

Public Comment for 2147 and 2149 Ellsworth St

From: [Nathan Osburn](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: Re: Public Comment (written) for Historical Commission Committee on Historic Designation
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 2:34:09 PM

Dear Philadelphia Historical Commission's Committee on Historic Designation:

Last August, I noticed that the We the Youth Keith Haring mural in my neighborhood of Point Breeze had fallen into disrepair and raised some funds along with several friends to help restore it, through a fundraising link from Mural Arts. We were hopeful that it might be restored by the 250th anniversary given the mural's title but I was also told it would likely take longer than that.

I'm hopeful that the recent historic designation nomination aligns with such efforts, and that the funds can soon be put to use.

Assuming that the Historic Designation will support the near-term restoration and long term maintenance of the mural, I want to voice my strong support for the nomination by Alexander Till.

In particular, it's clear that the mural is indeed a "material thing" of "aesthetic, cultural and historic value" that is "related to a specific setting and environment," as required. It's also clear that this collaborative mural has immense global value as the only one of its kind that remains in its original location in the entire United States, as the application attests.

In addition to the two criteria Till selected in the nomination...

[(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; and,

(e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation]

... I believe that the mural also meets additional criteria:

(b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation - **the mural was intended to be celebrated as part of the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution and also Haring's art is strongly associated with the HIV/AIDS epidemic (and subsequent efforts to address it)**

(f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation - **Haring's design is globally renowned and has become immediately recognizable to millions of people**

(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

(j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community

Thank you for your consideration,

Nathan Osburn

Point Breeze resident



Save the Mural!

From Theresa Rose <theresa@rairphilly.org>

Date Wed 8/26/2026 1:57 PM

To Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

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Dear Jon,

Just writing as one of the many neighbors as well as Arts leaders in this City who want to save the Keith Haring Mural!

It would be heartbreaking if our city allowed one of the few surviving works by an artist of Haring's stature to disappear. Haring was born in Pennsylvania and came to Philadelphia to specifically create this work of art. The mural was created in 1987 as part of the Bicentennial celebration. Keith chose to do the mural in Point Breeze rather than Center City.

Some people say "move the mural." The site of this mural matters. The mural was conceived for this neighborhood and the wall. Its relationship to Point Breeze is of historical significance. Keith Haring worked on the mural on this site. We actually met him when he worked on it and that was a thrill.

Please consider the historic designation!

Best,
Theresa

Theresa Rose (she, her)
Managing Director
Recycled Artist In Residency

Our [OPEN CALL](#) for the residency is now open!

theresa@rairphilly.org | rairphilly.org | [instagram](#)

7333 Milnor Street
Philadelphia, PA 19136

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From: [Tobia, Blaise](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: Keith Haring Mural
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2026 9:45:51 PM

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I am writing in support of giving the Keith Haring mural in Point Breeze historic protection.

It epitomizes Haring's style and is this highly regarded artist's most important mural; the community-based nature of its production makes it even more valuable as a historic work of material culture. As Jane Golden has said, "Its survival tells a remarkable Philadelphia story. It has survived neighborhood change and development pressures. We [Mural Arts] restored it beautifully in 2013. A work intended to be ephemeral became permanent because the community cared to keep it alive."

The mural and the Neighborhood Gardens Trust-owned garden in front of the mural are an ensemble. The mural was conceived for this location.

The City of Philadelphia needs - and benefits from - this mural more than it will benefit from the development project that seeks to destroy it.

— Blaise Tobia

Professor Emeritus of Art & Art History
Drexel University

From: [Margaret Harris](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Cc: [Kenyatta Johnson](#); [Rue Landau](#); [Nikil Saval](#); [Ben Waxman](#)
Subject: Please save Keith Haring's We the People mural
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2026 10:01:37 PM

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To the members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

I am writing to ask you to save Keith Haring's We the People Mural in Point Breeze.

I write as a concerned citizen, Philadelphia voter, art lover, and community leader.

We need to preserve this mural not only because of its artistic significance, but also because of its importance to Philadelphia's history, to the Point Breeze community and the LGBTQ community. We hope you will vote to designate it an historic object with cultural significance.

Haring was born in Pennsylvania and came to Philadelphia specifically to create this work of art. The mural was created in 1987 as part of the Bicentennial celebration. Keith chose to do the mural in Point Breeze. Young people in the Point Breeze neighborhood helped create the mural. This mural needs to stay in Philadelphia and in the Point Breeze community.

We have lost many works of cultural and historical significance in Philadelphia. We need to save this one.

Sincerely,

Margaret Harris
228 S. 21st St.
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-470-5238
margaretharris@me.com

From: [RJ Rushmore](#)
To: [preservation](#)
Subject: Haring Mural Comment
Date: Friday, August 28, 2026 1:44:02 PM

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Hello,

I am writing in support of the nomination of Keith Haring's "We the Youth" mural at 2147–2149 Ellsworth Street to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

I am a writer and curator whose work focuses on public art and street art. I have produced mural projects in England, New York, and Philadelphia, and I have written multiple books on public art. Most recently, I worked with Mural Arts Philadelphia on a separate mural project in Point Breeze.

I applaud the staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission for nominating Keith Haring's "We the Youth" for listing in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. "We the Youth" is a Philadelphia landmark, a standout mural even in a city known for its public art. As the nomination notes, Philadelphia would not be the first jurisdiction to recognize the historic importance of a Keith Haring mural. Haring's 1984 mural in Australia was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in 2004.

I also urge the Committee to reject the argument that the ordinary consequences of historic designation weigh against designation here. Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia Executive Director Paul Steinke has warned that designation can have "lasting effects on property, new construction, and neighborhood revitalization." Of course it can. In all their years of hard work, is this the first time that the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia has noticed those consequences? Besides, it is well understood that public art (especially by famous artists like Haring) contributes to neighborhood revitalization. Does every mural by a famous artist warrant these protections against new construction and similar issues? No. But this mural is exceptional, and as such, merits an exception.

I am also concerned by whispers of proposals to preserve "We the Youth" by relocating it. The idea that the mural can or should be moved, except as an absolute last resort, is ridiculous. Relocation is a complicated and expensive matter involving conservation, engineering, specialized transportation and storage, and a suitable permanent destination. "We the Youth" was created for this wall, in Point Breeze, collaboratively with young people from the neighborhood, and for public view. Its location is part of its historical meaning. Tearing it down, especially without a plan to display the mural elsewhere, risks changing its historical context and meaning, taking it out of public view indefinitely, or even destroying the artwork.

Take the example of Bernard Zakheim's "The History of Medicine in California," a mural painted at the University of California, San Francisco in the 1930's. In 2021, this 10-panel mural was removed from the walls of a UCSF lecture hall and placed in storage. With no new home for the artwork, the panels have sat in storage ever since. Meticulously preserved and cared for, but hidden from public view.

If OCF or other groups want to propose relocating "We the Youth", they should present a detailed conservation plan that includes a fully funded removal and reinstallation strategy, an identified new home for the mural, and a promise to maintain public access. I have seen no such plan.

Preserving a historical site this important should not be left to the preferences of current or future property owners. Without designation, the mural remains vulnerable to alteration, removal, or destruction.

I urge the Committee on Historic Designation and the Historical Commission to follow through on their nomination and list "We the Youth" in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We are lucky to have a Haring mural in our city, even better that it still stands in the neighborhood and on the wall for which it was created. Let's care for it properly.

Thank you,
RJ Rushmore

--

RJ Rushmore, CAIA

RJRushmore.com

Pronouns - He/him

Cell - +1-347-331-9127

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: Save the Keith Haring mural
Date: Monday, August 31, 2026 8:44:18 AM

From: Marsha Moss <marshamoss2@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 29, 2026 8:57 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Cc: Marsha Moss <marshamoss2@gmail.com>
Subject: Save the Keith Haring mural

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Dear Director,

We in Philadelphia have felt so fortunate to have one of Keith Haring's very few public murals. In fact, I frequently include this amazing piece when I take out-of-towners on a tour of our beautiful city.

Now the mural is in jeopardy of being removed. Please protect it! It is a Philadelphia treasure!

