

**THE MINUTES OF THE 693RD STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 8 MAY 2020
REMOTE MEETING ON WEBEX
ROBERT THOMAS, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:00:00

Mr. Thomas, the chair, called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and announced the presence of a quorum. The following Commissioners joined him:

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Comment
Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair	X		
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Committee on Historic Designation Chair	X		
Kelly Edwards, MUP	X		
Steven Hartner (Department of Public Property)	X		
Labaron Lenard-Palmer (Dept. of Planning & Development)	X		
Josh Lippert (Department of Licenses & Inspections)	X		
Melissa Long (Division of Housing & Community Development)	X		
John Mattioni, Esq.	X		
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Architectural Committee Chair	X		
Jessica Sánchez, Esq. (City Council President)	X		
H. Ahada Stanford, Ph.D. (Commerce Department)	X		
Betty Turner, MA, Vice Chair	X		
Kimberly Washington, Esq.	X		

* Owing to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, all Commissioners, staff, applicants, and public attendees participated in the meeting remotely via Cisco Webex video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D., Executive Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner I
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department
Megan Cross Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Alex Balloon
Kathleen Trinh
James Connors
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Eric Leighton
Justin Coleman
Jack Zhao
Suzanna Barucco
Rudy D'Alessandro
Elizabeth Milroy
David Gest, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Dennis Carlisle
Danie Kayser
Neil Sklaroff, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Sabrina Reissman
Michelle Schmitt
Susan Wetherwill
David Fecteau
J.M. Duffin
Justin Coleman
Michael Alhadad
Stuart Rosenberg, SGRA
Jason Greenspon
Ralph Marano
Oscar Beisert
Martha Cross

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, 691ST STATED MEETING, 13 MARCH 2020

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:08:52

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners if they had any additions or corrections to the minutes of the preceding meeting of the Historical Commission, the 691st Stated Meeting, held 13 March 2020. None were offered.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Ms. Edwards moved to adopt the minutes of the 691st Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 13 March 2020. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: Minutes, 691st Stated Meeting					
MOTION: Adoption					
MOVED BY: Edwards					
SECONDED BY: Mattioni					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

CONTINUANCE REQUESTS

ADDRESS: 1132 MARLBOROUGH ST

Name of Resource: Jacob Souder House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Adam and Jeremy Margent

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1132 Marlborough Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criterion for Designation J. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the Jacob Souder house, a two-and-a-half-story wooden house constructed c. 1810, represents one of the few surviving frame buildings typical of Fishtown's foundational development.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1132 Marlborough Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1132 Marlborough Street satisfies Criteria for Designation I and J.

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:12:33

DISCUSSION: Mr. Thomas presented the continuance request and asked if any Commissioners or members of the audience wished to comment. No one offered comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to continue the review of the nomination of 1132 Marlborough Street to the June 2020 meeting of the Historical Commission. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: 1132 MARLBOROUGH ST MOTION: Continue review to June 2020 PHC mtg MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Edwards					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

ADDRESS: 1801-03 N HOWARD ST

Name of Resource: The Star Carpet Mills

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Joseph Laragione

Nominator: Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller @phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1801-03 N. Howard Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Star Carpet Mills complex satisfies Criteria for Designation G and J. Under Criterion G, the nomination argues that the complex was “part of and related to a distinctive industrial area and block which should be preserved for its ties to Philadelphia’s manufacturing history, exemplifying the economic heritage of Kensington and Philadelphia.” Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that Star Carpet Mills represents an important and intact surviving example of a nineteenth-century industrial complex with an integrated dye house where ingrain carpets were manufactured, and contributes to the industrial history that defines the Kensington neighborhood.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1801-03 N. Howard Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J, but not G. Criterion G is intended to facilitate the designation of groups of discrete buildings that together form an ensemble, like rowhouses around a city square; it is not intended to facilitate the designation of sites related to broader neighborhood themes like textiles in Kensington or banking in Center City.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1801-03

N. Howard Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J, and that the property should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:15:20

DISCUSSION: Mr. Thomas presented the continuance request and asked if any Commissioners or members of the audience wished to comment. No one offered comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to continue the review of the nomination of 1801-03 N. Howard Street to the August 2020 meeting of the Historical Commission. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Mattioni recused.

