

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

**19 JANUARY 2022, 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 9:30 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair	X		
Suzanna Barucco	X		
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.	X		
Bruce Laverty	X		
Debbie Miller	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:

Jon Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner I
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Celeste Morello
David Traub, Save Our Sites
Alex Balloon, Tacony CDC
John Scott
Malcolm Lazin
Jay Farrell
Nick Kraus, Heritage Consulting Group
Allison Weiss, SoLo Germantown Civic Association
Donna Rilling
Rev Dr Theresa H Dent
D Greenfield
David Smith
David Mercuris

Peter Angelides, Econsult Solutions
Christopher Vera, Columbia Historical Preservation Society
Kristen Pomroy
Martha Cross
Spencer Allen
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
Mike Perine
Russell Fulton
Venise Whitaker
Steven Peitzman
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society
Michael Clemmons
Rev. Evelyn Barnes, Star of Hope Baptist Church
Amarynth Ruch
Suzanne Ponsen
R. Freedman, Goldenberg Group
J.M. Duffin
Kevin McMahon
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance
Colin Jones, Goldenberg Group
Gabriel Gottlieb

ADDRESS: 727-35 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: Thrift Park, Inc.
Proposed Action: Classification in Chestnut Street East Historic District
Property Owner: Chestnut 733 Associates LP/Goldenberg Group
Applicant: Goldenberg Group
Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: At its November 2021 meeting, the Historical Commission designated the Chestnut Street East Historic District, which includes properties on the 600, 700, and 800 blocks of Chestnut Street as well as some cross streets. The nomination included the parking garage at 727-35 Chestnut Street in the proposed district and classified it as non-contributing. The Committee on Historic Designation disagreed with the nominator's proposed classification and recommended classifying the parking garage as contributing. The Historical Commission subsequently adopted that recommendation and classified the parking garage at 727-35 Chestnut Street as contributing when it designated the historic district.

An attorney representing the owner of the garage subsequently objected to the classification of the garage as contributing, asserting that his client had received notice letters stating that the property would be considered as non-contributing in the historic district but had not been notified that the Committee had recommended upgrading the classification to contributing, fundamentally changing the way that the Historical Commission would regulate the property. The Historical Commission's attorney reviewed the matter and decided that the Historical Commission should not upgrade the classification of a property from non-contributing to contributing during its review of a historic district nomination without notifying the property owner, who may want to participate in the deliberations regarding classification. The Commission's attorney has directed the Historical Commission to throw out the original contributing classification and to consider anew the classification of the garage at meetings of

the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission so that the owner has an opportunity to participate in the deliberations.

During the Committee on Historic Designation's review of the nomination for the Chestnut Street East Historic District in October 2021, the Committee's members discussed the parking garage at 727-35 Chestnut Street briefly. One member "noted that the parking garage at 727-35 Chestnut Street ... represents how people got to the district." Another stated that the garage "is a very early architect-designed garage and still retains many of its key historic details." That member also "suggested that the property be reclassified as contributing as an exemplary early parking garage." The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that the "architect-designed building at 727-35 Chestnut Street, constructed in 1940, is an early garage and represents the development of the district and how people travelled to the commercial district" and recommended that the Historical Commission upgrade its classification to contributing.

At the Historical Commission's review of the nomination for the historic district in November 2021, the Commission members discussed the parking garage at 727-35 Chestnut Street briefly. One member stated "that 727-35 Chestnut Street is an early garage by a known architect that reflects the changing character of transportation into the commercial district in the period beginning around World War II ... and retains Moderne style details that are not obvious on first look." The Commissioners agreed and reclassified the property as contributing.

Three reasons were cited for upgrading the classification of the garage from non-contributing to contributing during the original review of the historic district nomination:

1. the garage was designed by important architects Silverman & Levy with Art Moderne features;
2. the garage represents the shift around World War II to automobiles as the means to access the historic district; and
3. the garage was an early example of an architect-designed parking garage in Center City.

Following the initial designation and objection by the property owner to the classification as contributing, the staff conducted research that showed that the three reasons cited at the earlier meetings for upgrading the classification to contributing were not supported by facts. The garage was designed by an engineering firm from New York, while architects Silverman & Levy only played a supporting role. The garage was constructed for customers of Gimbels Department Store on Market Street, outside the district, not for businesses in the district. The garage was not an early parking garage in Center City, architect-designed or otherwise. In fact, architect Abraham Levy of Silverman & Levy designed the U.S.M.C. Garage at 337-41 S. Broad Street 15 years earlier in 1925. The garage in question was constructed in 1941, more than two decades after the first hourly parking garages appeared in Center City. By 1929, there were 76 parking garages in Center City.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends classifying the parking garage at 727-35 Chestnut Street as non-contributing because new research shows that the reasons cited for upgrading the classification from non-contributing to contributing during the original review were not based on fact:

- the architectural firm of Silverman & Levy did not play the lead role in the design of the parking garage;
- the parking garage was not directly related to the nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial buildings within the district, but was instead erected to provide parking for customers of the Gimbels Department Store, located on Market Street, outside the historic district; and,