With appreciation for your effort,

Marsha Moss

--

Marsha Moss
Public Art Curator & Consultant
[215-990-5583](tel:215-990-5583)
marshamoss2@gmail.com
marshamoss.com



September 1, 2026

Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

I am writing to offer my fullest and most emphatic support for preserving and restoring **Keith Haring's *We the Youth* mural in place on site in South Philadelphia**. In a city whose historic landscape holds an extraordinary place in the American story, *We the Youth* stands as one of Philadelphia's most precious—and precarious—works of public art. Its preservation is an opportunity for Philadelphia to affirm that places where art, history, community, and civic life converge are essential parts of our historic landscape.

Keith Haring is one of the country's most significant artists of the 20th century. Born in Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1958, Haring developed a singular approach to public art that bridged storytelling, popular culture, history, and advocacy. Across museums, galleries, subways, storefronts, and public spaces, he created a graphic language of extraordinary significance and global renown. More than three decades after his death, Haring remains a defining figure of engaged, democratic artmaking.

We the Youth is particularly significant because it is both a work by Haring and created *in place* in Philadelphia. Created in South Philadelphia in 1987 for the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the mural was made collaboratively with CityKids of New York and Philadelphia's Brandywine Workshop. Its history is rooted not only in Haring's artistic vision, but also in youth participation, arts education, neighborhood life, and civic ideals. As Mural Arts Philadelphia has written, "the mural is quintessential Keith Haring. In the work and on the wall, Haring's artistic vision—his energy, life, and spirit—serves as his testimony."

That phrase—"in the work and on the wall"—is especially important now. The significance of *We the Youth* cannot be separated from the place where it was created. Painted collaboratively onto a building in South Philadelphia, it has been experienced for nearly four decades as part of the neighborhood and streetscape. The wall is not merely a substrate for an artwork; its location, setting, and public accessibility are fundamental to the mural's history and meaning.

The mural's significance is also reflected in the remarkable community of stewardship surrounding it. The Keith Haring Foundation, Mural Arts Philadelphia, and the Neighborhood Gardens Trust bring distinct commitments to Haring's legacy, Philadelphia's mural tradition, and the preservation of community-held public space. Their engagement demonstrates that preserving *We the Youth* is a shared civic responsibility, with local and national stakeholders committed to its future.

Of the 74 public murals Haring created during his lifetime, only about half remain fully or partially intact. This number will no doubt dwindle over the coming years. *We the Youth* has endured the forces of time, neighborhood change, redevelopment, and shifting ownership. The possibility that the mural could be deconstructed, removed from its

historic setting, and sold into the private market would represent a profound and priceless loss—not only of an irreplaceable Haring work, but of a crucial piece of Philadelphia’s public and commemorative landscape. It would fundamentally alter what Haring and his collaborators of: a mural collaboratively made on site *for* and *within* the public realm.

For that reason, I urge the Philadelphia Historical Commission and the City of Philadelphia to use the tools and authority available to them to support preserving and restoring *We the Youth* in place on site. Historic significance resides not only in an object, but also in the relationships summoned through artmaking, architecture, neighborhood, memory, and public access.

We the Youth remains one of Philadelphia’s most treasured sites of memory—for the story of its creation, its extraordinary aesthetic and cultural value, its neighborhood context, and its enduring presence within a historic city. Its future should remain here as well.

I respectfully urge the Philadelphia Historical Commission and the City of Philadelphia to ensure that Keith Haring’s *We the Youth* is preserved and restored in place on site, remaining publicly accessible and inseparable from the Philadelphia community and landscape for which it was created.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul M. Farber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul M. Farber, PhD
Director, Monument Lab

From: [Jon Farnham](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: Fw: keith haring mural
Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2026 8:20:20 AM

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission

From: Mcinerney, John P <mcinernj@upenn.edu>
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2026 8:47 PM
To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>
Subject: keith haring mural

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John,
I know the Keith Haring mural will be up for preservation soon. I wanted to add my voice to the effort to save this important piece of our collective history. I know you have heard a lot of reasons why that mural is so special. Keith was such an incredible artist and person, and he loved Philadelphia. There is actually a hidden Haring mural at Penn we are also trying to save. It is important for so many people and such a joyful demonstration of our collective history. Please save the mural. If there is anything I or Penn can do please let me know.
thank you for your support
john

John McInerney
Executive Director | [The Sachs Program for Arts Innovation](#)
University of Pennsylvania | 215-573-0874
Join us! [Sachs Program 2026 Grant Awards Celebration](#)



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL

RUE LANDAU
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE

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Public Health and Human Services
Labor and Civil Service
Law and Government

August 31, 2026

To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and Committee on Historic Designation,

I am writing in strong support of the nomination of Keith Haring's We the Youth for designation as a historic object on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

We the Youth is an extraordinary part of Philadelphia's artistic and cultural history. Created by internationally renowned Pennsylvania born artist Keith Haring in 1987 in collaboration with Philadelphia and New York City youth, the mural embodies Haring's commitment to making art accessible to the public and engaging communities directly in the creative process. It is also the only surviving collaborative public mural by Haring that remains intact on its original site, and the only Haring mural in Philadelphia or Pennsylvania.

The mural's significance extends beyond its artistic rarity. Haring deliberately chose to create this work in Point Breeze rather than in a more affluent or traditional cultural setting, and its history is inseparable from the neighborhood in which it was created. As Point Breeze has experienced significant change and development, preserving We the Youth in its original location protects not only an important work of art, but an important piece of Philadelphia's community history.

As Philadelphia's first openly LGBTQ+ member of City Council, I also recognize the particular cultural significance of preserving Haring's work. Haring became an important figure in LGBTQ+ history through both his art and his public advocacy during the AIDS crisis. His work continues to serve as a powerful and accessible expression of LGBTQ+ identity, love, community, and activism. Preserving We the Youth allows future generations to encounter that history not only in museums and archives, but in a Philadelphia neighborhood where Haring himself worked alongside young people to create it.

We the Youth represents the democratic possibilities of public art: art created with a community, for a community, and preserved because that community recognized its value. I strongly urge the Committee on Historic Designation and the Philadelphia Historical Commission to designate the mural as a historic object and ensure that this irreplaceable part of Philadelphia's artistic and cultural heritage remains in place for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rue Landau". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Rue Landau
Philadelphia City Councilmember



Eleanor Nairne

Keith L and Katherine Sachs Curator and Head of Modern and Contemporary Art
Philadelphia Museum of Art
2600 Benjamin Franklin Parkway
PA 19130

3 September 2026

Dear Members of the Committee,

Re: Support for the nomination of *We the Youth* (2147–49 Ellsworth Street) by Keith Haring for historic designation and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

As a curator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, I write to lend my professional support to the nomination of *We the Youth*—Keith Haring's 1987 mural at 2147–49 Ellsworth Street in Point Breeze—for historic designation and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. I strongly urge the Committee to recommend this designation to the full Historical Commission.

From a curatorial perspective, *We the Youth* holds singular art-historical importance as the only collaborative public mural by Keith Haring that survives intact on its original site anywhere in the world. Created in partnership with the Brandywine Workshop, CityKids of New York, and local youth to mark the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the mural brought civic inclusion to a Point Breeze neighborhood then facing significant disinvestment. By reframing the Constitution's preamble, the title insists on the presence of young people and marginalized communities in the American narrative—a hallmark of Haring's commitment to accessible, socially meaningful art.

This site represents an exceptionally rare artifact within Haring's broader career. Between 1982 and 1989, Haring produced over 50 public works around the world, driven by a belief that art should be accessible to all regardless of socio-economic status. Following his death from AIDS-related illnesses in 1990 at age 31, his universal visual language continues to garner recognition internationally to this day. Because much of his public art has since been lost, *We the Youth* remains the clearest surviving record of his collaborative public practice.

Beyond its artistic merit, the mural serves as a landmark of community resilience. For nearly 30 years, its vibrant design of signature dancing figures has graced Point Breeze, making it both a beloved neighborhood icon and a global pilgrimage site. As Point Breeze faces rapid redevelopment, formal designation is vital to safeguard local heritage rather than leaving its protection to chance.

Designation would formalize what is already true: *We the Youth* is an irreplaceable piece of Philadelphian and American art history. I respectfully ask the Committee to recommend its inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to preserving our city's heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "E. Nairne", with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

Eleanor Nairne



Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

16 September 2026

RE: 2147-49 Ellsworth Street Historic Designation

Chair Frankel:

The Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) has been asked by community organizations to provide a letter regarding the above referenced designation. The PA SHPO has not evaluated Keith Haring's 'We The Youth' mural for its eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and is unable to provide the requested letter. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) has, however, recognized Keith Haring's significance in art and pop-culture in the 1980s through a historical marker in his hometown of Kutztown. Dedicated in 2024, the marker recognizes Haring's national significance and his instantly recognizable art style and sociopolitical issues he addressed through his work.