ITEM: 1801-03 N HOWARD ST					
MOTION: Continue review to August 2020 PHC mtg					
MOVED BY: Cooperman					
SECONDED BY: Edwards					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni				X	
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	12			1	

ADDRESS: 1533-39 N 7TH ST

Name of Resource: Trinity Reformed Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 99 Real Estate LLC

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1533-39 N. 7th Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Trinity Reformed Church satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and J. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the church exemplifies the “inexpensive, but expressive” form of Gothic ecclesiastical architecture. Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that the church was designed by influential Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan, who included an illustration of the

building in his 1868 publication of *The Architectural Review and American Builders' Journal*. The nomination further argues that the modest but expressive design reflects the cultural, economic, and social heritage of Philadelphia's working-to-middle-class residents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1533-39 N. 7th Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that 1533-39 N. 7th Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and J, and that the property should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:17:22

DISCUSSION: Mr. Thomas presented the continuance request and asked if any Commissioners or members of the audience wished to comment. No one offered comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to continue the review of the nomination of 1533-39 N. 7th Street to the August 2020 meeting of the Historical Commission. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: 1533-39 N 7th ST					
MOTION: Continue review to the August 2020 PHC mtg					
MOVED BY: Cooperman					
SECONDED BY: Edwards					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

ADDRESS: 123-29 CHESTNUT ST

Proposal: Install metal entry arch and exterior lighting

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: 123-29 Chestnut Street Associates

Applicant: Gerry Gutierrez, Group G LLC

History: 1903; Corn Exchange National Bank; Newman, Woodman & Harris, architects; alterations/additions, Horace Trumbauer, 1912, 1929, 1931

Individual Designation: 10/7/1976

District Designation: Old City Historic District, Significant, 12/12/2003

Preservation Easement: Yes

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to create a main entrance for the offices at 123 Chestnut Street. The building is occupied retail and offices uses. The entrance to the upper business floors is located on 2nd Street and is the focus of this application. The intent of the proposed design is to direct attention to this primary entry point for visitors and delivery people.

The proposed construction would take place at the sidewalk area only. Except the restoration of the doors and molding, the proposed work would not alter the historic fabric.

SCOPE OF WORK

- Construct limestone base with card access reader.
- Restore wood entry doors.
- Install three stainless steel tube arches.
- Install bollards in sidewalk.
- Install bluestone paving in the sidewalk area near entrance with stainless steel lettering embedded into the bluestone.
- Install exterior lighting.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
 - The proposed work would not remove distinctive materials or alter character-defining features. It would have minimal impact to the spaces and spatial relationships of the historic property, satisfying Standard 2.
- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed work including the paving elements, bollards, and limestone base is differentiated from but compatible with the historic building, satisfying Standard 9.
 - Additional information about the lighting design and scheme, materials, and detailing of the vertical elements should be provided to determine if the proposed work is compatible with the architectural features of the historic building.

- *Standard 10: New additions and adjacent construction or related new construction will be undertaken in a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*
 - The proposed work is fully reversible. Since the construction is focused on the sidewalk area, if it were removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired, satisfying Standard 10.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, provided the design of the vertical tube arches and exterior lighting is further developed to ensure compatibility with the historic building and district, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 2, 9, and 10.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2 and 9.

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:19:33

DISCUSSION: Mr. Thomas presented the continuance request and asked if any Commissioners or members of the audience wished to comment. No one offered comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to continue the review of the application for 123-29 Chestnut Street to the first in-person meeting of the Historical Commission after the Covid-19 shutdown. Ms. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: 123-29 CHESTNUT ST					
MOTION: Continue review to the first in-person PHC mtg after shutdown					
Moved BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Edwards					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

ADDRESS: 1045-49 SARAH ST

Name of Resource: Otis Elevator Company Boiler and Engine House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Antal Group Inc.