- the parking garage was not an early example of a short-term parking garage in Philadelphia. The first short-term parking garages were built more than 20 years earlier.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:04:15

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the application to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney David Smith and preservation consultant Nick Kraus represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farnham presented the results of the staff's research on the parking garage, which was conducted after the historic district was considered at Committee on Historic Designation's meeting in October 2021 and the Historical Commission's meeting in November 2021. He stated that little was known about the garage at the time the property when the historic district was designated, and the parking garage was classified as contributing in November 2021. He explained that three reasons were cited for upgrading the classification of the garage from non-contributing to contributing at the October and November meetings: the garage was designed by important architects Silverman & Levy; the garage was constructed to support the parking needs of commercial enterprises in the historic district; and the garage was an early example of an hourly parking garage in Center City. Mr. Farnham stated that the staff's research shows that the three reasons cited at the earlier meetings for upgrading the classification are not supported by facts. The garage was designed by an engineering firm from New York. Architects Silverman & Levy played a supporting role. The garage was constructed for customers of Gimbels Department Store on Market Street, outside the district, not for businesses in the district. The garage was not an early parking garage in Center City. It constructed in 1941, more than two decades after the first hourly parking garages appeared in Center City. By 1929, there were 76 parking garages in Center City. Mr. Farnham stated that the staff recommends classifying the garage as non-contributing because the three reasons were cited for upgrading the classification of the garage from non-contributing to contributing are not supported by the research.
- Ms. Cooperman informed the property owner's representatives that they will have 10 minutes to make their presentation and offer their comments.
- Mr. Smith introduced himself and stated that he represents the owner of the garage at 727-35 Chestnut Street. He stated that there is considerable new information that the Committee did not have at its October 2021 review of the Chestnut Street East Historic District nomination. The new information has been collected by both the Historical Commission's staff and Nick Kraus, his preservation consultant. He stated that he has submitted three expert reports, by the preservation consultant, economist, and structural engineer. He asserted that the parking garage should not be classified as contributing to the historic district and, perhaps, should be removed from the district altogether. He noted that his preservation consultant has documented major modifications to the garage around 1950 that did "significant harm" to the original building. The consultant will make a brief presentation. He stated that the economist's report shows the difference between the economic impact of the garage and a 400-unit by-right development on the site. He stated that the garage cannot be repurposed for other uses. He stated that the economist, Peter

Angelides, will also make a brief presentation. He stated that engineer Dan Greenfeld of Thornton Tomasetti has provided a report that provides some of the facts behind the economist's report.

- Mr. Kraus, the property owner's historic preservation consultant, displayed a Powerpoint presentation. He stated that he agrees with the staff's recommendation that the building should not be classified as contributing to the historic district. He compared a rendering of the original building with a current photograph and explained that a fourth floor was added to the building about 1950, which resulted in the removal of the original decorative banding around the top of the building, its only architectural embellishment. He also noted that the parking garage was originally open at the first floor but has been infilled with retail spaces. Mr. Kraus summarized the conclusions of his report.
 - o Mr. Kraus stated that the garage does not reflect the developmental history or significance of the mid nineteenth, late nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial buildings on the 700 and 800 blocks of Chestnut Street that are indisputably the motivation behind this historic district designation.
 - o He stated that the garage is physically and functionally dissimilar from the remainder of the buildings that have previously been determined to be contributing.
 - o He stated that the garage is inconsistent with the commercial architecture that defines the district.
 - o He stated that the garage accelerated the push away from the pedestrian focus of the blocks towards the automobile. The character of the area immediately around the garage represents that move toward the automobile with its many surface parking lots. This character is dissimilar from the character in the heart of the district.
 - o He observed that the garage was constructed for the Market Street department stores with no direct association to the Chestnut Street blocks in the historic district.
 - o He stated that it is not an early example of a parking structure in Philadelphia.
 - o He stated that the garage is not a noteworthy work of an important architect. He stated that the garage is best characterized as a utilitarian example of the Art Moderne style, and extensive alterations have resulted in irreversible alterations to the limited Moderne elements. The alterations were completed with little regard to the original design and materials and were completed in an attempt to extend the useful life of the structure.
 - o He explained that the parking garage has four floors above grade and two floors below grade. Owing to the level of ground disturbance that was caused by the excavation of the subterranean levels and related building work, the potential for historic and prehistoric archaeological resources within the subject property is extremely limited.
- Ms. Cooperman told Mr. Smith that he had one minute of time remaining to make his case. She suggested that he not present his engineer and economist, noting that they might have time to make their presentations at the Historical Commission meeting. She stated that the Committee does not make decisions based on such testimony. She asked him to be brief with any additional presentations to the Committee.
- Mr. Smith stated that he would depend on his reports owing to the time constraints. He stated that he also was prepared to address each of the Criteria for Designation individually but would not owing to the time limitations. He summarized his client's position. The parking garage is a utilitarian structure. He stated that the garage, built

in the 1940s, was neither early nor exemplary. The garage was built for Gimbels, outside the historic district. It was not built to service businesses in the historic district on Chestnut Street. It was designed for businesses on Market Street, outside the district. He stated that the city and historic district would benefit from new development on this site and the foot traffic it would create. He stated that the garage detracts from that foot traffic. A by-right residential development at this site would add 600 people to the area. He stated that the garage is a “sore thumb” in the district and is not even a good garage. The turning radiuses are inadequate. The decoration of the building was lost when the addition was constructed.

