

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

**21 APRIL 2021, 9:30 A.M.
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 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		
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.	X		

* Owing to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, all Committee members, staff, and public attendees participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Alex Balloon
S. Wetherill
Sandi Lichtman
Matthew Dering
Jay Farrell
Ashley Maass
Jennifer Robinson, Preservation Alliance
Hadiya Bynoe-Seabron
J M Duffin
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance
Laura Mark
Harrison Haas, Esq., Cozen O'Connor
Paul Boni, Society Hill Civic Association
Duncan Grant

Jackie Nunery
Richard Thom
Shay Iraggi
Jim Dougherty
Kevin Block
Kevin Greenberg, Esq.
Dennis George, Esq., Arangio & George, LLP
Aaron Forsman
Lesley Seitchik
Nathan Farris, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Libbie Hawes
Nancy Pontone
David Traub, Save Our Sites
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society
Barbara Jaffe
Carolyn Campbell, Studio CCLA
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
Adrian Trevisan
Li Zhao
Steven Peitzman
Ava McGee
Howard Langer
Abraham Calhoun
Eugene Desyatnik
Ralph Marano
Sam Katz
Chris Peterson
Brendan Kelly
Max Matthews

FRENCH VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Proposed Action: Designation; Request for continuance to October 2021 CHD Mtg

Property Owner: Various

Nominator: Historical Commission staff

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate a historic district comprised of 24 properties along Emlen and Huron Streets and Gate, Elbow, and E. Allens Lanes in the West Mount Airy section of Philadelphia. The district also includes six gas street lights, three masonry gates, and a stone plaque. All 24 properties are classified as contributing. The nomination argues that the district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the district is significant for its connection to the Henry Houston estate and for George S. Woodward's Philadelphia contribution to the national trend in developing utopian planned suburbs. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues that the development of French Village reflects the environment of the 1920s and '30s era of suburban planning and European Revival architecture and, more specifically, the French Normal Revival style. Under Criterion E, the nomination notes that significant Philadelphia architects, including Robert Rhodes McGoodwin, H. Louis Duhring, Willing, Sims & Talbutt, Mellor & Meigs, and Tilden, Register & Pepper, designed the district's buildings. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends

that the French Village suburban plan intersects with the wider developing Mount Airy community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the proposed district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:9:20

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farnham explained that the owners of the French Village properties met as a group with Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia. At the end of the meeting, he continued, the owners decided as a group to request a continuance to allow time for a meeting with the Historical Commission's staff to discuss designation and permit review processes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue the review of the nomination for the French Village Historic District to the October 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting.

ITEM: French Village Historic District					
MOTION: Continue to October 2021 CHD meeting					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Barucco					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

ADDRESS: 1006 BAINBRIDGE ST

Name of Resource: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Jay Stolzenberg

Nominator: Historical Commission staff

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1006 Bainbridge Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criterion for Designation A, for its association with the life of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, who owned the property from 1871 until her death in 1911. Frances E. W. Harper achieved acclaim as a reformer as well as a literary figure among African Americans. Harper's achievements as a reformer in the anti-slavery movement, women's rights movement, temperance movement, and post-Civil War civil rights movement spanned many decades and many states. Her poetry and essays were numerous and told of the Black female experience, advocating for equal rights, job opportunities, and education for the Black community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1006 Bainbridge Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:16:05

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman commented that 1006 Bainbridge Street is a property that is extremely worthy of historic designation owing to its association with Frances Ellen Watkins Harper.
- Mr. Cohen and Ms. Milroy supported the designation and commented that the nomination was well-researched.
- The Committee members thanked Ms. Chantry for authoring the nomination.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Ralph Marano, representing the Bella Vista Neighbors Association Preservation Committee, spoke in support of the nomination.
- Oscar Beisert, representing the Keeping Society, spoke in support of the nomination.
- Jim Duffin spoke in support of the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1006 Bainbridge Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

ITEM: 1006 Bainbridge St.

MOTION: Designate; Criterion A

MOVED BY: Barucco

SECONDED BY: Laverty

VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

ADDRESS: 1615 WALNUT ST

Name of Resource: The Clarke & Sarah Merchant House

Proposed Action: Designation; Request to withdraw nomination

Property Owner: Honey Nuts LLC

Nominator: Center City Residents' Association

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1615 Walnut Street, located in Center City, as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Historically known as the Clarke and Sarah Merchant House, it was constructed in 1832 with substantial alterations completed in 1892 and 1911. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the building is associated with the life of Clarke Merchant, whose career as a manufacturer and merchant of metal and tin-plate architectural and building materials made a significant impact on the built environment of Philadelphia and beyond. The nomination further contends that the building qualifies under Criterion E, owing to the alterations and addition completed in 1892 by prominent Philadelphia architect Addison Hutton. Finally, the nomination asserts that the building is significant under Criterion J because it is a rare surviving urban mansion on a principal street that was once home to expensive residences but is now lined with purpose-built commercial structures. The period of significance begins in 1892, when the Merchant family purchased the property and engaged architect Addison Hutton, and ends in 1931, when the building was sold out of the Merchant family.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1615 Walnut Street, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:24:00