As a Certified Local Government, the City of Philadelphia has made a commitment to implement and administer a local historic preservation program which conforms to the CLG *Ongoing Performance Standards*. These *Standards* charge communities to establish criteria and processes for designation which allow them to evaluate whether historic places are significant within their own context. The Philadelphia Historical Commission, and its staff, have applied the City's criteria thousands of times to render decisions regarding the significance of historic resources in Philadelphia.

PA SHPO is confident that the Philadelphia Historical Commission will give this designation due consideration and will rely on the expertise that the Commission, and its staff, possess in rendering a decision.

Sincerely,

Andrea L. MacDonald,
Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office



September 9, 2026

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

Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and Committee for Historic Designation,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), I am writing to express our strong support for the nomination of Keith Haring's *We the Youth* mural, located at 2147-2149 Ellsworth Street, for inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places while remaining at its current location.

For decades, PHS has been committed to strengthening neighborhoods through community greening, stewardship, and partnerships that connect people to public spaces. The *We the Youth* mural and the adjacent Haring Mural Garden represent an extraordinary example of how public art and community investment can work together to create a lasting cultural landmark.

PHS's connection to *We the Youth* stems from the mural's origins and its relationship to the surrounding community. Archival correspondence from 1987 (enclosed) documenting Keith Haring's selection of the location identifies the garden and PHS's Green Country Towne program among the factors that influenced his choice of the site. This history reflects the values that inspired the mural's creation: community investment, public participation, and the revitalization of neighborhood spaces. It also highlights the mural's significance as a work by Keith Haring, one of the most influential American artists of the twentieth century.

Over the years, *We the Youth* has become an iconic feature of Philadelphia's cultural landscape. Internationally recognized as one of Haring's most significant public artworks, it is the only Keith Haring mural in Pennsylvania and the only collaborative public mural by Haring that remains intact on its original site. Created with young people to commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the mural remains a powerful symbol of youth, creativity, and civic inclusion.

Its continued presence alongside the Haring Mural Garden at 21st and Ellsworth reflects the lasting impact of public spaces that bring together art and community. Designation on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places would provide important recognition and protection for this irreplaceable cultural resource. It would help ensure that *We the Youth* remains where Haring intended it to be experienced, preserving the setting and community context that are integral to the work itself. In doing so, future generations will be able to engage with the mural as an enduring part of Philadelphia's artistic heritage and

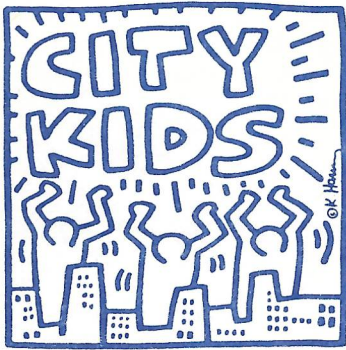


neighborhood history. For these reasons, PHS respectfully urges the Committee on Historic Designation and the Philadelphia Historical Commission to approve this nomination and grant historic designation to Keith Haring's *We the Youth* mural.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matt Rader
President



CITYKIDS CELEBRATE "WE THE YOUTH..."

a project of Network International, Inc.
co-sponsored by: Brandywine Workshop
1520-22 Kater Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146
215-546-3657, 70

New York/London
Citykids Foundation
99 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10013
212-219-4550

August 13, 1987

CLARENCE
H-215 235 3379

Mr. Keith Haring
676 Broadway 5th Floor
New York, NY 10012

Dear Keith:

This letter will follow up on our telephone conversation today. Please consider it as a statement of our intent and activity plan for your visit on September 1, 2 and 3, 1987 to work with Brandywine Workshop's CityKids, Philadelphia Chapter.

During the three days of your stay in Philadelphia, you will work with 10-15 CityKids (aged 14-19 years) to produce a wall mural project on the background wall to a converted vacant lot at the corner of 22nd and Ellsworth Streets in South Philadelphia's Point Breeze community. This lot has been a flower garden and sitting area for residents, and will be refurbished and restored after September 12th by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Greene Countrie Towne project. A bi-level wall facing the lot measures 60 feet long and has a smooth stucco finish, but has never had a mural painted on it. I have enclosed a diagram of the wall. It is on a very active corner and gets good exposure from mass transit buses and other traffic on 22nd Street.

Point Breeze is a low to moderate income area of 26,000 people with over 900 abandoned homes. The teenage dropout and pregnancy rate is one of the highest in the city. Crime and drugs are major problems. On the positive side, the Pt. Breeze Federation, Inc. is a progressive community development group that has completely embraced our concepts of art and community development and artists in public service. Over the period of the last five years, Brandywine has worked closely with the Federation to paint over 30 wall murals and to seal more than 40 vacant properties with trompe l'oeil murals on doorways and windows. Pt. Breeze is organized with 88 block associations

. . .

1787



1987

Philadelphia Project Staff

Brandywine Workshop
Allan Edmunds, President
Eleanor Childs, Administrator
Artistic Director: Leni Sloan

Citykids Foundation
Laurie Meadoff, President
Susan Doi, Administrator

Mr. Keith Haring
CityKids Mural Project
August 13, 1987
Page two

that help facilitate our beautification/conversation projects. Despite the successes that we have had in this community, your participation in the mural project, at the Ellsworth Street location, will help us to direct local youth's attention more closely to the importance of cultural activity and promote even more support from the adult residents. I am enclosing some brochures for your reference.

Brandywine Workshop will provide for your travel costs, local transportation, meals and use of our furnished one-bedroom apartment above the Workshop. A local professional artist will act as coordinator and assist you and the CityKids where needed. Scaffolding, paints and other supplies will be provided by the Workshop. The project will be documented in black and white prints, color slides and, if affordable, video-tape. The wall will be prepared with a white undercoat.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or our administrator, Eleanor Childs at (215) 546-3657. Otherwise, if you are in agreement with this letter, please sign and return it to Brandywine Workshop.

Your offer of assistance is very generous and reflects the spirit of public service and sharing vital to forming bridges between the visual artist and the community.