- Ms. Cooperman told Mr. Smith that his time was up.
- Mr. Smith stated that he is seeking to have the property excluded from the historic district altogether or to have it classified as non-contributing.
- Mr. Cohen acknowledged that the benefits of 400 additional residential units should be weighed against whatever historical significance this building may have, but that assessment exceeds the Committee’s purview. He stated that the Committee’s job is to ascertain whether this garage has any historical or architectural significance. He stated that he finds that this parking garage reflects a chapter of the later history of the district, when downtowns were struggling with cars. He stated that the garage is indicative of the struggles of the twentieth century for downtown retail. He concluded that the results of the staff’s research - that Silverman & Levy were not the main designers of the garage; that the garage was not constructed to service businesses within the district; and that the garage was not an early example of parking garages in Philadelphia - were not compelling. He stated that, even if the earlier reasons cited as the basis for a classification of contributing have been proven incorrect, the garage still contributes to the district because it tells the later story of the historic district. The garage is significant because it documents the adverse effects that automobiles had on historic downtowns.
- Mr. Laverty asked about the period of significance of the historic district.
 - o Mr. Farnham responded that the period of significance is 1840 to 1965.
- Ms. Miller stated that the staff’s research demonstrated to her that the parking garage is significant even if it was constructed to support a department store outside the historic district. She stated that, with regard to archaeological resources, we never know what we are going to find. There is a potential that no archaeological resources exist at the site, but there is also a potential that resources do exist. She stated that, even though the garage has two levels of parking below grade, something might still exist in the ground under the garage. She observed that knowing whether the underground parking covers the entire lot and knowing the depth of the basement could help determine archaeological potential more precisely, but at this time we do not have that information. She advocated for a classification of contributing.
- Ms. Barucco stated that the preservation world needs to start recognizing that structures like this mid twentieth-century parking garage are important. She noted that the original cornice was destroyed when the top floor was added later, but she asserted that the addition did not adversely impact the integrity of the building. She contended that people who parked in this garage would have shopped at stores other than Gimbels, even if the garage was built for Gimbels. She stated that the parking structure contributes to the historic district.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that people who would have driven to the area and parked in the garage still would have then walked around the area. She objected to the claims made by Mr. Kraus about pedestrians. Ms. Cooperman stated that, because we do

not have a photograph of the building in its original condition, we do not know whether the rendering of the building reflects the garage as it was actually constructed. Renderings are not always accurate. She asserted that the decoration seen at the top of the building in the rendering may or may not have been executed on the original building. Because we do not have a photograph of the building between the time of construction and alteration, we just do not know whether it had that ornament. She concluded that she agrees with her colleagues on the Committee that the property should be classified as contributing.

- Ms. Milroy observed that the garage was built at the same moment that the area around Independence Hall was beginning to be reimagined. She wondered if the garage was constructed to serve visitors to the historic buildings around Independence Hall.
- Mr. Lavery noted that this parking garage was constructed at the same time the garage on the 1100 block of Chestnut Street was erected by Ballinger for Snellenberg's Department Store. That garage was recently demolished. Mr. Lavery stated that that garage was more significant than this one. It occupied an entire block, had retail on the first floor, had a direct connection to the department store, and had a "slick" Art Moderne façade. He stated that that garage was designed to fit its context. This garage, on the other hand, intruded on its block. This garage is not as sophisticated as the Ballinger garage a few blocks to the west. He stated that this garage intrudes on the buildings that make up the district and has since the 1940s. He advocated for classifying the building as non-contributing.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the staff's assertion that the garage is not important because it was not designed by Silverman & Levy is "specious." She stated that Silverman & Levy probably undertook the design of the exterior skin. She pointed to the Vagelos Laboratories at the University of Pennsylvania and contended that, although Venturi Scott Brown Associates only designed the exterior skin, not the interior, the firm is still the designer of the building. She stated that the role of the consulting architect should not be negated.
- Mr. Cohen echoed Ms. Cooperman and stated that the role of Silverman & Levy was significant. He stated that the garage is well designed and announces its modernity. He stated that this garage was constructed at a time when the pedestrian and automobile were competing. This garage proposes that the pedestrian and the automobile can co-exist peacefully. He stated that this garage presents a striking, interpretable moment on the far side of World War II.
- Ms. Barucco suggested that preservation students should study parking garages because the research on them is very thin.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert observed that he had classified the building as non-contributing in the nomination that he had submitted for the Chestnut Street East Historic District but would now support a classification of contributing. He stated that he liked the newspaper advertisement that the staff had uncovered. He suggested that the building might be individually designated but observed that that might be difficult to justify. He suggested that an overbuild for apartments might be appropriate.
- Steven Peitzman stated that he does not have strong feelings about whether this building contributes to the historic district. He noted, however, that the newspaper advertisements were interesting. He stated that it represents the movement of automobiles into the city.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The parking garage at 727-35 Chestnut Street was designed by the engineering firm of Abbott, Merkt & Company with consulting architects Silverman & Levy in 1940 and constructed by S.H. Levin in 1940 and 1941.
- The parking garage was constructed and managed by National Garages for the Gimbel's Department Store, which was located on Market Street.
- An additional floor was added to the garage in the 1950s.
- Retail spaces were added to the first floor of the garage at some point after its construction.
- This garage, built in 1940 and 1941, is not an early example of parking garages in Philadelphia. The earliest hourly and daily parking garages in Philadelphia were built in the late 1910s and early 1920s. By 1929, there were 76 parking garages in Center City Philadelphia.
- The garage documents the moment when the pedestrian and the automobile were competing in the downtown shopping district.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property at 727-35 Chestnut Street should be classified as contributing to the Chestnut Street East Historic District.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend to the Historical Commission that it classify the property at 727-35 Chestnut Street as contributing to the Chestnut Street East Historic District.