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the request to withdraw the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society represented the nomination on behalf of the Center City Residents Association.
- Attorney Nathan Farris represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farham explained that Tim Kerner, on behalf of the nominator, the Center City Residents Association, had been in communication with the staff of the Historical Commission regarding the request to withdraw the nomination.
- Mr. Beisert said that he understood the owner was considering the possibility of an easement. He stated that he would let the owner's attorney speak to the details of it.
- Mr. Farris explained that his client had a letter of intent with the Preservation Alliance and the Center City Residents Association to donate a façade easement that would preserve all of the significant features and would also offer a financial benefit to the owner.
- Patrick Grossi spoke on behalf of the Preservation Alliance and confirmed they were in the process of finalizing the donation of a façade easement with the owner.
- Ms. Cooperman requested to hear from the other members of the Committee on Historic Designation about whether they wanted to consider the withdrawal request or whether they wanted to consider the merits of the nomination.
- Mr. Cohen asked whether a letter of intent was a binding agreement.
 - Mr. Farris responded that the letter of intent was binding is so far as it meant they intended to enter into an agreement with the Preservation Alliance. He added that his client had also signed an agreement with the Center City Residents Association that no changes would be made to the exterior of the building during the negotiation period regarding the terms of the easement. Mr. Farris said that, should the Committee on Historic Designation decide to consider the merits of the nomination, it should hold that review at a future meeting so that the Historical Commission would have an opportunity to review the current request for the withdrawal.
- Ms. Cooperman reminded Mr. Farris that the Committee is an advisory body to the Historical Commission and its recommendation would be regarding the application of the Criteria for Designation. She said it would be up to the Historical Commission to decide whether to consider their recommendation about the merits of the nomination or grant the withdrawal.
 - Mr. Farris said that he was not prepared to respond to the merits of the nomination but would like the opportunity to do so. He reiterated his request for the review of the merits of the nomination to be postponed to a future meeting.
- Ms. Milroy remarked that it was a very substantive nomination, and the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places exists as a tool to help people understand the history of Philadelphia's built environment. She stated that when nominations were prepared they should be made accessible to the public. Ms. Milroy said that she wanted to have a conversation about the merits of the nomination and the possible designation of the property.
- Ms. Barucco explained that, if the subject property was listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, it would reduce the value of the easement.
- Ms. Milroy asked if the nomination was withdrawn, would there be a future opportunity for it to be reviewed and for the subject property to be designated by the Historical Commission.
- Ms. Barucco said that she previously sat on the easement committee of the Preservation Alliance and so she had some insight into the review process. Ms. Barucco stated that because the easement process was underway, it had likely instigated the withdrawal request. She suggested that, should the easement not be

- finalized, the nominator would likely resubmit the nomination for consideration so the building could be designated.
- Ms. Cooperman suggested that they make a recommendation that the withdrawal request be granted only once the easement agreement had been finalized by all parties so that the protection of the building was guaranteed. She added that this recommendation could be made on the condition that, should the easement not be finalized for any reason, the nomination would be sent back to the Historical Commission for consideration.
 - Ms. Barucco asked whether they could postpone making a recommendation.
 - Ms. Cooperman said that the Committee always makes a recommendation, and in this matter the question is whether their recommendation should be about the merits of the nomination or the timing of the withdrawal request.
 - Mr. Cohen commented that he saw three issues: the protection of the building, the potential for the designation to reduce the value of the easement, and the significance of the research and documentation that was captured in the nomination. Mr. Cohen asked if there was any way for the research to be included in the records of the Historical Commission if the building was not designated.
 - Ms. Cooperman said that if the Historical Commission declined to designate the subject property, the nomination would still be included in the Historical Commission's files.
 - Mr. Lavery asked whether the Committee on Historic Designation could consider the merits of the nomination and, assuming the subject property was found worthy of designation, they could submit that recommendation to the Historical Commission and leave the decision about the withdrawal up to them.
 - Ms. Cooperman reminded Mr. Lavery that Mr. Farris stated that he was not prepared to discuss the merits of the nomination at their current meeting and had requested that any consideration of the worthiness of designation be postponed to a later date.
 - Mr. Lavery remarked that the nomination did an excellent job of documenting a complicated building with architectural and cultural significance. He also acknowledged the cooperation of the property owner and the Center City Residents Association in working together to find a solution that benefited all parties. Mr. Lavery said that if the nominators agreed, the Athenaeum of Philadelphia would be happy to keep a copy of the nomination in its files so it was accessible to researchers.
 - Ms. Barucco commented that she thought the ordinance was clear about the Historical Commission's role, which was to preserve Philadelphia's built heritage, and whether it was done through listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places or through a façade easement, the mission was fulfilled either way. Ms. Barucco said they should recommend a continuance of the review in order to allow the easement agreement to be finalized.
 - Mr. Farnham clarified that regardless of whatever action is taken by the Historical Commission regarding a nomination, the nomination becomes a part of the office's records. He also reminded the members about some of the digital archiving developments happening at the Department of Planning and Development, all of which will ultimately increase public access to the Historical Commission's records over time. Mr. Farnham said that he could not recall an instance where the Committee members themselves requested that an item be continued; however, as an advisory body, they could make whatever recommendation they deemed most appropriate.