Sincerely,

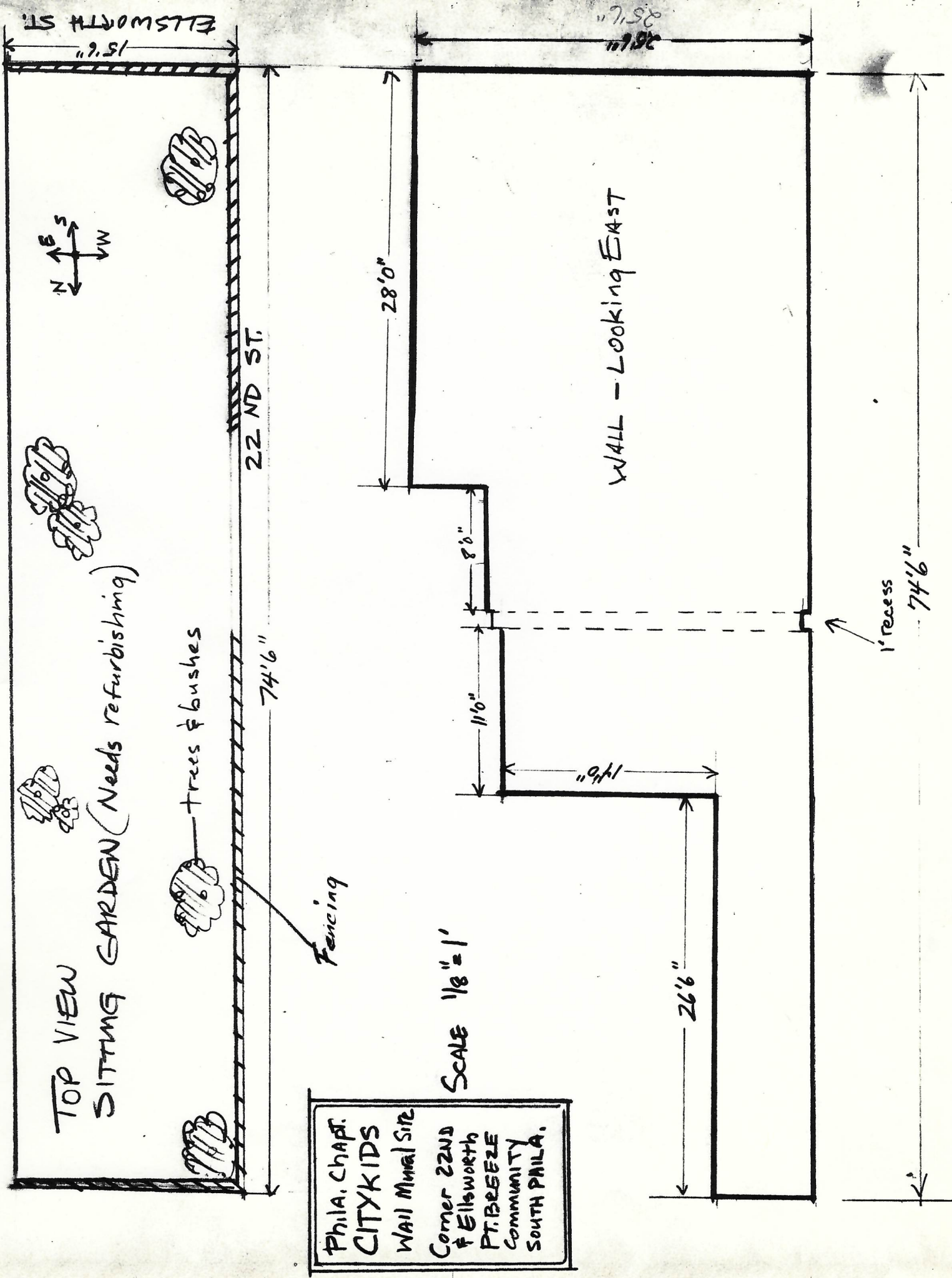

Allan L. Edmunds
President

Signature _____ Date _____
Keith Haring

ALE:emc

Enclosures

cc: Laurie Meadoff



From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: Fw: Support for the historic designation of "We the Youth" by Keith Haring
Date: Monday, September 14, 2026 7:35:46 AM

From: Sophie Roach <hello@sophieroach.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 13, 2026 1:51 PM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Support for the historic designation of "We the Youth" by Keith Haring

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Dear Members of the Committee on Historic Designation,

I am writing as a muralist based in Philadelphia, with a mural of my own in the Point Breeze neighborhood, to express my strong support for the nomination of Keith Haring's "We the Youth" mural to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Growing up in Austin, in a family that spent more time at the mall than museums or galleries, the things I saw on the street — street art, band posters — were what formed my interest in visual art in the first place. Keith's work in particular has always stood out to me because of how it makes people feel like they, too, could be an artist. That matters, because his style is still considered outside the norm even today. Protecting a piece like this isn't just about preserving one artist's legacy; it's about preserving a rare, visible example of the kind of art that gives people a broader perspective of what is and isn't art, particularly for kids and adults that don't have the privilege of access to our more formal art museums and institutions.

As a muralist, I want to mention that impermanence is often the special sauce that makes mural work feel authentic and alive, and I don't think every piece made to be temporary should be preserved. But "We the Youth" has already earned its exception. This isn't a hypothetical worry: A client of mine who hired me for my own mural in Point Breeze in 2020 personally saw people beginning to stucco over "We the Youth" and was one of the neighbors who stepped in to halt it, going on to get Mural Arts Philadelphia involved in what became the mural's 2013 restoration. That's about as direct a piece of evidence as exists that this mural holds real value to the public, not just to preservationists or the art world.

Left unprotected, the mural remains at the mercy of exactly that: building trends, personal taste, and business interests, all of which are frequently at odds with the kind of genuine creative action Keith Haring has come to represent for so many people. Designation would ensure that any future decision about that wall happens in the open, with the public's stake in it accounted for. "We the Youth" is also the only one of Haring's collaborative public murals still standing at its original site anywhere in the United States, which makes it irreplaceable in a way most public art simply isn't. On the criteria themselves, I'd point the Committee to RJ Rushmore's recent piece in The Philadelphia Citizen (<https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/guest-commentary-is-haring-historic/>), which lays out directly how the mural satisfies Criteria A and E. I agree with his read of it.

I'll also note, for full transparency, that I've worked directly with OCF Realty, the current property owner, on a long term mural project in the past. When I was hired to create work for them, I naively assumed my interests would be protected in good faith even where they weren't explicitly written into the contract. This good faith approach has had long term financial and personal consequences for me. That experience is part of why I don't think

anything short of formal designation will protect this mural for as long as the building remains under business ownership — goodwill isn't a substitute for something written down. To be clear, my priority here is preserving the mural, not any ill will toward OCF.

I urge the Committee to recommend approval of this nomination to the full Commission.

Thank you for your consideration and for the work you do to protect Philadelphia's cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

Sophie Roach



Pennsylvania
Governor's Advisory Commission
on LGBTQ Affairs



Pennsylvania
Governor's Advisory Commission
on Next Generation Engagement

To the Members of the Committee on Historic Designation and the Philadelphia Historic Commission:

We are writing on behalf of Governor Josh Shapiro's Advisory Commissions on LGBTQ Affairs and Next Generation Engagement to express our strong support for the designation of Keith Haring's "We the Youth" mural on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

The Advisory Commission on LGBTQ Affairs serves as a vital conduit between LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians and the Commonwealth. Commissioners gather information on LGBTQ+ experiences and needs, assess programs that impact community wellbeing, and provide recommendations to strengthen equity, inclusion, and safety. The Commission also works to increase awareness of statewide programs and services so LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians can more easily access resources that support everyday life. Commissioners serve as an extension of state leadership within their communities, helping communicate priorities, uplift accomplishments, and ensure the Commonwealth remains warm and welcoming for all.

Keith Haring's legacy closely reflects the mission of the LGBTQ Affairs Commission. As an artist, activist, and Kutztown native, Haring dedicated his creativity to celebrating LGBTQ+ people and advocating for AIDS awareness and research following his diagnosis at age 30. His bold and accessible artistic style, combined with his compassion for marginalized communities, created a visual language that continues to inspire LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians and allies nearly 40 years after his passing.

Earlier this year, commissioners welcomed Haring's family to the Governor's Residence for a celebration of his life and impact. The artwork displayed at the Residence serves as a reminder of the ongoing work needed to ensure that LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians and all communities feel seen, valued, and supported. Preserving "We the Youth" is a vital part of honoring this legacy.

The Advisory Commission on Next Generation Engagement shares these values through its commitment to advancing health, safety, education, and opportunities for young people across Pennsylvania. Commissioners represent the diverse experiences and potential of youth statewide and advise on their needs, concerns, and aspirations. The Commission also works to raise awareness and increase education around opportunities and programming across the state to expand accessibility for all Pennsylvanians. We ensure that young voices shape the policies that govern us and mold our futures, making youth inclusion a central priority.

Haring's connection to young people was a defining element of his work. In 1986, he designed a centennial banner celebrating the Statue of Liberty's 100th anniversary with the participation of 1,000 New York high school students. This collaboration demonstrated his commitment to accessible and participatory public art and set the foundation for what followed.

Building on the success of that project, Haring returned the next year, in 1987, to work with youth from Philadelphia and New York to create "We the Youth." This mural is now the only Haring mural in Philadelphia, the only one in Pennsylvania, and the only collaborative public mural by Haring that remains intact at its original site. These two youth-centered projects, created one year apart, highlight Haring's dedication to ensuring young people's creativity, energy, and voices were central in shaping public art.

By choosing to paint "We the Youth" in a working-class neighborhood, Haring reinforced his belief that art and opportunity belong to everyone, especially young people and marginalized communities who are often excluded from public narratives.

As commissioners committed to youth empowerment and LGBTQ+ inclusion, we recognize "We the Youth" as a powerful symbol of opportunity, collaboration, safety, and community connection. It reflects the values we champion every day and honors the lived histories we strive to protect.

Preserving "We the Youth" ensures future generations can experience Haring's work in the context he intended: public, collaborative, vibrant, and rooted in community. It safeguards an irreplaceable cultural landmark and honors Haring's enduring legacy as an artist and advocate.

For these reasons, we strongly support the designation of "We the Youth" as a historic landmark under Criteria A and E. Protecting this mural is essential to preserving community heritage, uplifting youth and LGBTQ+ voices, and ensuring that Haring's legacy continues to inspire all Pennsylvanians for generations to come.