ITEM: 727-35 CHESTNUT ST					
MOTION: Classify as contributing					
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			
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5	1			

ADDRESS: 138 W WALNUT LN

Name of Resource: John E. Fryer House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Gloria Del Piano

Nominator: Staff of the Historical Commission

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 138 W. Walnut Lane in Germantown as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criterion for Designation A because it “is associated with the life of a person significant in the past.” From 1972 to 2003, the property at 138 W. Walnut Lane was the home of Dr. John E. Fryer, a psychiatrist and a national leader in the gay civil rights movement whose advocacy was instrumental in convincing the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to end its classification of homosexuality as a psychiatric disorder in the early 1970s. The classification stamped homosexuals as emotional deviants and lent medical authority to laws that made homosexual acts and even public gatherings of homosexual persons illegal. In 1972, Fryer spoke at the APA's annual convention and objected to the APA's classification of homosexuality as a psychiatric disorder. Fearing retribution for his position, he appeared in disguise as Dr. Anonymous. Fryer's courageous effort to speak out as a homosexual psychiatrist against psychiatry's decision to pathologize homosexuality changed the APA's position, a major shift with ramifications in myriad realms from medicine to the law that marked a key point in the gay civil rights movement. In 1973, the board of the APA voted to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders and to urge that “homosexuals be given all protections now guaranteed other citizens.” The members of the APA ratified the decision in 1974. Fryer lived at 138 W. Walnut Lane until his death in 2003.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 138 W. Walnut Lane satisfies Criterion for Designation A.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:53:43

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman thanked the staff for preparing the nomination.
- Ms. Milroy thanked the staff for an exemplary nomination. She acknowledged the importance of Dr. Fryer as a physician and an activist.
- Ms. Cooperman questioned whether Criterion C or E should be added.
 - o Mr. Cohen agreed. He stated that architect Mantle Fielding was significant and that the building is architecturally significant.
- Ms. Milroy noted that the Period of Significance would need to be adjusted if the architectural criteria are added.
- Mr. Laverty asked if adding the architectural component in any way diminishes the significance of Dr. Fryer.
 - o Ms. Barucco agreed.
 - o Ms. Miller also agreed. She stated that the greatest significance of this property is related to Dr. Fryer, not the architect.

- Ms. Cooperman stated that the building itself also has importance and should be protected.
 - o Ms. Barucco agreed and noted her change of position.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert supported the nomination. He asked when the original porch was removed and replaced.
 - o Mr. Farnham stated that the original porch was removed and replaced by Dr. Fryer. He noted that it appears that the original porch was damaged in a fire and necessitated replacement. He also noted that Dr. Fryer's papers are housed at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and may shed some light on the replacement.
- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance supported the nomination. He noted that this year marks the 50th anniversary of Dr. Fryer's speech at the psychologist's conference. He stated that the City Council will consider declaring 2 May as Dr. John Fryer Day. The American Psychiatric Association and others are also planning commemorations.
- Celeste Morello supported the nomination. She noted the historical marker at 13th and Locust Streets commemorating Dr. Fryer.
- Steven Peitzman stated that this stretch of Walnut Lane was a doctor's row. He asked if this property is located in a historic district.
 - o Mr. Farnham stated that it is located in the Tulpehocken National Register Historic District, but not in a local district. He stated that a local district would be merited.
- Malcolm Lazin of the Equality Forum spoke in support of the nomination. He explained that Equality Forum is a national LGBTQ civil rights organization with an emphasis on the history of the movement. He stated that Dr. John Fryer is an extremely important figure in the LGBTQ civil rights movement. He observed that the photograph showing Dr. Fryer delivering his famous speech also shows Barbara Gittings and Frank Kameny, the mother and father of the LGBTQ civil rights movement. He noted that Ms. Gittings was also a Philadelphian. Mr. Lazin stated that Equality Forum was responsible for the historical marker at 13th and Locust Streets. The marker is located near the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which holds 217 archival boxes related to John Fryer. The Equality Forum helped produced an Off Broadway play about Dr. Fryer. It also oversees LGBTQ History Month. Mr. Lazin stated that Equality Forum is planning a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the speech. A John Fryer Award will be given at the American Psychiatric Association's 2022 annual convention. Philadelphia City Council will consider declaring 2 May as Dr. John Fryer Day. There will be a celebration of Dr. Fryer on 2 May at the historic marker.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property at 138 W. Walnut Lane was the residence of Dr. John Fryer from 1972 to 2003.
- The house at 138 W. Walnut Lane was constructed about 1860 and rehabilitated in the Queen Anne style by architect Mantle Fielding in 1893.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- Dr. John Fryer was a nationally important figure in the LGBTQ civil rights movement, who owned and lived in the house at 138 W. Walnut Lane from 1972 to 2003, satisfying Criterion for Designation A.
- Mantle Fielding, who rehabilitated the house at 138 W. Walnut Lane in 1893, was an architect whose work influenced the development of the city, satisfying Criterion for Designation E.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 138 W. Walnut Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation A and E, with a Period of Significance of 1860 to 2003.