- Jennifer Robinson of the Preservation Alliance spoke about the financial benefits of the easement to the property owner.
- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance said that they expected the easement agreement to be finalized before the end of the calendar year. Mr. Steinke also suggested that there was no reason the nomination could not be resubmitted at a future date once the easement agreement was finalized and have the Historical Commission consider the property for designation at that point.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Steven Peitzman commented that he though he understood the importance of incentivizing preservation through programs such as façade easements, the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places was the City's official record for acknowledging architecturally or historically significant buildings.
- Jim Duffin suggested the committee members could recommend a "withdrawal without prejudice" so that it was clear that they were not commenting on the merits of the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation recommended that the Historical Commission allow for the withdrawal of the nomination for the property at 1615 Walnut Street without prejudice.

ITEM: 1615 Walnut St MOTION: Withdrawal without prejudice MOVED BY: Lavery SECONDED BY: Barucco					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

ADDRESS: 935 S 3RD ST

Proposed Action: Rescind Individual Designation

Property Owner: Queen Village Home Rescue

Applicant: Richard W. Thom

Individual Designation: 5/31/1966

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This request proposes to rescind the designation and remove the property at 935 S. 3rd Street from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property was designated on 31 May 1966. The Historical Values Committee, the predecessor of the Committee on Historic Designation, met on 31 May 1966 and recommended in favor of designating 935 S. 3rd Street as well as numerous other properties in the Southwark section of the city. The Historical

Commission met later that day and adopted the recommendations of the Committee, designating the property at 935 S. 3rd Street. The current preservation ordinance, which went into effect in 1985, explicitly confirmed the designations of all properties under the prior preservation ordinance. The ordinance under which this property was designated did not enumerate Criteria for Designation, as does the current ordinance. Also, nominations were not used at the time of this designation; they came into use in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Section 5.14.b.1 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations stipulates that the Historical Commission may rescind the designation of a property and remove it from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places if:

- a. the resource has ceased to satisfy any Criteria for Designation because the qualities that caused its original entry have been lost or destroyed;
- b. additional information shows that the resource does not satisfy one or more Criteria for Designation; or,
- c. the Commission committed an error in professional judgment when it determined that the resource satisfied one or more Criteria for Designation.

The rescission request contends that additional information shows that the resource does not satisfy one or more Criteria for Designation.

As depicted in the images below, the subject property has been altered since the time of designation. It is unclear whether these changes were approved by the Historical Commission. However, the current review is not intended to determine the legality of the building's current conditions. The cornice has been covered with metal. However, original corbeling flanking the flashing is still visible. The brick has been painted a red color. A front porch with a metal awning has been installed at the ground floor of the house. Although the windows and front door appear to be replacements, the original masonry openings, lintels and sills appear to be intact. The height of the structure has not changed. In general, the primary features of the building, its front façade, window and door openings, and roofline, survive and the building could be restored to its appearance in the 1966 designation photograph below.

The Department of Licenses and Inspections cited the property as unsafe, suffering from demolition by neglect, and vacant on 16 May and 25 June 2019. Those violations remain open.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial of the request to rescind the designation of 935 S. 3rd Street, pursuant to Section 5.14.b.1 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:01:55

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the rescission request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Architect Richard W. Thom and property owner Jim Dougherty represented the rescission request.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Thom contended that most features of the subject property had been significantly altered since the time of designation including the windows and the cornice. He also noted that the front porch and other features had been added. He noted that several of the buildings in the immediate area had been refaced, owing to the deterioration of the original brick. Mr. Thom noted that any attempt to remove the paint on the brick

would cause even further damage to the building's façade. Mr. Thom said that, owing to the extensive alterations, the building no longer met any of the Criteria for Designation that would have been used to designate it. He added that there were no records in the Historical Commission's files that justified the designation.

- Mr. Dougherty said that he did not take a rescission request lightly and that the severely deteriorated condition of the subject property left him no other option, nor did he see the historical significance of the building.
- Ms. Barucco stated that there must have been compelling reasons for the designation of the property at the time, even if the documentation is not in the Historical Commission's files.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society spoke against the rescission.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites spoke against the rescission.
- Jim Duffin commented that the papers of Roy Nickels include some documentation of the informal criteria for designation that were applied by the Committee on Historic Designation's predecessors.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation recommended that the Historical Commission deny the request to rescind the designation of 935 S. 3rd Street, pursuant to Section 5.14.b.1 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations.