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1045-29 Sarah Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former boiler and engine house of the Otis Elevator Company, built in 1904, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, G, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that the property is significant in the development of Fishtown/Kensington as part of the Morse Elevator Works and the Otis Elevator Company. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the building is representative of industrial power plant design of the early twentieth century. Under Criterion G, the nomination argues that the building is part of the earliest, extent, coherent industrial complexes in Fishtown, but does not propose to designate the complex as a district. Many of the other properties associated with the former Morse and Otis Elevator Companies were individually designated in 2015 and 2016.

The Committee on Historic Designation reviewed this nomination and recommended that the property satisfies Criteria D and J. The owner, who did not attend the Committee's review, requested that the Historical Commission remand the nomination to the Committee to provide him with an opportunity to participate in the review. The Commission granted the request, sending the nomination back to the Committee.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1045-49 Sarah Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and J, but not Criterion G.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION, MARCH 2019: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J.

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:23:11

DISCUSSION: Mr. Thomas presented the continuance request and asked if any Commissioners or members of the audience wished to comment. No one offered comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to continue the review of the nomination for 1045-49 Sarah Street to the first in-person meeting of the Historical Commission after the COVID-19 shutdown. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: 1045-49 Sarah Street MOTION: Continue review to the first in-person PHC mtg MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Mattioni					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

ADDRESS: 5250 UNRUH AVE

Name of Resource: Tacony Worsted Mills

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 5250 Unruh Avenue Assoc.

Nominator: Alexander Balloon, Tacony Community Development Corp.

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5250 Unruh Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the Tacony Worsted Mills is an early and intact example of an industrial complex designed by Walter Harvey Geissinger, a prolific architect who designed several commercial and industrial buildings throughout Philadelphia. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the Tacony Worsted Mills was considered locally and nationally to be one of the finest and largest worsted yarn mills of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5250 Unruh Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5250 Unruh Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J.

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:24:55

DISCUSSION: Mr. Thomas presented the continuance request and asked if any Commissioners or members of the audience wished to comment. No one offered comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to continue the review of the nomination for 5250 Unruh Avenue to the first in-person meeting of the Historical Commission after the COVID-19 shutdown. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: 5250 Unruh Avenue					
MOTION: Continue review to the first in-person PHC mtg					
MOVED BY: Cooperman					
SECONDED BY: Mattioni					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

JEWELERS' ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT

Proposed Action: Designation

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the Jewelers' Row Historic District and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The proposed district is located on Sansom Street primarily between S. 7th and S. 8th Street, and along a portion of S. 8th Street between Chestnut and Walnut Streets. The nomination contends that the proposed district, which is composed of 57 buildings constructed between 1800 and 2015, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, G, H and J.

Under Criteria A and J, the nomination states that as the site of Carstairs Row, Printers' Row, and Jewelers' Row, the district has significant character, interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of Philadelphia and exemplifies the community's cultural, economic, and historical heritage. In support of Criteria C and D, the nomination asserts that the architectural resources of Jewelers' Row span more than two hundred years and include significant examples of multiple building types and architectural styles important to Philadelphia's history, including (but not limited to) Federal rowhouses, Victorian and early 20th-century commercial lofts, and Depression-era and postwar commercial fronts. The district includes surviving works by a number of architects whose careers have significantly influenced the architectural development of the City, including Thomas Carstairs,

Collins & Autenrieth, Theophilus P. Chandler, Frank T. Watson, Louis Magaziner, and possibly even Frank Furness, supporting an argument for Criterion E. Furthermore, under Criteria H and G, the nomination contends that owing to its unique location along a block of Sansom Street offset from Center City's otherwise regular grid and distinguished by an iconic and distinctive streetscape, the district represents an established and familiar visual feature of Philadelphia and constitutes a distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural and architectural motif.