ITEM: 138 W WASHINGTON LN					
MOTION: Satisfies Criteria A and E					
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 Laverty	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 2100-20 W ALLEGHENY AVE

Name of Resource: Steel Heddle Manufacturing Company Complex

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: AM8 Group Steel Heddle Building LP

Nominator: Heritage Consulting

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2100-20 Allegheny Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the Steel Heddle Manufacturing Company Complex, constructed over a span from 1919 to 1951, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that the company was “one of the largest weaving loom accessory suppliers in the United States, [and supplied] the nation’s textile industry with the most technologically advance steel heddles and associated loom harness equipment.” Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that the complex is significant owing to its association with the William Steele & Sons Company, a leader in the construction of industrial, manufacturing and commercial structures between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2100-20 W Allegheny Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:17:55

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Nick Kraus of Heritage Consulting represented the nomination and the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman asked Mr. Kraus if the building is also seeking listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
 - o Mr. Kraus responded that the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009.
- Ms. Milroy commented that the nomination was fascinating and that she enjoyed researching details, such as what a heddle looked like and how the looms operated.
- Ms. Cooperman agreed that the nomination was very informative and that she learned many things reading it.
- Ms. Barucco remarked that it would have been helpful had the nominator included details such as an image of a heddle rather than mentioning information that caused the reader to have to conduct her own research. She also requested that the nominator include clearer photographs of the subject property.
- Ms. Cooperman added that it would be helpful to have a clearer site plan in the nomination.
- Ms. Barucco stated that she would have liked to know more about the firm behind the buildings and how they took such a project from start to finish. She added that it would have been interesting to know more about how the builders worked with concrete.
- Mr. Laverty mentioned that the Steele & Sons Company used the term “The Steele Idea” in their advertising of their turn-key services.
- Mr. Cohen remarked that he found Criterion J to be the most persuasive significance discussed in the nomination. He said that he was more skeptical about the property’s significance under Criteria A and E.
- Ms. Milroy opined that perhaps based on Mr. Laverty’s comments Steele & Sons Company did, in fact, satisfy Criterion E.
- Ms. Cooperman said that she believed that the nomination satisfied Criteria A, E, and J.
- Mr. Laverty agreed with Ms. Cooperman.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Steven Peitzman supported the nomination.
- Celeste Morello supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The Steel Heddle Manufacturing Company Complex was constructed over a span from 1919 to 1951.
- The complex is associated with the William Steele & Sons Company.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The Steel Heddle Manufacturing Company was a significant national supplier of weaving loom accessories, specializing in the most advanced equipment available, satisfying Criteria A and J.
- William Steele & Sons Company was a leader in the construction of industrial structures between the late nineteenth century and the 1930, satisfying Criterion E.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2100-20 W. Allegheny Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.

ITEM: 2100-20 W ALLEGHENY AVE					
MOTION: Satisfies Criteria A, E, and J					
MOVED BY: Laverty					
SECONDED BY: Barucco					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 1232 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: DeLong Building

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Realkore 1232Chestnut LLC

Nominator: Preservation Alliance

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1232 Chestnut Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the corner building, constructed in 1900 as a speculative office venture for inventor and manufacturer Frank E. DeLong, satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. The nomination argues that the building is significant as an important Philadelphia example of the commercial aesthetic popularized in Chicago beginning in the 1880s. Popularly known as the Commercial Style, but also referred to as the Chicago School, this form of tall building construction prioritized the expression of structure over superficial ornamentation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1232 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:42:30

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.