ITEM: 935 S 3rd St MOTION: Denial of rescission MOVED BY: Milroy SECONDED BY: Cohen					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

ADDRESS: 413 S PERTH ST

Proposed Action: Amend entry historic district inventory
 Property Owner: Matthew Dering and Caroline Price
 Initiator: Historical Commission staff
 Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: The Historical Commission designated the Society Hill Historic District on 10 March 1999. At the time it created the historic district, the Historical Commission adopted an inventory for the district, which lists every property in the district, provides a description and brief history of it, and a classification for it. Each property in a historic district is classified as Significant, Contributing, or Non-contributing, and then subsequently regulated based on that classification. Owing to an apparent error, the property at 413 S. Perth Street was included in the inventory,

but not described or classified. To correct this error, the staff of the Historical Commission has initiated a proposal to amend the district inventory and provide a complete entry for 413 S. Perth Street.

The property is located at the southeast corner of Perth and Addison Streets. A three-story building stood on the property as late as 1931. It appears that the remnants of that building were demolished in 1939. The building that currently stands on the property was constructed by Bernard Shapiro in 1940 as a one-story hardware storage building, which supported his hardware business, B. Shapiro Inc., at 728-30 Lombard Street. The property was categorized as commercial on the 1952 and 1962 Philadelphia Land Use Maps. The building was converted to a residence in 1964. The extant building is two stories in height and clad in stucco.

The entry for 413 S. Perth Street in inventory for the Society Hill Historic District adopted in 1999 directs the reader to an entry for 720-22 Addison Street, an alternate address, but there is no such entry.

The staff proposes the following entry for 413 S. Perth Street as an amendment to the Society Hill Historic District inventory:

413 Two-story, stucco-clad, vernacular house with roof deck.

Built: 1940 for hardware storage. Alteration: Converted to dwelling in 1964. Non-contributing.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Amend the Society Hill Historic District inventory entry for 413 S. Perth Street as proposed above.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:15:30

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the staff's request to amend the Society Hill Historic District inventory to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Matthew Dering, the property owner, attended the review and offered to answer any questions about the property.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cohen stated that the record with regard to the entry for this property in the inventory of the Society Hill Historic District should be corrected. He agreed with the proposed correction, except the word "vernacular" to describe the house. He suggested removing it from the proposed entry amendment.
 - Ms. Barucco and Ms. Cooperman agreed with Mr. Cohen.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation recommended that the Historical Commission amend the entry for 413 S. Perth Street in the inventory of the Society Hill Historic District with the description and classification of

non-contributing offered by the staff, with the deletion of the word “vernacular” from the description.

ITEM: 413 S Perth St					
MOTION: Amend inventory entry in Society Hill Historic District inventory					
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				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

ADDRESS: 514 S 4TH ST

Proposed Action: Amend Historic District

Property Owner: Sandra & Joseph Lichtman

Applicant: Sandra & Joseph Lichtman

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application requests to reclassify the property at 514 S. 4th Street from significant to non-contributing in the Society Hill Historic District. The property includes a three-story building fronting S. 4th Street and a two-story building with a half-gambrel roof at the rear of the lot. A one-story infill structure adjoins the buildings. The property is described as follows in the entry from the Society Hill Historic District inventory:

514 A,B 3-story, 2-bay, painted brick, vernacular building. Central shopfront with 9 large lights and flanking pedimented doorways, each with different transoms and doors; 2nd and 3rd floors have 6/6 wooden sash; storm sash; fake louvered shutters at 2nd and 3rd floors; corbelled brick cornice.

North elevation: stucco.

South elevation: stucco 2 ½-story building with multiple additions at rear of lot; ½ gambrel roof; added porch and new side wall; 1/1 replacement windows; new metal overhang for wrap-around porch; stepped parapet walls; shed dormer.

Built c. 1760. Alterations: c. 1920 front section. Significant.

The application asserts that the property is unsalable, owing to its classification as a significant resource in the Society Hill Historic District. The applicants, in this case the property owners at the time of designation, contend that they received notice of the property’s designation but not notice of the nomination, which would have provided them with information regarding public meetings and a means to participate in the process. The application argues that the Historical

Commission staff has “not approached the issuance of demolition permits in a reasonable and practical way,” though no demolition permits have ever been submitted.