Thank you for the Committee and Commission's consideration.

Sincerely,

Ashleigh Strange

Executive Director, PA Governor Josh Shapiro's Advisory Commission on LGBTQ Affairs

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Samira", followed by a horizontal line.

Executive Director, PA Governor Josh Shapiro's Advisory Commission on Next Generation Engagement



Maria Rosario Jackson, Ph.D.

September 13, 2026

Submitted via email to preservation@phila.gov

Re: Support for the nomination of *We the Youth* (2147–49 Ellsworth Street) for historic designation and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

To the Members of the Committee on Historic Designation and the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the historic designation of Keith Haring's *We the Youth* mural, located at 2147–49 Ellsworth Street, to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

My 30 + year career has centered on understanding and advancing the roles of the arts in building healthy communities where all people can thrive. As a researcher, scholar and professor of creativity and social impact, as former Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts from 2021 to 2025, through nearly two decades studying how the arts strengthen civic life at the Urban Institute, and now as a member of the Board of Directors of the Keith Haring Foundation, I stand firm with a clear conviction: public art is not incidental to community wellbeing; it is often catalytic to it. *We the Youth* is one of the clearest examples of that catalytic potential I know of, and I believe that it deserves the protection that historic designation would provide.

Organized with the Brandywine Workshop and City Kids New York, Keith Haring painted this mural in 1987 as part of the celebration of the U.S. Constitution's bicentennial. Rather than selecting an affluent historic district, he deliberately chose a rowhouse wall in Point Breeze. By titling the mural *We the Youth*, he pointedly reinterpreted “We the People” to advocate for the inclusion of younger generations and marginalized communities in our national narrative. Crucially, *We the Youth* is the only collaborative public mural by Keith Haring worldwide that remains intact on its original site, and it is the sole Haring mural in his home state of Pennsylvania. It remains an extraordinary site of pilgrimage for artists, community members, and fans.

During his brief but impactful career, Haring created a universally recognized visual language that profoundly shaped modern art and culture. He believed deeply in democratic, accessible art, producing over 50 public works across the globe. *We the Youth* represents a definitive model of his collaborative approach: Haring painted alongside young people from Philadelphia and New York City, guiding them to fill his signature bold outlines with their own creative energy.

Before his death from AIDS-related illnesses in 1990 at age 31, Haring devoted his career to fostering community resilience, youth empowerment, and public access. Preserving this mural directly honors those founding values, and it is precisely the kind of civic asset that my own research and advocacy have shown to be irreplaceable once lost.



I respectfully urge the Committee and Commission to grant historic designation to *We the Youth* to protect this landmark for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Rosario Jackson".

Maria Rosario Jackson, Ph.D.

University Professor of Creativity and Social Impact, Arizona State University

*Executive and Creative Director, Studio for Creativity and Social Impact, Arizona State University,
California Center (Los Angeles)*



PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

for greater philadelphia

September 14, 2026

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

Dear Members of the Historical Commission,

The Preservation Alliance supports the nomination of “We The Youth” to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We recognize Keith Haring’s significance as a well-known artist and understand the mural’s importance to Philadelphia’s public art scene and the Point Breeze community. The nomination before the Historical Commission does appear to satisfy criteria for designation A and E.

At the same time, the nomination raises broader policy questions about how to evaluate murals under the city’s historic preservation rules. Murals are often created as public art on blank party walls. Being listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places can have lasting effects on property, new construction, and neighborhood revitalization. Since this would be the first outdoor mural designated in Philadelphia, we believe it is essential for the Historical Commission to consider both the importance of this specific work and the precedent it may set for future mural nominations.

Sincerely,

Paul Steinke
Executive Director

To the Members of the Committee on Historic Designation and the Philadelphia Historical Commission:

We are writing jointly as Keith Haring's three sisters—Kay Haring, Karen DeLong, and Kristen Haring—to express our strong support for the designation of Keith's 1987 *We the Youth* mural on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Located at 2147 and 2149 Ellsworth Street, the mural has remained in place for nearly four decades, becoming part of the life and history of the Philadelphia community in which Keith created it.

We are, of course, personally connected to Keith and to his work, but each of us has also spent many years in different ways witnessing the continuing historical and cultural significance of his art. We hope our perspective may be useful to the Commission as it considers the mural under Criteria A and E.

Criterion A recognizes a resource that has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation, or that is associated with the life of a person significant in the past. *We the Youth* speaks to all of these dimensions.

Keith's work was deeply rooted in the idea that art belongs to everyone. He was drawn to public spaces and to people who might never enter a gallery or museum. The *We the Youth* mural embodies that conviction unusually clearly. It was created not simply for a community but with the participation of young people from Philadelphia and New York, and Keith deliberately placed it in a residential neighborhood rather than in a conventional cultural or commercial setting. The result was a work of art that became part of the everyday life of a Philadelphia community.

Kay experienced this firsthand. In June 2017, she was invited to the Queen Memorial Library, only a couple of blocks from the mural, to read from her children's book, *Keith Haring: The Boy Who Just Kept Drawing*. During that visit, she saw directly the pride and joy that *We the Youth* continues to inspire in the surrounding community. For her, it was a moving reminder of something Keith cared about deeply: that art could engage people where they lived, and that young people could see themselves as participants in artistic creation, rather than simply as spectators.

The mural has further significance within the broader history of Keith's life and work. Karen is president of the Kutztown Area Historical Society, which safeguards a remarkable group of drawings Keith made on chalkboards there in 1982. The Historical Society occupies an 1892 school building — itself listed on the National Register of Historic Places — immediately next door to our childhood home. Those drawings offer an intimate record of Keith's connection to his hometown and to the beginnings of his artistic life. *We the Youth*, created five years later, provides an important record of his public work.

Pennsylvania recently formally recognized Keith's importance to the Commonwealth. In October 2024, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission unveiled a historical marker honoring Keith in our hometown, on the grounds of the Kutztown Area Historical Society. The Commonwealth reserves this honor for people, places, events, and innovations that have “had a significant impact on its times, and has statewide and/or national, rather than merely local or regional, historical significance.” We

believe this recognition by the Commonwealth provides important precedent for the nomination of *We the Youth* for historic designation.

As the nomination notes, *We the Youth* is the only collaborative public mural by Keith that remains intact and in its original location in the United States. It is also the only Keith Haring mural in Philadelphia or anywhere else in his home state of Pennsylvania. Its continued presence in the neighborhood where Keith painted it therefore gives us something that cannot be offered by a museum collection, a reproduction, or a relocated work: an opportunity to encounter his public art in the setting where he created it.

Criterion E recognizes the work of a designer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation. Keith's influence is indisputable, and *We the Youth* demonstrates how that influence operated. His artwork did not remain confined to galleries. He brought it into schools, hospitals, and other community spaces, so that people could encounter art as part of their daily lives. By expanding his artistic practice to include youth collaborators in many projects, Keith directly mentored hundreds of young people in how small personal actions can bring about change.

Kristen is a historian who has served as a member of the board of directors of the Keith Haring Foundation since its creation by Keith in 1989. From that perspective, she has seen how Keith's work has entered the history of art while continuing to retain its extraordinary public accessibility. *We the Youth* is a compelling expression of that dual legacy: it is the work of an internationally influential artist, rooted in the Point Breeze Philadelphia neighborhood where people encounter the work where it was created.

For the three of us, there is something especially meaningful about the fact that *We the Youth* has endured for nearly four decades in the place where Keith made it. We remember the young man who grew up drawing with our father, who remained connected to his Pennsylvania hometown, and who believed that art could cross boundaries of age, class, and background. The mural's survival allows something of that person and that philosophy to remain present in Philadelphia—not as a relic removed from daily experience, but as a work that people live with every day.

We respectfully urge the Committee on Historic Designation and the Philadelphia Historical Commission to recognize *We the Youth* for its significance under Criteria A and E and to designate it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Kay Haring

Karen DeLong

Kristen Haring

Composite Inc.

2024 Fitzwater Street • Philadelphia PA 19146-1333
267-228-6680

13 September 2026

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19103

SUPPORT FOR DESIGNATION

Keith Haring Mural
2147-49 Ellsworth Street
Point Breeze, Philadelphia PA 19146

Dear Commissioners,

This letter is written to support the designation of the *We the Youth* mural by Keith Haring under Criteria A and E.