- Patrick Grossi and Kevin McMahon of the Preservation Alliance represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Grossi and Mr. McMahon summarized the historic significance of the building.
- Mr. Cohen described the ways in which the building has a more nuanced relationship to the Chicago School but agreed that the nomination was excellent.
- The Committee members agreed that it was surprising that this building was not already listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.
- The Committee members agreed that the nomination was extremely well-written and well-researched.
- Ms. Barucco applauded Mr. McMahon for authoring an exemplary nomination.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, supported the nomination.
- Alex Balloon supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The building was constructed in 1900 as a speculative office venture for inventor and manufacturer Frank E. DeLong.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The building is an important Philadelphia example of the commercial aesthetic popularized in Chicago beginning in the 1880s, popularly known as the Commercial Style, but also referred to as the Chicago School, satisfying Criteria C and D.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1232 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

ITEM: 1232 CHESTNUT ST					
MOTION: Satisfies Criteria C and D					
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				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 917 DICKINSON ST

Name of Resource: "Iron Plantation Near Southwark, 1800" (object)

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: United States Postal Service

Nominator: Celeste Morello

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate a mural inside of the Southwark Station Post Office as an historic object and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the mural, painted in 1938 and titled "Iron Plantation Near Southwark, 1800," satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the mural has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation, as one of the many New Deal paintings commissioned by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts in the 1930s. Under Criterion J, the nomination claims that the mural exemplifies the cultural, political, social, or historical heritage of the community in terms of its content, which was typically chosen to reflect the local community.

While the Historical Commission may designate a mural as historic, the Historical Commission may not be able to exert plenary jurisdiction over proposed work to this mural. The City's historic preservation ordinance empowers the Historical Commission to review building permit applications to ensure that the work proposed in those applications satisfies preservation standards. The United States Postal Service, a federal agency, may not be required to obtain building permits from the City of Philadelphia and therefore may not be subject to the Historical Commission's review. Any designation would be honorary but would not empower the Historical Commission to exert oversight over the mural.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the mural inside the Southwark Station Post Office at 917 Dickinson Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A but not Criterion J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:50:30

RECUSAL:

- Mr. Lavery recused from the review of the nomination.

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Morello summarized her nomination.
- Ms. Milroy stated that the mural is an object worthy of historic designation. She commented that there is not much information available on the artist, Robert Larter, but the fact that he was at Yale University means he was likely studying with Eugene Savage. She observed that the nomination lays out preliminary information but could have included more information on mural painting in the 1930s and mentions of important artists, in addition to other contemporary murals in Philadelphia and a more detailed description of the representations in the mural.

- o Ms. Cooperman agreed that it is often difficult to understand what these murals are meant to represent.
- Ms. Miller noted that the mural content is often conjecture of a 1930s representation of the past, where some aspects are accurate but others are not. She stated that it is important to acknowledge that there are things other than buildings that are worthy of historic designation in Philadelphia.
- Ms. Milroy asked Ms. Morello to explain why this is not a WPA mural.
 - o Ms. Morello responded that the post office was put up by the Department of the Treasury, and the Department of the Treasury had its own fine arts section.
- Ms. Milroy asked the staff to clarify its recommendation regarding Criteria A and J.
 - o Ms. Chantry responded that the staff found a stronger argument in Criterion A for the mural's association as one of the many New Deal paintings commissioned by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts in the 1930s, rather than the argument made for Criterion J and the content of the mural reflecting the community in 1800.
 - o Ms. Milroy responded that the mural content is often an interpretation rather than documentation, and this mural was clearly painted for an audience of the 1930s. She stated that it does not do any harm to include Criterion J, and she supports its inclusion.
 - o Ms. Cooperman agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert supported the nomination.
- David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The Historical Commission may not be able to exert plenary jurisdiction over proposed work to this mural, and therefore the designation may be honorary.
- The mural is currently installed on an interior wall of the Southwark Station Post Office.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The mural has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation, as one of the many New Deal paintings commissioned by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts in the 1930s, satisfying Criterion A.
- The mural exemplifies the cultural, political, social, or historical heritage of the community in terms of its content, which was typically chosen to reflect the local community, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the mural inside the Southwark Station Post Office at 917 Dickinson Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

ITEM: 917 DICKINSON ST**MOTION: Satisfies Criteria A and J****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 Lavery				X	
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5			1	

ADDRESS: 1651 KINSEY ST

Name of Resource: Burial ground, Campbell A.M.E. Church of Frankford

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Campbell African Methodist Episcopal Church

Nominator: Joseph Menkevich

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the burial ground and site at 1651 Kinsey Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The church, Campbell AME Church of Frankford, is already listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as of 4 February 1982. This nomination seeks to highlight the historic significance of the site itself. The nomination contends that the site satisfies Criteria for Designation A, I, and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the site is associated with the lives of persons significant in the past, including persons associated with the AME Church of the Borough of Frankford and landowners of properties that were conveyed to the Church. The nomination provides biographies of those persons. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the site exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social and historical heritage of the Black community of Frankford. Under Criterion I, the nomination argues that the site, which is labeled on an 1834 map as “Burying Ground and Meeting of the Blacks” may be likely to yield information important in pre-history or history, as a large section of the cemetery remains undisturbed, and the church building on the remaining section appears to have been constructed in a way to not disturb the burials which lie beneath.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the site at 1651 Kinsey Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, I, and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:16:05**PRESENTERS:**