The application fails to provide any evidence that the property lacks historic value or that the property no longer meets the criteria that caused its entry on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Instead, the application seeks to reclassify the property to allow for the demolition of its significant buildings and redevelopment of the site.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial of the reclassification of 514 S. 4th Street as non-contributing, pursuant to Section 5.14 of the Historical Commission’s Rules & Regulations.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:22:40

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the reclassification request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Owners Sandra and Joseph Lichtman represented the property.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Keller stated that Paul Boni submitted public comment on behalf of the Society Hill Civic Association, though it came in after the deadline to receive public comment. She noted that the civic association supports the staff’s recommendation to deny the reclassification request.
- Ms. Lichtman noted that her husband, Joseph Lichtman, is a primary care physician whose office is located in the building. She commented that there were no deed restrictions on the property when they purchased it, and they then received a letter in 1999 stating that the property was deemed historic. The designation letter, she claimed, stated that the Historical Commission would approach the issuance of demolition permits in a reasonable and practical way. She asked that the Committee understand the changes that have occurred in the immediate area and argued that the property’s character and setting have been compromised. Ms. Lichtman referred to the staff’s research, emphasizing that the front façade of the main building had been reconstructed in 1951. She then noted that there are several undated additions at the rear. She argued that, with the demolished property to the south and the three 1970s buildings to the north, the property has lost its historic context and character. Ms. Lichtman further explained that a new building has been approved at 516 S. 4th Street and contended that the construction would be highly disruptive to her husband’s medical practice and the building’s tenants. She elaborated that she has marketed the property for a year, and the only interest has been from developers. She asked that the property be reclassified as non-contributing, arguing that it is in the public’s interest to have visual uniformity on the block.
 - Mr. Lichtman agreed that he would be unable to practice medicine with the disruption of new construction next door.
 - Ms. Cooperman stated that, while individual members of the Committee may be sympathetic to the issues related to adjacent new construction, the impact of the resulting noise on one’s medical practice is outside the Committee’s purview.
- Mr. Cohen commented that the Committee must consider whether the property should remain classified as significant and stated that it absolutely should. He noted that he has taken photographs of the rear building several times, adding that it is a remarkable example of a building not typically visible from the public way. Its

visibility, he continued, is only because of the demolition of 516 S. 4th Street. He reiterated that the property should remain classified as significant.

- Ms. Milroy agreed with Mr. Cohen. Regarding the altered historic context, she argued that the context is much broader than the adjacent buildings and includes the sequence of buildings on the entire block.
- Ms. Barucco stated that, in addition to the unique half-gambrel structure at the rear, the front building is also significant. She agreed with Ms. Milroy that the property contributes to the streetscape and is not limited in its context to the adjacent structures. She observed that there are numerous historic structures on the block. She agreed with the staff's recommendation that the property should remain classified as significant in the Society Hill Historic District.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Alex Balloon commended the staff on its research of the property. He argued that this particular area of S. 4th Street has a rich collection of nineteenth and twentieth-century storefronts that highlights the evolution of commercial architecture. He stated that, while he sympathizes with the challenges the owners face, the Commission should recognize the property's contribution to the Society Hill Historic District and decline to reclassify it as non-contributing.
- Oscar Beisert supported the staff's recommendation and stated that the property should not be reclassified. He contended that the façade could be restored to its original appearance. He added that he personally has admired the rear half-gambrel structure and that the building, with its specific roof shape and shed dormer, was once ubiquitous but is now a dwindling type in Philadelphia.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the staff recommendation and the previous comments made by Messrs. Balloon and Beisert. He stated that reclassifying the property would be a step back in the efforts to preserve Philadelphia's built heritage. He disagreed with Ms. Lichtman's comment that a new development would provide uniformity to the block, adding that retaining and renovating the buildings would provide a model for good future development.
- Steven Peitzman endorsed the staff's recommendation and agreed with Mr. Beisert regarding the appeal of the half-gambrel structures found throughout the city.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to deny the reclassification of 514 S. 4th Street as non-contributing, pursuant to Section 5.14 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations.

ITEM: 514 S 4th St					
MOTION: Denial of reclassification					
MOVED BY: Lavery					
SECONDED BY: Barucco					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

ADDRESS: 915-23 N BROAD ST

Proposed Action: Amend Historic District

Property Owner: Z Realty LLC

Applicant: Dennis George, Esq., Arangio & George, LLP

District Designation: Automobile Row Thematic Historic District, Contributing, pending

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to amend the inventory of the proposed Automobile Row Thematic Historic District and remove three resources from it. All three resources stand on the same parcel, 915-23 N. Broad Street. The inventory for the proposed district classifies all three buildings, at 915-17, 919-21, and 923 N. Broad Street, as contributing. The property owner requests that the Historical Commission amend the nomination and remove the three resources from the proposed historic district because the owner made a significant financial commitment to the redevelopment of the property prior to the Historical Commission's announcement that it planned to consider the designation of a thematic district that includes these three buildings. In a letter dated 28 December 2020, an attorney representing the owner states that a designation of the property will cause extensive hardship to the property owner.

Eight months before Historical Commission sent its first notice letters on 17 January 2020, the owner and its architect began the zoning process with the intention of demolishing the existing buildings and constructing a mixed-use building on the site. During the period between April 2019 and the notice letter in January 2020, the redevelopment plan for the site was reviewed twice by Civic Design Review (CDR) and at four meetings with the Registered Community Organization Committee Board members (14th Ward Democratic Executive Committee). The owner applied for zoning permits for demolition and new construction beginning on 10 April 2019 and was issued a zoning permit on 24 June 2020. The owner submitted a completed application for demolition to the Department of Licenses & Application on 25 February 2021.