The mural has significant value as part of the heritage and culture of Philadelphia, primarily for its association with Keith Haring, an internationally acclaimed Pennsylvania native, and therefore satisfies Criterion A.

The unbridled creative genius of Keith Haring has had a significant impact on the cultural development of Philadelphia, America, and the world, and therefore satisfies Criterion E.

We the Youth is regarded as the only outdoor community mural extant on its original site. Created collaboratively by the artist and the young people of our city, it marked the Bicentennial of the US Constitution in a most democratic and inclusive manner. It deserves to be protected.

My personal connection

When I first observed this eye-catching mural in the early 1990s, it was fenced off from the public in a weedy lot. I reached out to the owner of the

lot and suggested that the artist and the work itself deserved more love and respect.

In a happy turn of events, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Neighborhood Gardens Association [now NGT] welcomed me as a volunteer to redesign the garden. With a boost from the Garden Club of America, funds were obtained to realize that design. Subsequently, NGT and Mural Arts Philadelphia have invested in both the preservation of the mural and the further refinement of the space. In addition, this unique installation has enjoyed the full support of the Keith Haring Foundation.

My special interest in this corner is partly because Keith and I were born just ten days apart. He was swallowed up by the AIDS epidemic while I, somehow, escaped it. The joy expressed in all of Haring's work is infectious. We are so lucky to have this mural in Philadelphia!

Designation and protection

The vibrant mural is highly visible to the public who walk, bike, bus, or drive by. They are delighted by the dancing figures, the bright colors, the barking dog. It enriches their day.

On occasions when I have been working in the garden, I have had chance encounters with visitors from all over Philadelphia. I have also met travelers from other states and even from Europe who have trekked here to see this exciting landmark on a random corner in Point Breeze. The low fence is intentionally unlocked to allow folks of all walks to enter, sit, picnic, or just gaze upon this outstanding work. It is a truly democratic work in an accessible space.

It is my hope that, by designating this important site-specific work, not only will it be protected, but other citizens will be able to appreciate the uniqueness and special character of *We the Youth* now and into the future.

Michael J. LoFurno

Michael J. LoFurno, ASLA
Composite Inc.
Landscape Architect

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: Ellsworth Haring Murals
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 9:05:32 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Harrison Boyle <harrison.boyle@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2026 5:25 PM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Ellsworth Haring Murals

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Dear Comittee members

As a homeowner (an taxpayer) in the Graduate Hospital area for more than 45 years, I support the historic designation of the Haring murals. The murals and the community garden design they complement are a notable milestone of ongoing community renewal, and remain an important signifier of the will to invest in quality of life issues affecting the people of Philadelphia.

Harrison Boyle

Bainbridge St.

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: Public comment to protect Keith Haring mural in South Philly 09/14/2026
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 9:05:45 AM

From: Molly <mollyhemphill@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 12:13 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Public comment to protect Keith Haring mural in South Philly 09/14/2026

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Hello,

I'm writing in my public comment to protect the "We the Youth" mural painted by Keith Haring and Philadelphia children in 1987. As a born and raised Philadelphian, I cherish the murals on the city's walls and believe they should be protected at all costs. They should be especially protected from predatory real estate companies that have paved the way for harmful gentrification in historically black neighborhoods like the one this mural lives in.

Please add this mural to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,
Molly Hemphill

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: If you keep the mural I'll visit
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 9:06:09 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Nica Mendez <nicalmn@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 6:25 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: If you keep the mural I'll visit

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Thank you!
~Nica

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: Written Comment - "We The Youth" Historic Designation
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 9:06:58 AM

From: Jordan Shuster <jordanwshuster@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2026 9:34 PM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Written Comment - "We The Youth" Historic Designation

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Good evening,

Please accept my written remarks ahead of Wednesday's hearing to determine the addition of Keith Haring's "We the Youth" mural to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. As a Point Breeze homeowner, I feel very strongly that this mural should be preserved through designation as a historic place. To house a small piece of Keith Haring's legacy in my own neighborhood is an honor and a privilege, and it would be devastating to see the mural torn down in the ongoing wave of gentrification rather than preserved and honored as it should be. The mural - and the garden in front of it - are my favorite part of the neighborhood. The history of both the mural and its artists are hugely important to the character of our community. This mural does not belong to Haring alone - it is a testament to the 14 local high school students who worked together to make something bigger than themselves. This mural belongs to our community and should be treated as such.

Thank you for your time,
Jordan Shuster
Life Cycles Officiant
Jewish Children's Folkshul
www.folkshul.org
215-206-7849

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: 2147 AND 2149 ELLSWORTH ST Preservation
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 9:13:51 AM

From: john lowe <idigholes@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 9:08 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: 2147 AND 2149 ELLSWORTH ST Preservation

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Good morning,

My name is John Lowe. I am a professional consultant in the environmental sciences and historic preservation field with 22 years of experience, a 3-year resident of Point Breeze, and a longtime fan of Keith Haring. I am writing to strongly support a Historic Designation for the "We the Youth" mural.

My family moved to New York City in 1982, and one of the first things I remember seeing there, other than the buildings, was the street art. In particular, the distinct characters and artwork that Keith Haring was drawing on the blacked out subway ads. As I got older, I visited the Pop Shop to buy pins and posters, and saw his work in galleries. Few artists were able to capture the street spirit, joy, struggle, and community like Keith Haring. When I moved to Philadelphia in 2023, I was not even aware of the We the Youth mural. Some of this was certainly because, as originally planned, the mural was located away from busy pedestrian and commercial areas, and at the time in a Black community. The fact that there was an original Keith Haring mural, in its original location, was astounding to me. I have since visited many times, just standing and always noticing new details, hoping that someone would commit the time and money to preserve this unique treasure.

Were this a Section 106 undertaking, there is no doubt that the Keith Haring mural would qualify for listing on the National Register (with the understanding it does not currently meet the 50-year threshold). It represents the work of a master artist. It maintains integrity of location, and the location is a significant contributing factor to the eligibility. It is important to the history and culture of the neighborhood. Finally, it is a unique example of its type and is under critical threat.

I understand that OCF Realty maintains that the artwork is damaging the building and is of materials that will continue to peel in chunks from the wall. This is further evidence of

the importance of a historic designation for We the Youth, as this designation could be an important factor in securing grants for preservation. Moving the mural and replacing with a facsimile should be the last ditch option, its not just the artwork itself that is important, it's that it is the only remaining original Keith Haring mural in its original location, AND that it was painted with members of the Philadelphia community. Please vote for a Historic Designation status for the We the Youth mural, and also commit to find ways to preserve this important piece of art and Philadelphia history.

Thank you,
John Lowe

John Lowe jdigholes@gmail.com

"Do not make the end you seek the end"

Sun Ra

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: 2147 Ellsworth Street- Keith Haring Mural "We The Youth"
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 9:18:29 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: James <james.m.alfano@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 9:17 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: 2147 Ellsworth Street- Keith Haring Mural "We The Youth"

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To Whomever This May Concern:

I am submitting a public comment to express my support for the "We The Youth" mural by Keith Harding at 2147 Ellsworth street to be added to the Philadelphia Register of Historical Places.

This piece of artwork from 1987 represents a significant piece of Philadelphia history. The Mural Arts Program is something that is uniquely Philadelphian, something that we all should be proud of, and this mural, which is nearly 40 years old and been part of the fabric of this neighborhood for nearly 40 years is something that should be preserved.

Thank you,

James Alfano
1023 S. Chadwick St.

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: preservation of Keith Haring mural "We the Youth"
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 10:39:39 AM

From: Gwendolyn Beetham <gbeetham@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 9:59 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Cc: jgreenberg@pennhort.org; info@ocfrealty.com
Subject: preservation of Keith Haring mural "We the Youth"

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Dear Committee Members,

My name is Gwendolyn and I live in the Point Breeze neighborhood with my partner and my eight-year-old child. We are blocks away from the Keith Haring mural being discussed by the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

As a homeowner, engaged community member, and public art lover, I cannot put into words how much this mural means to me personally, and to the community more broadly. Pictures documenting the mural being painted in the 1980s tell the story: a multigenerational, multiracial group of people coming together to build something beautiful for the community (photo courtesy of the Keith Haring Foundation).



