

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION
OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**WEDNESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2026
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Chair	X		
Suzanna Barucco	X		
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.	X		
Bruce Lavery	X		
Debbie Miller		X	
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.	X		

The meeting was held remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kristin Hankins, Historic Preservation Planner II
Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner III
Joshua Schroeder, Historic Preservation Planner II
Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Allison Weiss, SoLo Germantown
Aaron Moselle
Abby Freed
Abigail Cornelia
Abigail Freed
Adena Herskovitz, Esq., Hangley Aronchick
Allie Marchesani
Annelise Ream, Keith Haring Foundation
Berk Atillasoy
Brian Blackmore, AFSC
Brian Yachyshen, KMA
Brionna Wakefield
Bruce Bohri, Department of Planning and Development
C. Lampson

Chamor Thomas, NGT
Conrad Benner
David Traub, Save Our Sites
Davitra Y. Smith
Earl Hopkins
Eleanor Sharpe, City Council President's Office
Elizabeth Young
Emaleigh Doley, Neighborhood Gardens Trust
Emily Foster
Emily Mello
E. Nichols
Gavin Joyce
Hallie Ringle
Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance
Isabella Segalovich
Jane Golden, Mural Arts
Jay Farrell
Jenny Greenberg, Neighborhood Gardens Trust
Jessica Clifford
Julia Guerrero
Julia Hayman
Kate Crankshaw
Kate Jacobi
Kelly Vresilovic
Kevin King
Krista Gebbia, Chestnut Hill Conservancy
Lauren Lewis
Lawrence Shuford
Lori Arnold
Louis Pansulla
Marc Miller
Margaret Doyle
Michael Assetto
Michael McCormick
Nate Osburn
Nicholas Dema
Nyla Boulware
Ori Feibush
Patrick Callahan
Preston Carey
Ricky Berman
R.J. Rushmore
S. Petsu
Samantha Chui, City Planning Commission
Sara O'Keeffe
Sarah Scholz
Sean Whalen, Esq.
Simon Castets, Haring Foundation
Sky Filippi
Tanaya Jadhav
Tanya Covington

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 2147 and 2149 ELLSWORTH ST

Name of Resource: *We the Youth* Keith Haring Mural

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 2147, 2147 Ellsworth LLC; 2149, Neighborhood Gardens Trust

Nominator: Philadelphia Historical Commission

Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate an object, *We the Youth*, a mural painted by the artist Keith Haring on the shared party wall at 2147 and 2149 Ellsworth Street in 1987, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The mural spans the entire exposed party wall at 2147 and 2149 Ellsworth Street and extends onto the concrete garden wall behind it. The nomination contends that the mural, *We the Youth*, is an object that satisfies Criteria for Designation A and E. It argues that the mural has significant value as part of the heritage and culture of Philadelphia and for its association with Keith Haring, an internationally renowned American artist, and therefore satisfies Criterion A. The nomination also argues that the mural is a work by Keith Haring, an artist who significantly influenced the cultural development of Philadelphia, the United States, and the world, and therefore satisfies Criterion E.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that *We the Youth*, the Keith Haring mural on the properties at 2147 and 2149 Ellsworth Street, satisfies Criteria for Designation A and E.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:07:50

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Till presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Mr. Till represented the nomination.
- Ori Feibush and Attorney Sean Whalen represented the property owner of the property at 2147 Ellsworth Street. Jenny Greenberg, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Gardens Trust, Simon Castets of the Keith Haring Foundation, and Jane Golden represented the owner of the property at 2149 Ellsworth Street.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Greenberg commented that the owner of the property at 2149 Ellsworth Street, the Neighborhood Gardens Trust, is in support of the proposed designation of the mural. She summarized the importance of Keith Haring as a Pennsylvania-born artist and highlighted the Neighborhood Gardens Trust's history as the owner of the lot at 2149 Ellsworth Street and their mission to create and preserve community gardens in the city. She went on to describe the importance of the *We The Youth* mural to the history of public art in Philadelphia, the history of the neighborhood of Point Breeze, and its importance to its neighboring character and heritage. She iterated that her organization is in favor of preserving the mural on site and is happy to work with the owner of the property at 2147 Ellsworth Street on maintaining and preserving it.
- Mr. Castets summarized the life and career of Keith Haring. Haring painted more than 70 murals during his life and about 45 of them survive today. He only created four murals working alongside young people including *We The Youth* and the other three were either painted on movable panels or have been lost, leaving this mural as the only of its type that can still be experienced in its original setting. He continued to