Since the Historical Commission notified property owners of its intent to consider the historic district, five buildings in the proposed district have been completely demolished. The property owners of 702, 704, 706, and 710 Sansom Street and 128 S. 7th Street submitted demolition permit applications to the Department of Licenses & Inspections prior to the start of the Historical Commission's jurisdiction, vesting their rights in the permits. The Historical Commission did not have the authority to review the demolition permit applications. The demolition permits were issued and the buildings were demolished in accordance with the law. The properties are now vacant lots.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Jewelers' Row Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, G, H and J. The staff recommends updating 113-15 S. 8th Street as a non-contributing addition to 731 Sansom Street. The staff recommends categorizing all buildings as Significant, Contributing or Non-Contributing without separate determinations for façades and storefronts. The staff recommends classifying 702, 704, 706, and 710 Sansom Street and 128 S. 7th Street as non-contributing because they are vacant lots.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the Jewelers' Row Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, H and J; all buildings should be classified as Significant, Contributing or Non-Contributing, without separate sub-classifications for façades and storefronts; and 113-15 S. 8th Street should be classified as a Non-contributing addition to 731 Sansom Street.

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:28:20

DISCUSSION: Mr. Thomas presented the continuance request and asked if any Commissioners or members of the audience wished to comment. No one offered comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to continue the review of the nomination of the Jewelers' Row Historic District to the first in-person meeting of the Historical Commission after the COVID-19 shutdown. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: JEWELERS' ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT MOTION: Continue review to first in-person PHC mtg MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Mattioni					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

OLD BUSINESS

ADDRESS: 737 WALNUT ST

Proposal: Construct six-story building with penthouse and decks

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Sarah Investment LLC

Applicant: Stuart Rosenberg, Stuart G. Rosenberg Architects, P.C.

History: 1955

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Society Hill Historic District, Non-contributing, 3/10/1999

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

BACKGROUND:

This application proposes to construct a six-story plus penthouse mixed-use building on the site of a non-contributing building in the Society Hill Historic District. The staff of the Historical Commission approved the demolition of the non-contributing building in October 2019. The north side of the block, where this site is situated, consists entirely of three and four-story historic buildings clad in red brick, brownstone, stucco, and other masonry. The proposed building's façade on Walnut Street features large industrial-style windows and metal panels. The east and west party walls, which would rise three stories higher than the adjacent historic buildings, would be clad in patterned Hardie Board panels.

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Construct six-story mixed-use building with commercial ground floor and set-back seventh floor penthouse.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines include:

- *Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportions and massing to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
 - The proposed building is differentiated from the old, but is incompatible with the historic context of this block and the historic district in terms of materials, features, size, scale, proportions, and massing.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9.

START TIME IN WEBEX RECORDING: 00:31:10

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Baron presented the application to the Historical Commission.
- Architect Stuart Rosenberg and developer Michael Alhadad represented the application.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thomas recused, owing to his firm's involvement as a consultant to the client. Ms. Turner assumed the chair.
- Mr. Rosenberg stated that he originally proposed a modern steel and glass structure, but after discussing the application with the staff and Architectural Committee and presenting to the Society Hill Civic Association, he made some major modifications. He added that the design indicates his intent to fill a gap within the streetscape. He noted that this part of the city has a wonderful collection of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century architecture, serving as a central business district for centuries. Over that period of time, he continued, the three- and four-story residential streetscape changed dramatically, unlike other sections of Washington Square and Society Hill where all buildings were predominantly two- to four-story residences. Mr. Rosenberg contended that, in this particular part of the city, the buildings exhibit a wide variety of architectural styles and sizes, which makes it such a rich and wonderful place. He noted in the rendering the Curtis Building is visible in the background and stands at nearly 10 stories in height. Across the street from this property, he added, is the St. James, which is over 300 feet in height. He then described the nearby University of Pennsylvania medical office facility. Directly behind 737 Walnut Street, he continued, is a seven-story historic building nominated as part of the Jewelers' Row Historic District. He contended that there is precedent for different types, styles, and sizes of architecture within the site's immediate context. He argued that his design fits in with the variety of scales and styles and that he is proposing high-quality materials, such as precast stone for the storefront, with the intent to have ground-floor retail like other buildings in the neighborhood. Above, he continued, there would be three stories of brick with punched window openings to reflect the types of windows in the adjoining residential buildings to the east. He noted that above the brick would be a lighter material where the building would be stepped

back to minimize the impact from the street. He contended that the proposed building would have very little impact on the context.