This photo and this mural depict the kind of city that I want to live in, the kind of community I want to raise my daughter in: a diverse, complex, and *beautiful* place that is worthy of one-of-a-kind public art and green spaces that bring people together, not just boring gray box new construction.

I hope that you agree that Haring's mural represents all of these things too, and that you will consider voting to add "We the Youth" to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Gwendolyn Beetham



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

CITY COUNCIL

KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMEMBER
AT-LARGE

CITY HALL, ROOM 312
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and Committee on Historic Designation,

I am writing to express my support for the designation of Keith Haring's "We the Youth" mural as a historic object on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

As an at-large member of Philadelphia City Council and community organizer; and a life-long advocate for our city's youth, I know that the "We the Youth" mural must be preserved and registered as a historic object.

The mural satisfies Criteria for Designation A and E for Historic Dedication as it is an important part of the heritage and culture of Philadelphia. It also deserves protection for its association with Keith Haring, an internationally renowned American artist who significantly influenced the cultural development of Philadelphia and the broader world.

In 1987, Keith Haring came to Philadelphia to paint the "We the Youth" mural on the party wall of a Point Breeze rowhouse at 2147-2149 Ellsworth Street with a group of Philadelphia and New York City teenagers, organized through the Brandywine Workshop and CityKids Foundation.

The mural's value is rooted in its democratic spirit. Created to commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, Haring pointedly chose a struggling neighborhood over an affluent historic district. By titling the work "We the Youth," he challenged the traditional interpretation of "We the People," arguing for the inclusion of younger generations and marginalized communities in the American narrative.

The work also serves as a blueprint for collaborative art. Haring did not simply paint for the community; he painted with them, guiding students to fill his bold outlines with their own creative expressions. We the Youth is the only one of Haring's murals located in the City of Philadelphia or the Commonwealth of PA, his home state.

For close to 30 years, the mural's vibrant design has graced the same wall, as a beloved artwork for and by the community. As the Point Breeze neighborhood has experienced rapid redevelopment, preserving the mural on site is essential to protecting community heritage.

Haring was diagnosed with AIDS in 1988. In 1989, he established the Keith Haring Foundation, its mandate being to provide funding and imagery to AIDS organizations and children's programs, and to expand the audience for Haring's work through exhibitions, publications and the licensing of his images. Haring enlisted his imagery during the last years of his life to speak about his own illness and generate activism and awareness about AIDS. Haring's mural also demands that those with AIDS and HIV, often ostracized and ignored by their government, are included in the history of our nation.

"We the Youth" is a landmark of social history, artistic rarity, and community resilience. Keith Haring was a prolific global artist, and "We the Youth" is the only collaborative public mural by Haring that remains intact and on its original site. This makes the mural a place of pilgrimage for art historians and Haring fans alike, and helps establish our City as an international center of art, community, and activism.

I urge the designation of Keith Haring's "We the Youth" mural as a historic object on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It is a part of our city's heritage and represents many of the things that make Philadelphia so special. "We the Youth" was painted with Philadelphia youth from a neighborhood long denied access to resources by an artist that would soon die from AIDS in the midst of a health crisis defined by government indifference. The beautiful and colorful mural is at the same time a reflection on our failures, a demand for inclusion, and a work of hope for a better future where all are equally a part of our nation's story. It is more important than ever that we honor this heritage by preserving "We the Youth" for decades to come.

Sincerely,



Kendra Brooks
Minoirty, Leader, City Councilmember At-Large

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: Keith Haring mural
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 10:39:57 AM

From: Claire Griffin <clairegrif@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 10:18 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Keith Haring mural

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Hello,

I am writing with my enthusiastic support of designating the Keith Haring mural in point breeze to the register of historic places. I live down the block at 2036 Federal St, love having this piece of history in my neighborhood, and think it's important to Haring's legacy and to my neighborhood to preserve it.

Best,

Claire Griffin

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: Save Keith Haring's We the Youth mural
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 10:40:01 AM

From: Stephen Maciejewski <teciu1949@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 10:26 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Save Keith Haring's We the Youth mural

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Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

I am writing to urge you, with both passion and profound concern, to ensure the permanent preservation of Keith Haring's *We the Youth* mural.

This extraordinary work is Keith Haring's only intact, site-specific public mural in Philadelphia. Haring was also a native Pennsylvanian whose brief life left an immeasurable mark on art, culture, and society. Although he died far too young, his influence remains visible throughout the world. Countless artists have imitated his unmistakable style, but here in Philadelphia, we are fortunate to possess an original work created by Haring himself.

This mural is not simply an image painted on a wall. It is an irreplaceable part of Philadelphia's artistic, cultural, neighborhood, and LGBTQ+ history. Its message of unity, inclusion, hope, and youthful energy remains as powerful today as when it was created. Once such a work is lost, it can never truly be replaced.

I have visited the mural and its garden many times, and I continue to find them deeply inspiring. I feel extraordinarily fortunate to have this internationally significant work in my own neighborhood, and I have even helped maintain the surrounding garden. The mural brings beauty and meaning to our community while connecting Philadelphia to visitors and admirers from around the world.

Too often, cities fail to recognize the treasures already in their care. The old Temple University expression about finding "acres of diamonds" in our own backyard feels especially appropriate here. *We the Youth* is one of Philadelphia's diamonds, and we must recognize its value before it is placed at risk.

This mural could become an even greater cultural destination. Artists, students, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and admirers of Keith Haring from around the world would seek it out while visiting Philadelphia. It is a powerful calling card for our city—evidence that Philadelphia values public art, diversity, history, and creative expression. With thoughtful preservation and promotion, the mural and garden could become an even more vibrant and celebrated neighborhood landmark.

I respectfully ask the Philadelphia Historical Commission to use every available means to protect and preserve *We the Youth* permanently. Future generations deserve the opportunity to stand before this remarkable work, experience its energy, and understand its many layers of history and meaning.

Philadelphia has been entrusted with something rare and irreplaceable. Please help ensure that it remains here, protected and cherished, for generations to come.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to preserving Philadelphia's cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

Stephen Maciejewski
2030 Fitzwater Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146
215-869-9445

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: "We The Youth" Mural
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 10:40:10 AM

From: Brett Krasnov <brett5355@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 10:31 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: "We The Youth" Mural

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I am writing today to support Keith Haring's "We The Youth" mural being added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It is the longest-standing collaborative mural by Mr. Haring and is an important part of our Pt. Breeze neighborhood. This designation will help to keep the mural where it is and also hopefully help to raise funds for some much-needed restoration.

Thank you.

Brett Krasnov
2039 Federal Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19146
215-359-6632

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: keith haring mural
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 11:10:33 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Caitlyn Carey <caitlcarey@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 11:09 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: keith haring mural

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Hello,

I live at 1929 Fernon St and I want to designate the Keith Haring mural in Point Breeze to the Register of Historical places.

This is a landmark in the neighborhood and such a rare piece of art to be able to walk by daily, and it deserves to be restored and protected.

-Caitlyn Carey

Sent from my iPhone



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL

Kenyatta Johnson
President
Room 494 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-2070
COUNCILMAN – 2nd District

September 14, 2026

Philadelphia Historical Commission
Committee on Historic Designation
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19102

Re: Support for the Designation of the *We the Youth* Mural as a Historic Object

Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission Committee on Historic Designation:

I am writing to express my support for the designation of Keith Haring's *We the Youth* mural as a historic object on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. As the representative of the 2nd Councilmanic District, I understand the importance of preserving and celebrating public art that reflects the history, character, and cultural identity of Point Breeze. Public art has the ability to bring communities together, tell stories, and create connections between residents and the places they call home. *We the Youth* exemplifies the important role that art can play in preserving Philadelphia's history while continuing to inspire future generations.

We the Youth is not just public art; it is a landmark of social history, artistic rarity, and community resilience. Keith Haring was a prolific global artist, and *We the Youth* is the only collaborative public mural by Haring that remains intact and on its original site. This distinction makes the mural an important destination for art historians and Haring fans alike. Additionally, it is the only one of Haring's murals located in the City of Philadelphia or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Haring's home state.

For nearly 30 years, *We the Youth* has remained a beloved landmark in Point Breeze despite the redevelopment that has occurred in the area. Protecting the mural ensures that this piece of Philadelphia's cultural heritage remains part of the neighborhood and accessible to the public for generations to come.

For these reasons, I urge the Philadelphia Historical Commission to support the designation of Keith Haring's *We the Youth* mural as a historic object on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Thank you for your consideration of this important designation.