describe the official recognition and protection that some of Haring's murals have received under different national and municipal frameworks, citing examples in Pisa, Amsterdam, Paris, Melbourne, Barcelona, and New York. He highlighted that Haring was born and raised in Pennsylvania and that the state recently recognized his importance with a historical marker in his hometown of Kutztown. He reiterated Haring's importance and the influence of his works. He pointed out the significant support the nomination has received from the public so far.

- Ms. Golden commented on the importance of the mural. She stated that it meets the proposed Criteria for Designation. The mural was painted in 1987 as part of the commemoration of the bicentennial of the US Constitution and Haring specifically choose the location for the mural and painted it along with young community members. It is important to the history of the neighborhood, to LGBTQ cultural history, and the history of public art and murals in Philadelphia. She described being able to meet Haring while he was painting the mural. She emphasized its importance relative to its location and that the mural should be preserved in place. She added that Mural Arts is committed to helping make sure the mural is properly preserved.
- Mr. Whalen first clarified that the owner of the house at 2147 Ellsworth Street is 2147 Ellsworth LLC, not OCF Realty LLC, which does not have an ownership interest in the property. Ori Feibush is the manager of 2147 Ellsworth LLC.
- Mr. Feibush reported that he purchased the property at 2147 Ellsworth Street approximately 8.5 years ago and that he has worked with Mural Arts, the Haring Foundation, and the owner of the property at 2149 Ellsworth Street on plans to maintain the mural in its original location. He highlighted that he has applied for no permits for work that would affect the mural and hopes to be able to preserve the mural. He asserted that designating the mural would eventually lead to its loss. He described having worked to reduce water infiltration and wall movement to preserve the mural and had engineers from Mural Arts and the Haring Foundation make reports on the wall. They have shown that the entire mural has delaminated from the underlying wall. He stated that the interior of the rowhouse would need to be demolished in order to preserve the mural. He explained that he proposed a solution that was at one point supported by the other stakeholders to hire a firm to remove and restore the mural and install a facsimile in its place on site. He stated that he firmly believes that this is the only realistic path to maintaining the mural on site for the long term. He described this plan as a commonsense approach to preserving the mural that was previously supported by Mural Arts and the Haring Foundation. He concluded by stating that he does not dispute the importance of the mural or Haring but that murals are temporary objects not suited to preserving via designation.
 - Ms. Cooperman explained that the purview of the Committee of Historic Designation is to evaluate whether the nomination shows that the mural satisfies any of the Criteria for Designation and it is not for them to review technical matters related to expert engineering reports. She added that the Historical Commission has the latitude to designate structures and objects in poor conditions, even ruins, and that Mr. Feibush should reserve arguments about the mural's condition for the Historical Commission's review of the nomination at its monthly meeting.
 - Mr. Feibush responded that he understands the Committee's purview and was outlining the condition issues of the mural because, should the mural be designated, the only way to fulfill the Historic Commission's requirements would be to demolish his rowhouse.
 - Ms. Cooperman reiterated that that issue is beyond the Committee's purview.

