an important role in ensuring that new construction is compatible with the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

We respectfully request that the Commission deny the application to rescind the historic designation of 520 Queen Street.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Steinke, Executive Director