- Mr. Alhadad explained that he has completed several similar projects throughout the city, including projects on Walnut Street and Green Street. He noted that he has attempted to create a historic look for the building and asked that the Historical Commission consider the new design compared to the existing condition of the site.
- Mr. Rosenberg reiterated that this project is a good opportunity to replace the one-story nondescript building in a prominent location with an appropriate well-designed building of the right scale and character.
- Mr. McCoubrey stated that the Architectural Committee has not reviewed the revised design and asked that it be remanded to the Committee. He added that the selection of materials on the street façade reflect the staff and Committee's comments; however, he argued that the mass of the building is large and the setbacks are minimal. In the view from 8th Street, he continued, the party wall looms significantly over the adjacent building. He added that the application failed to include a similar view looking west and noted that the adjacent building is three stories in height with a gable roof and dormer. He commented that the party wall would loom over that building as well. He concluded that he agrees with the staff's comments that the size is too large and the setbacks need to be increased significantly to allow the building to fit more comfortably within the block.
- Ms. Cooperman agreed with Mr. McCoubrey's comments, adding that the Commission would greatly benefit from a review by the Architectural Committee. She noted that the pieces from the application do not allow the Commission to provide a decision at this time. She explained that, while there are some much larger buildings in the general area, the scale of this building substantially exceeds the scale of the eighteenth-century buildings nearby. She argued that one can still understand the scale of Sansom Row, despite the alterations to the buildings, noting that this building would be a substantial deviation from that scale, especially when considering the overall scale of such an important row. She contended that the fact that there are taller buildings in the vicinity does not justify such a change of scale being appropriate in this row.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia stated that the Architectural Committee reviewed the previous design proposal at its February meeting. The revised design was submitted after the Architectural Committee meeting. He questioned whether the most appropriate course of action would be to remand the new design back to the Architectural Committee for a detailed review rather than taking action today based on a design that many are seeing for the first time.
- Oscar Beisert stated that the proposed design is a better attempt to fit into the streetscape than many others in recent years, though he added that it could be improved.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Historical Commission found that:

- Benjamin Latrobe designed Sansom Row, a group of buildings constructed in 1799 that are significant as the first block of rowhouses in the city.
- The application as submitted lacks the detail necessary to allow the Commission to make an informed decision.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- The size of the party walls overwhelms the adjacent buildings and the setbacks are too minimal. The proposed design is incompatible in size, scale, proportion, and massing and does not satisfy Standard 9. Although larger buildings exist in the surrounding context, any new construction at this site should be compatible in height, massing, and proportion with Sansom Row.

Action: Mr. McCoubrey moved to recommend denial, pursuant to Standard 9, with the suggestion that the revised application be submitted for review by the Architectural Committee. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 11 to 1. Mr. Mattioni dissented. Mr. Thomas recused.

ITEM: 737 Walnut Street					
MOTION: Denial					
MOVED BY: McCoubrey					
SECONDED BY: Cooperman					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair				X	
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni		X			
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	11	1		1	

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:56:59

ACTION: At 10:16 a.m., Mr. Mattioni moved to adjourn. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ITEM: Adjournment					
MOTION: Adjourn					
MOVED BY: Mattioni					
SECONDED BY: Turner					
VOTE					
Commissioner	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Thomas, Chair	X				
Cooperman	X				
Edwards	X				
Hartner (DPP)	X				
Lenard-Palmer (DPD)	X				
Lippert (L&I)	X				
Long (DHCD)	X				
Mattioni	X				
McCoubrey	X				
Sánchez (Council)	X				
Stanford (Commerce)	X				
Turner, Vice Chair	X				
Washington	X				
Total	13				

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Philadelphia Historical Commission 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.