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

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman asked for confirmation that this nomination is for the site and burial ground rather than the church building itself.
 - o Ms. Chantry confirmed this. She stated that the church building was designated as historic in 1982.
- Ms. Chantry explained that, based on Mr. Menkevich's research, the extent of the burial ground reaches under the current church building, as the earliest burials pre-date the current church building.
- Ms. Barucco asked for clarification on the boundaries of the 1982 designation of the church building.
 - o Ms. Chantry responded that the option to designate for archaeological significance was not available in 1982 when the church building was designated as historic.
 - o Mr. Farnham confirmed that it was not until 1985 that the revised historic preservation ordinance called out archaeology specifically as one of the Criteria for Designation. He stated that the earlier preservation ordinance authorizes the Historical Commission to designate "buildings." He opined that Mr. Menkevich has nominated this not only to highlight the importance of the burial ground and its archaeological potential, but also to ensure that the Historical Commission does have jurisdiction over archaeological resources on the entire site.
- Ms. Barucco stated that this was a fascinating nomination for which an incredible amount of work was done.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the site is worthy of historic designation. She commented that the nomination was difficult to read.
 - o Ms. Milroy suggested that a chronological timeline at an early point in the nomination would help. She stated that the nomination contained an amazing amount of research. She stated that the nomination did not contain much information around burial customs of people of African American descent in this country. She stated that grave markers, for example, were typically made of ephemeral materials, and it is not uncommon to encounter African American burial grounds with very few grave markers because they either did not use them, or the grave markers have deteriorated with age.
- Mr. Cohen asked if this designation would provide additional protection to the burial ground.
 - o Ms. Cooperman confirmed that it would.
- Ms. Miller agreed that the nomination was difficult to read and that a timeline could help. She stated that she supports the designation. She noted that, with the fluidity of lot lines in the past, there is a high potential for expansion of the burial ground into the adjacent lots. She stated that there is a tremendous amount of Philadelphia history in this ground.
 - o Ms. Milroy agreed, noting that ground penetrating radar could be a method to confirm where the burials are at this site.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The church building, Campbell AME Church of Frankford, was listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as of 4 February 1982.
- The current nomination covers the site itself rather than the church building.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The site is associated with the lives of persons significant in the past, including persons associated with the AME Church of the Borough of Frankford and landowners of properties that were conveyed to the Church, satisfying Criterion A.
- The site may be likely to yield information important in pre-history or history, as a large section of the cemetery remains undisturbed, and the church building on the remaining section appears to have been constructed in a way to not disturb the burials which lie beneath, satisfying Criterion I.
- The site exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social and historical heritage of the Black community of Frankford, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the site at 1651 Kinsey Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, I, and J.

ITEM: 1651 KINSEY ST					
MOTION: Satisfies Criteria A, I, and J					
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 Lavery	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 1031 SHACKAMAXON ST

Name of Resource: Joseph Langer Building

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Kathryn Bartolomeo

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1031 Shackamaxon Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the Joseph Langer Building satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that the building fronting Day Street reflects the environment in an era characterized by vernacular, half-gambrel “flounders” of frame construction. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the property represents the historical heritage of the neighborhood’s early period of development, as well as the cultural, economic, industrial, and social history of the people who founded and formed Fishtown and the larger Kensington community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1031 Shackamaxon Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:27:35

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Beisert thanked the staff and Committee for reviewing the nomination. He contended that the building is a rare surviving frame “flounder.” He added that the property served as an industrial building. He noted that frame buildings like this one were once found throughout the River Wards, though now few remain. He commented that there is a possibility that the building was constructed earlier and moved to this site. That practice, he continued, was so common in the nineteenth century that a law was enacted to prohibit it.
- Ms. Miller requested clarification on the boundary, questioning whether the main block outlined in the boundary description is the only portion of the property intended to be designated.
 - o Mr. Beisert stated that he identified the main block of the building as being contributing to the property, because he could not determine the date of the rear portion of the building. Currently, the one-story rear portion would be considered non-contributing. He clarified that the entire parcel is intended to be designated.
- Ms. Barucco stated that the rear is identified as non-contributing, but only because Mr. Beisert could not find information on it. She suggested that it may very well be contributing and cautioned against its exclusion based on a lack of information.
 - o Mr. Beisert agreed, noting that the purpose of the nomination is to protect the two-and-a-half-story volume that fronts Day Street. He reiterated that he has no additional information on the one-story rear portion of the building. Because of the lack of information, he noted that he made no assertions about it. He remarked that he would not object to classifying the rear as contributing if the Committee finds it to be warranted.
- Ms. Miller stated that Criterion I should be considered for the property. She noted that several years ago, at 1026 Shackamaxon Street, there was a major archaeological effort on a four-foot strip of land along I-95. From that effort, she continued, dozens of features were recovered, along with several hundred Native American objects. She commented that, at this property, there would be archaeological resources that would relate to industrial activities and the other buildings that once existed near the site.
- Mr. Cohen explained that many flounders did not occupy the full width of the lot and were often entered on the long side rather than the front. A few examples in the nomination show that as a sub-type.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Celeste Morello supported the nomination.
- Venise Whitaker supported the nomination.
- Kristen Pomroy supported the nomination.
- Steven Peitzman supported the nomination.