Section 6.9.a.10 of the Historical Commission's Rules and Regulations, the so-called "transition rule," allows the Commission, its committees, and staff to consider development plans in place at the time of the issuance of the notice announcing the consideration of a designation, including but not limited to executed contracts, substantial design development, or other evidence of a material commitment to development in the review of applications." While this rule is intended to be applied while reviewing permit applications, the spirit of it may also apply to designation reviews.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff notes that the application makes no claims regarding the historical significance of the three buildings in question or of the merits of the Automobile Row Thematic Historic District nomination generally. The staff suggests that it would be premature for the Committee on Historic Designation to formulate a recommendation on the merits of the district nomination, or the place of these three resources in it, and recommends that the Committee forward this application to the Historical Commission without a recommendation so that the Commission may determine whether the redevelopment plans in place at the time of the notice qualify this property for special consideration under provisions in the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:57:00

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the amendment request to the Committee on Historic Designation.

- Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia, represented the nominator.
- Attorney Dennis George represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. George stated that the owner and project team began the development project on this property in April 2019 by submitting a Zoning application. He explained that they went through the process, including numerous meetings with Civic Design Review (CDR) and the registered community organization (RCO) which is the 14th Ward Democratic Executive Committee. Mr. George said they had four meetings with the local community and executed a community benefits agreement which included support for the local school, the playground, and inclusion of affordable units for the local community. He noted that they do not believe this building is one that should be considered for this designation because of the various changes over time that have taken place. Mr. George stated that the community organization raised the issue of the terra cotta tiles and their team has agreed to incorporate the tiles into the lobby of the residential portion of the building. He noted that the proposed building would include the first two floors of commercial space and 70 residential units with parking in the rear for 23 cars. Mr. George pointed out that the owner received notice of the district nomination from the Historical Commission on 27 January 2020 which was after they received zoning approval on 22 January 2020. He reiterated that they received the notice of the proposed nomination after they completed the entire zoning process and went through all the design work and plans. He also noted that he submitted a demolition permit application with the Department of Licenses and Inspections on 24 February 2021.
- Mr. Steinke stated that 915-23 N Broad Street is part of the proposed Automobile Row Historic District. He noted that the date of notice was 17 January 2020 after the Preservation Alliance submitted the nomination to the Historical Commission in December 2019. Mr. Steinke said each of these buildings exhibit qualities that are noted in the nomination, such as the glazed terra cotta and architectural styles of Classical Revival and Beaux Arts. He continued that each of them tie back to the history of the automobile industry as it was found on N. Broad Street, which was widely known as Automobile Row. Mr. Steinke stated that from the standpoint of this Committee, and weighing the qualifications of these buildings as contributing to this proposed historic district, this is something that the Committee could still debate and come up with an opinion on at this meeting although he recognized the questions of timing and permits. Mr. Steinke pointed out that the buildings could be incorporated into a new development on the site, if that is what the property owner and the community want.
- Mr. George responded by commenting that, unlike some of the other buildings proposed for inclusion in the district, these buildings were utilized at one time for automotive dealerships but primarily for other uses. He said he understood the issue of the facades but pointed out that they have undergone substantial changes.
- Mr. Cohen indicated he was unsure how to proceed with this review.
- Ms. Cooperman said that they could say they cannot make a recommendation about removal of 915-23 N. Broad Street from the proposed historic district at this point because the Committee has not yet considered the historic district as a whole. She continued that, since the Committee cannot understand the part without understanding the whole, then the Committee should concur with the staff's recommendation and recommend denial of the removal at this time.

- Ms. Barucco agreed with Ms. Cooperman. She added that she thinks the buildings have architectural integrity and the Committee can see that. Ms. Barucco said she is also sympathetic to how the process has played out for the owner, but, at the same time, she also believes that one-story buildings can be incorporated into a larger overbuilt project. She recognized that the buildings have changed over time, but she asserted that their character is still evident.
- Mr. Cohen observed that he sees a conflict between two goods. He said the owner has been very responsive when working through a process and the Committee would not want to impede that, but at the same time they feel there is something significant here, the continuity along a long stretch of N. Broad Street, which really adds particularity to the place. He said this could be lost if development picks up in that stretch of N. Broad Street. He encouraged the developer and owner to consider the possibility of incorporating these facades into the project. It would add a good deal to the streetscape to have that continuity and that historical resonance preserved. He agreed that the Committee could not do much more until it considers the nomination for the historic district.
- Ms. Milroy agreed that the Committee needs to have a larger conversation about the overall historic district before considering the removal of this property. She also agreed with her colleagues about the potential of incorporating the facades into the larger development.
- Ms. Cooperman commented that the Committee is talking about the development options in general terms, and it is not within their purview to make any recommendations along those lines. She said that the Committee was talking from their broader perspective in historic preservation. Ms. Cooperman noted that the Committee members seem fairly united in their opinion about the review matter.
- Mr. Laverty agreed that it would be premature to consider removing the properties before considering the nomination for the historic district. He commented that he found it interesting that the three buildings on this single property each have their own individual treatment in terms of details and materials.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society, said he is against removing the property from the district. He pointed out that the property's facades could be preserved as the first floor of the new taller building as an alternative to full demolition.
- Alex Balloon said that 915-23 N. Broad Street illustrates one of the problems that arises when historic districts are given long continuances. He said that applicants deserve some certainty and that is something the Committee should be mindful of because people deserve a decision from the Commission and a fair process.
 - It was noted that the Auto Row Historic District nomination has never been continued, but its review was suspended owing to meetings canceled because of the COVID pandemic.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend denial of the request to remove the property at 915-23 N. Broad Street from the proposed Auto Row Thematic Historic District prior to the consideration of the nomination for the historic district.