Sincerely,

Council President Kenyatta Johnson
Philadelphia City Council



THE KEITH HARING FOUNDATION INC.

Julia Gruen

President, Keith Haring Foundation Board of Directors

Simon Castets

Executive Director, Keith Haring Foundation

September 15, 2026

Committee on Historic Designation

Philadelphia Historical Commission

Submitted via email to preservation@phila.gov

Re: Support for the nomination of *We the Youth* (2147–49 Ellsworth Street) for designation on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Dear Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Keith Haring Foundation, we write in steadfast support of designating *We the Youth*, Keith Haring's mural at 2147–49 Ellsworth Street in Point Breeze, as a historic object and adding it to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We respectfully urge the Committee to recommend designation to the full Historical Commission.

The mission of the Keith Haring Foundation is to sustain, expand, and protect the legacy of Keith Haring, his art, and his ideals. Haring, a Pennsylvania native, was a prolific global artist who completed over fifty murals worldwide, guided by his unwavering conviction that art belongs to the public. *We the Youth* is the only collaborative public mural by Haring that survives intact and on its original site, making it a milestone of social history, artistic rarity, and community resilience.

The mural's significance is rooted in its democratic spirit. Created in 1987 in partnership with Brandywine Workshop, CityKids of New York, and neighborhood youth, on the occasion of the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, Haring pointedly chose a neighborhood sidelined by systemic disinvestment over an affluent one. By titling the mural *We the Youth*, he challenged the preamble "We the People," advocating for the inclusion of underrepresented groups into the overarching American story. The work also serves as a blueprint for collaborative art; Haring did not simply paint for the community but painted with them, guiding participants to fill his bold outlines with their own creative expressions. *We the Youth* exemplifies his commitment to publicly accessible, socially impactful art.

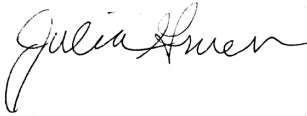
Haring's unique visual language achieved universal acclaim during his brief career, and despite his death from AIDS-related complications in 1990 at age 31, his global impact continues today. Though a world-renown visual artist, Haring was also a steadfast advocate for those in need, wielding his art to champion a wide range of causes. He established the Keith Haring Foundation shortly before his death to carry that work forward. *We the Youth* stands as a definitive surviving record of his artistic ideals, it is a significant, living link to his broader legacy.

Beyond its artistic significance, the mural stands as a testament to community resilience. For close to four decades, its iconic motif of radiant dancing figures has adorned Point Breeze, turning it into both a beloved neighborhood monument and a destination for art lovers the world over. Its 2013

restoration by Mural Arts Philadelphia and the Keith Haring Foundation, and its continued role anchoring the adjacent community garden, reflect how deeply this community values the work. As Point Breeze experiences rapid redevelopment, designation would help ensure this living legacy isn't lost to circumstance.

Formal designation simply affirms reality; *We the Youth* is an indispensable piece of Philadelphia's history, American art history, and a cornerstone of Keith Haring's legacy. We emphatically urge the Committee to recommend that *We the Youth* be designated a historic object and added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,



Julia Gruen

President, Keith Haring Foundation Board of Directors



Simon Castets

Executive Director, Keith Haring Foundation

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: public comment for 9/16/26 mtg - Keith Haring mural
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 12:19:00 PM

From: rachel lang <rlangtownsend@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 11:58 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: public comment for 9/16/26 mtg - Keith Haring mural

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Good morning,

I'm writing to comment re: the consideration of the Keith Haring mural at 2147 and 2149 Ellsworth St. for being added to the register of historic places. As a resident of Philadelphia for 18 years, I am in full support of the mural being added to the register. It carries great historical, cultural and artistic significance to our city. We have already lost too much art and history to developers and real estate interests that are extremely short-sighted. We cannot allow this important work by an extremely talented and celebrated queer artist to be lost.

Rachel Lang

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: Historical Commission Committee on Historic Designation meeting - Keith Haring Mural Ellsworth Street
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 12:19:11 PM

From: Kate Eckert <eckertkate@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 11:59 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Historical Commission Committee on Historic Designation meeting - Keith Haring Mural Ellsworth Street

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Hello,

My name is Kate Eckert, and I'm the branch manager and children's librarian of Queen Memorial Library, the public library serving Point Breeze. I would like to state for the record that the Keith Haring mural contributes to the emotional well being of our community and is an important part of our city's artistic history. For the sake of my patrons and future queer, BIPOC Philadelphians & visitors, please protect this mural and preserve it in situ for the future.

Thank you for your time.

best,

Kate Eckert

(they/them)

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: Support for Historic Designation of Keith Haring's "We the Youth" Mural
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 12:19:59 PM

From: Gus Scheerbaum <gscheerbaum@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 12:03 PM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Support for Historic Designation of Keith Haring's "We the Youth" Mural

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September 14, 2026

TO: Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and Committee on Historic Designation 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor Philadelphia, PA 19102

FROM: Gustave Scheerbaum, PE, 2241 Carpenter Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146

Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and Committee on Historic Designation:

I am writing on behalf of myself, a licensed professional engineer, a dedicated public servant, and near-neighbor living a few blocks away from the Keith Haring mural at 2147-2149 Ellsworth Street. I'd like to express my strong support for the designation of Keith Haring's "We the Youth" mural as a historic object on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

In my career in transportation engineering and public service, I focus daily on how our built environment and civic infrastructure serve the public good. Public art is a foundational piece of that infrastructure, shaping the identity, pride, and connectivity of a neighborhood. Living nearby the Haring mural for over 20 years, I have learned firsthand how it functions as a much loved landmark in our community. The nomination rightly contends that the mural satisfies criteria for "Designations A and E," and I wholly support this assessment.

Regarding Criterion A, the mural has significant value to the heritage and culture of Philadelphia. Its value is deeply rooted in a democratic spirit that resonates with my own life in public service. When Haring came to Philadelphia in 1987 to commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, he pointedly chose a struggling, working-class neighborhood over an affluent historic district. By titling the work "We the Youth," he brilliantly challenged the traditional interpretation of "We the People," arguing for the inclusion of marginalized communities and younger generations in the American narrative. The artwork itself further serves as an incredible blueprint for community collaboration. Haring did not simply paint *for* our community; he painted *with* them, guiding teenagers from the Brandywine Workshop and CityKids Foundation to fill his bold outlines with their own

expressions.

Regarding Criterion E, the mural is an irreplaceable work by an artist who significantly influenced the cultural development of the world. Keith Haring was a prolific global artist whose imagery became a universally recognized visual language of the 20th century before his too-early passing from AIDS-related illnesses in 1990. From an engineering infrastructure and preservation perspective I feel it's safe to say that, "We the Youth" is remarkably rare: it is the *only* collaborative public mural by Haring that remains intact and on its original site anywhere in the world. Furthermore, it is the only one of Haring's murals located in Pennsylvania, his home state.

Today, as the Point Breeze neighborhood experiences growth and redevelopment, including changes in the streetscape infrastructure itself, preserving the Keith Haring mural on-site is essential to protecting part of our community's heritage. Haring was known for his belief in creating art that was accessible to the public, regardless of socio-economic status and preferred street art over traditional museum spaces. Preserving "We the Youth" in its original location honors Haring's artistic values and protects an irreplaceable piece of Philadelphia's social and architectural history.

I urge the Commission to approve the historic designation of this wonderful and historically significant work of art. Thank you for your time, your service to the City, and for your consideration of this vital preservation effort.

Sincerely,

Gustave Scheerbaum, PE

[267-968-6450](tel:267-968-6450) (m)

[215-686-5698](tel:215-686-5698) (o)

From: [preservation](#)
To: [Alexander Till](#)
Subject: FW: Please Save "We The Youth" Keith Haring Mural
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 12:20:16 PM

From: Lauren Lewis <laurenlewis1.618@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2026 12:10 PM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Please Save "We The Youth" Keith Haring Mural

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Hi folks,

I'll be joining the meeting tomorrow morning but wanted to express my thoughts on preserving this mural by Keith Haring. He is our local Van Gogh, an LGBTQ icon, and his art is priceless. We need this mural to carry on through the ages. We need to remember the 80s as a time when countless young queer folk were taken from us, including Keith. His art is so joyful and iconic. Preserving this mural is critically important for the city and the nation.

Best,
-Lauren