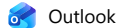


Public comment for 609-611 N 43rd Street



Fw: Please deny application for demolition

From preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Date Wed 10/21/2026 7:26 AM
To Allyson Mehley <Allyson.Mehley@Phila.gov>

From: Carol Diament
Sent: Tuesday, 20 October 2026 21:45:06
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Please deny application for demolition

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

I am writing as a Philadelphia resident to urge you to deny the application to demolish two buildings in the House of St. Michael and All Angels for Colored Crippled Children Historic District, at North 43rd and Wallace Streets in West Philadelphia.

This small campus tells a story found almost nowhere else in the country. Founded in 1886 by Sister Sarah Kirke, the House of St. Michael and All Angels cared for Black children with physical disabilities at a time when nearly every other institution turned them away. Children came from across the city and from as far away as Georgia and Virginia, and here they received surgery, nursing, schooling and a home. W. E. B. Du Bois listed the institution in The Philadelphia Negro in 1897, and in 1913 The Crisis called it "perhaps the only institution of its kind in the United States."

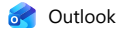
The district contains just five buildings. Demolishing two would erase 40 percent of one of only two African American historic districts in Philadelphia. The city has already lost too much of this history: the Home for Colored Children on Haverford Avenue, the St. Mary Magdalen Asylum in Germantown, the original Stephen Smith Home, and this institution's own buildings at 605 and 607 North 43rd Street are all gone. What remains on this corner is rare, and once it is torn down it can never be recovered.

I understand these buildings have suffered from years of neglect. But neglect should not be rewarded with permission to demolish. As a licensed real estate agent in Philadelphia, I have seen many buildings of this age and condition restored to good use, and these buildings deserve the same chance. Under Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the preservation ordinance, the Commission may approve demolition only if it is necessary in the public interest or if the buildings cannot reasonably be adapted for any use. I respectfully ask the Commission to hold the applicant to that standard and to require restoration instead.

Please preserve these buildings, and with them a chapter of Philadelphia's Black history that deserves to be seen and remembered.

Sincerely,

Carol Diament



Fw: Public comment - 609-611 N. 43rd Street

From preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Date Wed 10/21/2026 7:26 AM
To Allyson Mehley <Allyson.Mehley@Phila.gov>

From: Arielle Harris
Sent: Tuesday, 20 October 2026 20:11:57
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Public comment - 609-611 N. 43rd Street

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

To the Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and Architectural Committee:

I am writing to oppose 609 North 43rd Street LLC's application to demolish the handsome twin building at 609–11 North 43rd Street.

As documented in the University City Historical Society's 2023 nomination, this building is one of the few surviving remnants of the House of St. Michael and All Angels for Colored Crippled Children complex. It represents an important chapter in the care of Black children with disabilities at a time when racial discrimination restricted access to essential services. Its preservation matters to the history of both West Philadelphia and the nation.

The property was historically designated in 2023, before the current owner purchased it in 2026. Its historical significance and protected status was therefore apparent at the time of purchase. I was saddened to read in the engineer's reports that the property was acquired for redevelopment rather than preservation. Purchasing a historically designated property at sheriff's sale should not diminish the responsibility to preserve it or establish a justification for demolition.

I am also concerned about the owner's mailing address listed in OPA records: "5 Balanchine Ct Philadelphia, PA 19121." I could not locate this address using a map application. I ask the Commission to seek clarification so that the public has accurate contact information for the applicant.

Before permitting the permanent loss of this neighborhood asset, I urge the Commission to scrutinize the application's justification for demolition and whether reasonable preservation and rehabilitation alternatives have been fully explored.

These concerns are not exhaustive, but they underscore what is at stake. West Philadelphia should not lose another distinctive historic building to generic redevelopment, especially one with such significance to Black history. I respectfully urge you to deny the demolition application.

Sincerely,
Arielle Harris



Fw: 609-11 North 43rd Street

From preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Date Fri 10/23/2026 7:21 AM
To Allyson Mehley <Allyson.Mehley@Phila.gov>

From: Patrick Bayer <patrickbayer1220@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 22 October 2026 22:24:27
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: 609-11 North 43rd Street

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Sincerely,
Patrick Bayer
19143



Fw: Formal Opposition to Demolition – St. Michael and All Angels Historic District

From preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Date Fri 10/23/2026 9:24 AM

From: Bruce
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2026 9:22 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Formal Opposition to Demolition – St. Michael and All Angels Historic District

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed demolition of two historic buildings within the St. Michael and All Angels Historic District.

Philadelphia has a responsibility to preserve its history, particularly the contributions of African American communities whose institutions, accomplishments, and struggles have too often been overlooked or erased.

These buildings represent more than aging structures. They are part of the history of an institution that served Black children with disabilities at a time when educational and social opportunities were severely limited. Their historical significance is further underscored by their connection to W. E. B. Du Bois's The Philadelphia Negro.

The fact that these buildings have deteriorated should not automatically justify their demolition. Instead, we should be asking why historically significant properties were permitted to deteriorate and what opportunities exist to restore and repurpose them.

I strongly encourage the Commission to:

1. Deny the demolition request and prioritize the preservation of these historically significant structures.
2. Require a thorough evaluation of restoration and adaptive reuse alternatives before considering demolition.
3. Encourage collaboration among preservation organizations, community stakeholders, developers, and public agencies to identify viable funding and restoration opportunities.
4. Ensure that residents and organizations connected to Philadelphia's African American heritage have a meaningful voice in decisions affecting these properties.

