

Public Comment Received for
48-60 W Logan St



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CITY COUNCIL

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Mr. John Farnham, Executive Director
Philadelphia Historic Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th FL
Philadelphia, PA 19102

September 1, 2026

Dear Mr. John Farnham,

Re: Former St Francis Assisi Church, 48-60 W Logan St

I am writing on behalf of Philadelphia's 8th Councilmanic District to express my support for Independence Mission Schools and DePaul Catholic School in their efforts regarding the former St. Francis of Assisi Church, located at 48-60 W. Logan Street.

I understand that Independence Mission Schools has spent considerable time and resources evaluating potential options for the former church property, including rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. After exploring these alternatives and considering the significant costs associated with restoring and maintaining the building, the school has determined that moving forward with demolition and transforming the property into recreational open space would better serve its students and the surrounding community.

DePaul Catholic School has been an important educational institution and community presence in the Logan neighborhood. The proposed creation of a playground and recreational field would provide much-needed outdoor space for students while allowing the property to continue serving a positive community purpose.

As Councilwoman for the 8th Councilmanic District, I am supportive of thoughtful investments that enhance the quality of life for our children, families, and neighborhoods. For these reasons, I support Independence Mission Schools and DePaul Catholic School in their efforts to move this project forward and respectfully ask that their plans for the former St. Francis of Assisi Church property receive your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

Cindy Bass
Councilmember - 8th District

Anonymous Public Feedback Regarding Saint Frances Assisi Church

I am writing to express my strong support for the nomination of Saint Frances Assisi Church in Germantown for historic designation and preservation.

For well over a century, Saint Frances Assisi Church has stood as a part of the fabric of Germantown. Generations of families have walked through its doors. It has been a place of prayer, celebration, grief, hope, and community. Its walls have witnessed baptisms, weddings, funerals, holidays, and countless ordinary moments that, together, become the history of a neighborhood.

The condition of the church today is certainly concerning, and I recognize that the past decade has been difficult for the building and the community surrounding it. I also recognize the very real needs of DePaul Catholic School. As an educator, I understand the responsibility schools have to provide students with safe, functional, and supportive places to learn.

But I believe we have to ask ourselves an important question: What are we willing to lose in the process of moving forward?

The demolition of a Catholic church by a Catholic school would send a deeply troubling message to students, families, parishioners, and the Germantown community. Our children should be taught that history, faith, and community matter — not simply when they are convenient, but especially when preserving them requires effort and imagination.

A church is not just an old building. It is a repository of memories. It is where families brought their children to be baptized, where couples began their marriages, and where loved ones were mourned and remembered. It becomes part of the identity of the neighborhood itself. When a church like Saint Frances Assisi is demolished, we do not simply lose bricks, windows, and architectural details. We lose an irreplaceable piece of the community's story.

Philadelphia has already experienced the loss of historic churches that can never be recovered. In 2021, a similar argument was presented to the Historical Commission regarding the former Our Lady of the Rosary Church. The Commission ultimately declined to designate the church, and the West Philadelphia community lost one of its oldest and most architecturally significant resources. For many nearby residents, the loss was especially painful because they were unaware that demolition was being considered until it was too late.

We should not allow history to repeat itself.

As an educator, I believe deeply in preparing our children for the future. But preparing children for the future should not require erasing the places that connect them to the generations who came before them. Our students deserve modern, functional schools — but they also deserve to inherit a city with a history worth knowing and places worth remembering.

There may not be an easy solution. Rehabilitation will require time, creativity, resources, and cooperation. But the difficulty of preservation should not become the reason we abandon it. The decision to demolish Saint Frances Assisi Church is permanent. Once the building is gone, no future generation will have the opportunity to reconsider its value, restore it, or find a new purpose for it.

That is why I respectfully urge the Historical Commission to protect Saint Frances Assisi Church and to work with DePaul Catholic School, the surrounding community, preservationists, and other stakeholders to explore alternatives to demolition.

We have an opportunity to show our children that progress and preservation can exist together. We can teach them that the places that shaped our communities are worth fighting for. We can demonstrate that when something is difficult to save, the answer is not always to tear it down.

Saint Frances Assisi Church has already given more than a century to Germantown. Its story should not end simply because its future is difficult.

Please give this church — and the community that remembers it — the opportunity to have a future.

Thank you for your consideration.