ITEM: 915-23 N Broad St
MOTION: Denial
MOVED BY: Barucco
SECONDED BY: Cohen

VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

AUTOMOBILE ROW THEMATIC HISTORIC DISTRICT

Proposed Action: Designation; Request for continuance of 60 to 90 days

Property Owner: Various

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the Automobile Row Thematic Historic District and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. North Broad Street was an early center for the automobile trade in Philadelphia, with numerous small and large showrooms, assembly and distribution plants, and parts and accessories stores on what was known as “Automobile Row” as early as 1906. The thematic district covers an approximately 2.8 mile-long stretch between Cherry Street (at the south end) and Lehigh Avenue (at the north end) and includes 29 properties that are known to have been built by or for the automobile industry between 1909 and 1930. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination contends that the district is representative of the burgeoning automobile industry in Philadelphia between 1909 and 1930. Automobile Row was an outgrowth of the general commercial and industrial activity that had flourished on North Philadelphia’s “Main Street” for more than half a century. The large number of automobile industry-related businesses that opened on North Broad Street during this period reflect Philadelphia’s major role in the early automobile industry. Virtually every major national brand – Buick, Cadillac, Ford, Oldsmobile, Studebaker, among many others – was represented. Not confined to the selling of cars, many of Automobile Row’s facilities operated as major assembly plants and/or distribution centers, serving networks of dealerships in Philadelphia and throughout the region. Under Criteria C, D, and E, the nomination asserts that the district includes major works of Beaux-Arts, Classical Revival, and Commercial Style buildings by many of Philadelphia’s and some of the country’s best known architects of the early twentieth century. Many of the buildings are faced in glazed white architectural terra cotta, comprising one of the finest collections of this popular and highly adaptable building material in the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Automobile Row Thematic Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:19:28

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination and continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia, represented the nominator.
- Attorney Kevin Greenberg represented the property owners for 227-29 and 235-37 N Broad Street.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Alex Balloon stated his general concern about continuing a nomination that has been sitting for nearly a year. He noted that the nomination process is very clear and well established. Mr. Balloon said that while thinks that a 60-to-90-day continuance is reasonable.
- Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society, stated that he is opposed any further continuance of the district nomination.
- Steven Peitzman agreed with Mr. Beisert. He said it is difficult to understand why, after a year, more time is needed to consider this important nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Steinke stated that he believes the nomination does an excellent job in laying out Philadelphia's important early role in the automobile industry in this country and the way in which the physical environment of this part of N. Broad Street expresses that. He added that Philadelphia's role in the automobile industry in the early days is not well recognized and noted that most think of Detroit and maybe a few other cities as being more important. Mr. Steinke continued that Philadelphia, as a major industrial city at the turn of the last century, was a player in this industry. He said that real estate development pressure up and down N Broad Street continues to put these resources at risk and contended that most buildings nominated have only been changed at the storefront level or window openings and this type of change can be reversed. He stressed that a historic district on this stretch of Automobile Row in Philadelphia would give our city a rare opportunity something to manage change as it comes to this long-neglected part of N. Broad St. He stated that they welcome change and new development but think it should be done with respect to and protection of the historic resources of this corridor. Mr. Steinke said that we have a chance to get it right by recommending this district for approval. He added that Chicago, also not normally associated with the early history of the automobile industry, has its own automobile row on S. Michigan Ave and it is protected is a local historic district. Mr. Steinke noted that if you visit it today you find modern retailers, restaurants and other users happily and beautifully occupying the former automobile buildings, which are a credit to the Chicago streetscape.
- Ms. Cooperman asked Mr. Steinke to comment specifically on Mr. Greenberg's continuance request.
- Mr. Steinke said Mr. Greenberg's request appears to boil down to two issues. He noted that one is a request for more time to review the nomination to determine how it would affect these properties. He observed this is not atypical for property owners to request that but in this case the nomination has been public for more than one year. Mr. Steinke said the second issue is that Mr. Greenberg's continuance request letter goes into some detail about the merits of the nomination as it pertains to these three properties with respect to the Criteria for Designation. He pointed out that this is the Committee's purview. Mr. Steinke said that he thinks Mr. Greenberg made

some highly debatable assertions in his letter and he believes it would be appropriate for the Committee, which is strictly advisory on the merits of the nomination to the full Commission, to take up consideration to the nomination at this time.