- Mr. Whalen commented that there are no other outdoor murals listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. He questioned whether designating this one would encourage similar nominations.
- Ms. Barucco asked for clarification on Mr. Feibush's comments that, if the mural is designated, he will demolish the building.
 - Mr. Feibush responded that the only way to stabilize the mural would be to demolish the interior of the building to access the wall to which it is attached.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Sebastian Petsu commented in support of the nomination.
- Lori Arnold commented in support of the nomination. She explained that, as an architectural conservator, she believes the mural can be restored on site.
- David Traub, Save Our Sites, commented in support of the nomination.
- Emily Foster commented in support of the nomination.
- Sky Filippi commented in support of the nomination.
- Kevin King commented in support of the nomination.
- Tanya Covington commented in support of the nomination.
- Ricky Berman commented in support of the nomination.
- Sam Milroy commented in support of the nomination.
- Conrad Benner commented in support of the nomination.
- Abby Freed commented in support of the nomination.
- Brian Blackmore commented in support of the nomination.
- Nate Osburn commented in support of the nomination. He suggested the mural also satisfies Criteria for Designation B, F, H, I, and J.
- Lauren Lewis commented in support of the nomination.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cohen commented that he has rarely heard as much public support for a nomination and it is clear to him that the significance of the mural is supported in the nomination. He questioned whether designation would put the mural at risk and how it would affect its preservation. Designation is the only protection that the Historical Commission can extend to the mural and the owner is asking the Commission to decline to designate so that other strategies for preservation can be explored. But others have claimed that designation will lead to preservation. It is important to explore all the options in this case. He observed that he does not believe designating the mural will prevent any preservation techniques from being used and that, without designation, the mural is very much in danger.
- Ms. Milroy agreed with Mr. Cohen's comments and added that she thinks Criterion H may be relevant to the designation as well. In addition, designation is important to ensure that the mural is carefully studied and preserved, and she also cannot see how designating it would hinder that process.
- Ms. Barucco agreed with Mr. Cohen about the impressive evidence of public support and participation for the mural. She addressed the question of whether the nomination demonstrates the satisfaction of any of the Criteria and concluded that it definitely does. She added that there are more than 4000 murals in the city, but that few of them would rise to level of importance of this one by Keith Haring, an internationally recognized figure. She opined that designating this mural would not open the way to designating every other local mural. She added that she would like to see more investigation done to determine the condition of the mural and how it may be preserved in a way that is hopefully not as damaging as the one described

by Mr. Feibush. The preservation of the mural should be discussed at the Historical Commission's meeting. She commented that there is no question whether the mural meets at least one Criterion and she observed that she is in favor if its designation but does wonder who is responsible for its preservation as there are two addresses listed in the nomination.

- Ms. Cooperman agreed about the question of the two addresses and asked if the staff had looked into the ownership of the party wall.
- Mr. Till explained that he and Mr. Farnham assert that, because it is a party wall, both property owners have an ownership interest in it.
- Ms. Cooperman commented that agreed. She noted that the concern that a designation in this case will set a precedent and lead to designating other murals should be discussed at the Historical Commission's meeting but asserted that designating this mural would not set a precedent.
- Mr. Farnham agreed and added that the Historical Commission may designate a historic resource if it satisfies one or more of the Criteria for Designation, but that it is never obligated to designate any resource. Designation is discretionary and, in the future, should another mural be proposed for designation, the Historical Commission would not be obligated to designate it simply because it had designated this one.
- Mr. Lavery commented that he was surprised to see that no other murals were already listed on the Philadelphia Register except the Maxfield Parish *Dream Garden* mosaic, which is located inside a building and has been threatened with removal. He added that a designation in this case will not lead to many other murals being designated. However, if the Historical Commission chooses not to designate this mural, that action may set a negative precedent. Mr. Lavery concluded that the Historical Commission has an obligation to designate this mural based on its importance and the broad public support for a designation.
- Ms. Barucco asked if the Committee wants to add any Criterion for Designation to the nomination.
 - Ms. Cooperman responded to an earlier suggestion of adding Criterion F to the nomination and explained that its intention is to recognize innovations to building materials and designs more than artistic design and that is best covered by Criterion E, which is already proposed in the nomination. She added that she thinks adding Criterion J, based on the importance the mural has to the community members, along with Criterion H would be appropriate, though they are not obligated to add any and the nomination does not need anything added to fulfill any requirements for designation.
 - Ms. Barucco suggested Criterion H because it is a site-specific work.
 - Ms. Milroy agreed about adding Criterion J, owing to the large volume of community support expressed today.
 - Ms. Barucco wondered if the wording of Criterion J intends to reflect heritage of the current or a historical community.
 - Ms. Cooperman commented that it could also extend to the heritage of the LGBTQ community.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- Keith Haring's mural, *We The Youth*, was painted on the exposed party wall between 2147 and 2149 Ellsworth Street in 1987.
- Keith Haring is widely recognized as an artist with international importance and *We*

The Youth is his only mural located in Pennsylvania.