As someone actively involved in community development and programs serving Philadelphia residents across generations, I understand the importance of creating opportunities for progress. However, progress should not require us to sacrifice the history that helped shape our city.

Philadelphia has demonstrated that historic buildings can be transformed into vibrant spaces that serve contemporary needs while preserving their architectural and cultural significance.

Once these buildings are demolished, their history cannot be reconstructed simply by installing a historical marker.

I urge the Philadelphia Historical Commission to protect these properties and support a solution that honors their history while allowing them to serve future generations.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request that this letter be entered into the public record concerning the proposed demolition.

Sincerely,

Bruce Goodman
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Fw: Formal Opposition to Demolition – St. Michael and All Angels Historic District

From preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Date Fri 10/23/2026 9:24 AM

From: Linda Collins
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2026 9:21 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Formal Opposition to Demolition – St. Michael and All Angels Historic District

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Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request that this letter be entered into the public record concerning the proposed demolition.

Sincerely,

Linda Collins
Founder & Director
Postpartum4Ever
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Fw: Request

From preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Date Thu 10/22/2026 9:45 AM

From: Krista Malott <
Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2026 9:43 AM
To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>
Subject: Request

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Hello, I am writing in opposition to the request to demolish parts of the historically designated properties at 609-611 N. 43rd Street, formerly the House of St. Michael and All Angels for Colored Cripple Children. Such history, if preserved and shared with our many residents and tourists, can bring more foot traffic and passionate history lovers to our city, as we are known for our historical buildings, and this is a rare one. Historical points are below. Thank you so much for making our city thrive and shine in a time when so much of our history is being wiped out in the name of a soulless and very ugly (and not tourist-friendly) value of 'progress'. --Krista Malott, a Philly-adjacent resident who has many family and friends who come to see Philly's history regularly.

The historic district is a rare surviving historic campus of an institution that served the African American community in late nineteenth and twentieth century Philadelphia. It interprets West Philly as the site of formidable medical, humane, and therapeutic institutions where hospitals, benevolent societies, and group homes shared the landscape with graceful suburban houses in the former Blockley Township.

W. E. B. DuBois lists the House of St. Michael and All Angels as one of the Philadelphia institutions serving African Americans in his 1897 book The Philadelphia Negro.

Sent from [Outlook](#)



UCHS
UNIVERSITY CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October 25, 2026

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA

RE: 609-611 N. 43rd Street Demolition Permit

Dear Architectural Committee,

In 2023, the University City Historical Society nominated the House of St. Michael and All Angels for Colored Cripple Children Historic District to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. We sought designation to protect one of the most significant surviving institutions in West Philadelphia from the nineteenth century. It was dedicated to health care for handicapped Black children and called out by name by W.E.B. DuBois in his seminal 1897 book, *The Philadelphia Negro*.

The historic district was found to meet two criteria. The first was that it has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; in our opinion, the site could likely be a National Historic Landmark. The district was also found to exemplify the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

UCHS has as a mission to advocate for the architectural and cultural history of West Philadelphia. Furthermore, we believe: Black Lives Matter. Black Stories Matter. Black History Matters.

The House of St. Michael and All Angels Historic District was the culmination of our effort to protect a site of Black history in perpetuity. We worked closely and respectfully with the owners at the time to ensure survival of the c.1866 Italianate villas that interpret late Victorian era benevolent institutions specific to the lives of Black Philadelphians. Two other neighboring institutions for African Americans have since been demolished. This district must remain intact.

UCHS supports and joins the Historical Commission's staff recommendation to deny the demolition permit for 609-611 N. 43rd Street. The building's destiny should be tied to stewardship that engages with proper structural evaluation and architectural treatments that adhere to the Period of Significance, not a half-baked, street view estimation that aligns with developer outcomes instead of proper preservation practices.

Thank you to the Architecture Committee for their consideration of our position.

Yours truly,

Amy Lambert
Board President

George Poulin, AIA
3502 Hamilton St
Philadelphia, PA 19104

October 25, 2026

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
preservation@phila.gov

Dear Members of the Philadelphia Historical Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed demolition of 609-11 N 43rd Street, an important contributing building within the House of St. Michael and All Angels for Colored Cripple Children Historic District.

The application fails to meet the standard required to necessitate demolition. Statements provided within application such as the presence of squatters or the parcel's CMX-2 zoning have absolutely zero bearing on the historic integrity of the property. The issues cited in the reports are all observable from the exterior of the building and would have been known when the current owner purchased the historically designated property in February of 2026. A deteriorating cornice, spalling brick, or overgrown vegetation are typical issues of older properties with deferred maintenance. The lack of exploratory probes and statement by the professional engineer noting "This report does not constitute a comprehensive structural analysis" indicate that alternative solutions were not thoroughly explored.

If development is the goal, 609-11 N 43rd would make a spectacular centerpiece of a larger development. According to Atlas, the parcel is 14,842 sq ft. This is sizable by most standards and allows both for the stabilization of the existing structure, and a sizable addition. Referencing historic photos, we can see that restoring the porch and returning the windows to their original sizes would positively enhance the appearance of the building.

In short, the application for demolition represents both a lack of thoroughness and a lack of vision. Philadelphia deserves better.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Poulin", written in a cursive style.

George Poulin