- Mr. Greenberg stated that he objected to the process. He pointed out that Mr. Steinke just mischaracterized his request for continuance, before he even had a chance to present it.
- Ms. Cooperman interjected that the Committee's process is to hear from the nominator first and then hear from the property owner or property owner's representative. She added this is part of the Historical Commission's guidelines for meeting conduct.
- Mr. Greenberg stated that he does not object to Mr. Steinke's comments on the merits of the proposal but that the Committee has chosen to begin the process before dealing with the continuance request. He added that Mr. Steinke's comments characterizing and making legal arguments about a letter requesting a continuance points out the many problems that need further investigation here. Mr. Greenberg explained that he represents the owners of 227-229 N. Broad St and 235-237 N. Broad St, which are two legal parcels in a single building that contains three legal parcels. He noted that only one of the owners he is representing received timely notice of the Committee's meeting. He noted he is not asserting that the notice was not sent. Mr. Greenberg noted that the proposed historic district inventory treats all three buildings as a single unified whole and that is the kind of problem he and the owners are looking to explore. He added that they are not necessarily against the historic district and they are not necessary for it, but this is what they wish to explore. Mr. Greenberg stated they are certainly concerned about the historic designation of this property. He explained that when the issue of designation first arose and the owner received the first notice, the pandemic had started. Mr. Greenberg said he spoke to Ms. Mehley and Mr. Steinke at that time and was told by the Historical Commission staff that everything was on hold until the Commission could hold in-person meetings. He stated that he was surprised when the owners received notice of the review process resuming before we they were able to undertake their investigation of the nomination and designation process. Mr. Greenberg said that they have not yet engaged an architectural historian, but are seeking one. He state that he and his client need time to explore their options, but have not had an opportunity to do so yet because of the pandemic. Mr. Greenberg said they have not had an opportunity to work with other property owners. He noted that they have not had an opportunity to see if an appropriate historic district might be limited to the 700, 800, and/or 900 blocks of N. Broad Street and questioned if the district should really extend as far south as the 200 block. Mr. Greenberg outlined other concerns he had about the merits of the nomination. He pointed out that they have asked for a fairly short continuance period of 60 to 90 days and said that it appears that the July Committee on Historic Designation meeting might be the appropriate. Mr. Greenberg stated that they would be prepared at that time and they are not planning for an extended process. He requested that the Committee recommend that the Historical Commission continue the nomination for 60 to 90 days and potentially be reviewed at the July 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting.
- Mr. Cohen said he is struggling to understand what a reasonable standard for continuances might be. He noted that the Committee has been giving out continuances freely for a while now, but there is a new policy for continuances. He inquired if the new policy applies to this continuance request.

- Mr. Farnham responded that the new policy that was adopted recently and went into effect last week. According to the Law Department, it is not applicable to nominations for which the notice letters were sent before the policy became effective. He explained this means that there is no policy here and the Committee has discretion. He pointed out, however, that the Committee's role is advisory and ultimately the Historical Commission will make the decision. He noted that, once the policy is effective, the Committee will not be called upon to adjudicate continuance requests. All continuance requests were be considered by the Historical Commission or staff, but not the Committee.
- Mr. Cohen stated he defer to others on this. He added that this continuance came very late in the process when most members had already read the 50 odd pages of the nomination. Mr. Cohen said he is prepared to discuss the nomination now, but wants to be consistent with the Committee's practice on continuance requests. He noted that the Committee has been meeting on Zoom meetings for more than nine months.
- Ms. Barucco said that she finds the argument regarding the challenges of dealing with these things during the pandemic to be less and less convincing. She agreed with Mr. Cohen's comments, but noted that the Committee has set a precedent for granting continuances and it needs to be fair to all parties. Ms. Barucco added that, while she feels the Committee should review this nomination today, she is compelled to consider the owner's position. She noted that she takes all public comments to heart.
- Mr. Lavery stated that he is very pleased that the Historical Commission has created a defined policy for the continuances and looks to employing that on future nominations. He stated that historic district nominations are always more complex than single parcel nominations. Mr. Lavery said that, because of the precedent set by the Committee, the Committee should offer a continuance of at least 60 days and give everyone the opportunity to review the nomination.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the Committee should urge the Historical Commission to move forward with all deliberate speed.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission continue the review of the nomination of the Automobile Row Thematic Historic District and remand it to the June 2021 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

ITEM: Request for continuance					
MOTION: Continue to the June 2021 CHD meeting					
MOVED BY: Lavery					
SECONDED BY: Barucco					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Committee on Historic Designation 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.

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.