- There is strong community support to designate the mural as a historic object.
- There are open questions related to the mural's condition, how it can or should be preserved, and whether designating it will promote its preservation.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- *We The Youth* has significant value as part of the heritage and culture of Philadelphia and for its association with Keith Haring, an internationally renowned American artist, satisfying Criterion A.
- *We The Youth* is a work by Keith Haring, an artist who significantly influenced the cultural development of Philadelphia, the United States, and the world, satisfying Criterion E.
- *We The Youth* is a unique and recognizable landmark in Point Breeze, satisfying Criterion H.
- *We The Youth* exemplifies the cultural heritage of both the Point Breeze and LGBTQ communities of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that *We the Youth*, the Keith Haring mural on the properties at 2147 and 2149 Ellsworth Street, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, H, and J.

ITEM: 2147 and 2149 Ellsworth St, mural					
MOTION: Satisfies Criteria A, E, H, and J					
MOVED BY: Milroy					
SECONDED BY: Laverty					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, Chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Debbie Miller					X
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				1

ADDRESS: 1800-04 and 1808-12 WILMOT ST

Name of Resource: Second Baptist Church of Frankford

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Second Baptist Church of Frankford

Nominator: Philadelphia Historical Commission

Staff Contact: Josh Schroeder, joshua.schroeder@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the Second Baptist Church of Frankford at 1800-04 and 1808-12 Wilmot Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, pursuant to Section 14-1004(1) of the Philadelphia Code. The nomination contends that the Second Baptist Church of Frankford satisfies Criterion J by exemplifying the cultural, social, and historical heritage of the community. The historic church building was constructed in 1924-25, but the congregation was first established as a mission church in 1869 to serve Frankford's

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION, 16 SEPTEMBER 2026

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Black Baptist population. As the congregation grew, Second Baptist became a leading institution in Frankford's Black community and played a leading role in civil rights and social justice efforts in Frankford.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1800-04 and 1808-12 Wilmot Street, the Second Baptist Church of Frankford, satisfies Criterion for Designation J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:29:44

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Schroeder presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Pastor Lawrence Shuford and Reverend Davitra Y. Smith of the Second Baptist Church of Frankford represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Milroy complimented the nomination and noted that the stained-glass windows were impressive.
 - Ms. Milroy and Ms. Barucco offered research advice to identify the window manufacturer.
- Ms. Barucco noted the nomination's emphasis on the importance of churches to the Black community.
- Mr. Lavery expressed his support for the nomination and noted his surprise at the small size of Frankford's Black population in the nineteenth century.
- Ms. Barucco asked why the writing on one of the stained-glass windows faced outward, rather than inward, and if it was visible on the inside.
 - Mr. Schroeder noted that both windows on the towers face out to serve as a sign for the church, though one is covered by a screen. He also noted that they are visible inside the tower.
- Mr. Lavery noted his appreciation for the church's role in preserving and utilizing the Wilmot School.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Gail McCormick of the Frankford Historical Society spoke in favor of the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The Second Baptist Church of Frankford has been an important institution in Frankford and for the neighborhood's Black population since 1869.
- The Second Baptist Church is an example of the historic importance of churches to the Black community in Philadelphia and the United States.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property at 1800-04 and 1808-12 Wilmot Street satisfies Criterion J as it reflects the cultural, political, social, and historical heritage of Frankford.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1800-04 and 1808-12 Wilmot Street, the Second Baptist Church of Frankford, satisfies Criterion for

Designation J.

ITEM: 1800-04 and 1808-12 Wilmot St					
MOTION: Satisfies Criterion for Designation J					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Lavery					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, Chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Debbie Miller					X
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				1

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:48:24

ACTION: The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 10:49 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and its advisory Committees are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the video recording for this meeting. The start time for each agenda item in the recording is noted.
- Application materials and staff overviews are available on the Historical Commission's website, www.phila.gov/historical.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

§14-1004. Designation.

(1) Criteria for Designation.

A building, complex of buildings, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for preservation if it:

- (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;
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation;
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park, or other distinctive area that should be

- preserved according to a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;
- (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; or
 - (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

DRAFT