- John Scott supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The nomination proposes to designate the entire parcel of 1031 Shackamaxon Street, though it identifies only the two-and-a-half-story “flounder” as contributing. The one-story rear portion of the building is identified as non-contributing in the nomination, owing to a lack of information; however, the one-story addition could potentially contribute to the property’s significance.
- The property is located next to I-95 in Fishtown, an area with high potential for archaeology, as evidenced by the recovery of numerous archaeological resources from a neighboring property. The property at 1031 Shackamaxon Street formerly housed both residential and industrial uses, and artifacts from those uses are likely to be uncovered in the future.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The half-gambrel frame “flounder” fronting Day Street represents the once-common building type historically found throughout the River Wards. The nomination satisfies Criterion C.
- The property has high archaeological potential and satisfies Criterion I.
- The property represents the industrial and residential development of the Fishtown community and satisfies Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1031 Shackamaxon Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C, I, and J.

ITEM: 1031 SHACKAMAXON ST

MOTION: Satisfies Criteria C and J; add Criterion I

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 Laverty	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	6				

Ms. Milroy excused herself from the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

ADDRESS: 919-21 LOMBARD ST

Name of Resource: Smith Whipper Houses

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Hutchinson Properties Partnership LP

Nominator: Donna J. Rilling and Michael Clemmons

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 919-21 Lombard Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property, which encompasses two formerly separate rowhouses constructed circa 1840, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, B, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination asserts that the property is significant as the former residences of important African American abolitionists, reformers, businessmen, and civic activists Stephen and Harriet Smith and William and Harriet Whipper. Stephen Smith purchased the property at 921 Lombard Street in 1840 from fellow abolitionist Robert Purvis and resided there until his death in 1873; his wife continued to live there until her death in 1880. The Whippers purchased 919 Lombard Street in 1867. The Smiths and the Whippers were central to voluntary organizations focused on the betterment of impoverished Philadelphians, aided freedom seekers, were at the forefront of antislavery efforts, and were key activists of the region's Black community. Under Criterion B, the nomination explains that the Smiths hosted key leaders of the antislavery movement, including John Brown, William Still, Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Carnet, at their home in March 1858 as part of a fundraising campaign for Brown's Harpers Ferry mission.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 919-21 Lombard Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, B, and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:46:10

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Donna Rilling and Michael Clemmons represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Rilling said the Smiths and the Whippers were very prominent individuals in the mid nineteenth century. She noted she and Mr. Clemmons focused the nomination primarily on the events after Stephen Smith and William Whipper came to Philadelphia but also touched on their background when they were in Columbia, Pennsylvania. She explained that they maintained ties to Columbia, Pennsylvania during their time in Philadelphia.
- Mr. Clemmons described that Smith and Whipper's involvement in the Underground Railroad was through their lumber business. He noted that they used railcars—approximately 22 to 25 rail cars—to transport lumber between Columbia, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia. He continued that these rail cars had secret compartments in them that were used to transport fugitive slaves as well. Mr. Clemmons noted that Stephen Smith, in addition to being an AME minister, was also the also the treasurer of Mother Bethel AME Church between 1849 and 1850.
- Ms. Cooperman said she is pleased to see this nomination and that Stephen Smith is finally being recognized in Philadelphia as it is long overdue.

- Ms. Miller asked the Committee members their thoughts on adding Criterion I to the Criteria for Designation of the nomination. She said that although the property lot is small there is information in the nomination that suggests that there may be privies on the site.
 - o Ms. Cooperman agreed with this suggestion.
- Mr. Cohen said the nomination is well researched and written. He continued that it is an amazing story and that he supports the nomination. Mr. Cohen agreed with adding Criterion I.
- Ms. Barucco said she thought the nomination was well-researched and she learned a lot from it. She expressed concern that there was only one paragraph addressing Criterion B. She wondered if that was enough to support this criterion.
 - o Ms. Miller contended that she thought the significance of the meeting described in the single paragraph was enough to include Criterion B.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub supported the nomination.
- Oscar Beisert supported the nomination.
- Christopher Vera, Director of the Columbia Historic Preservation Society, supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The nomination is well researched and written and presents a strong case for designation.
- Although the property lot is small there is information in the nomination that suggests this may be an area of high archaeological potential.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The Smiths and the Whippers were central to voluntary organizations focused on the betterment of impoverished Philadelphians, aided freedom seekers, were at the forefront of antislavery efforts, and were key activists of the region's Black community, satisfying Criteria A and J.
- The Smiths hosted key leaders of the antislavery movement at their home in March 1858 as part of a fundraising campaign for Brown's Harpers Ferry mission, satisfying Criterion B.
- The property has high archaeological potential and satisfies Criterion I.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 919-21 Lombard Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, B, I, and J.

ITEM: 919-21 LOMBARD ST**MOTION: Satisfies Criteria A, B, J; add Criterion I****MOVED BY: Miller****SECONDED BY: Lavery**

VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy					X
Total	5				1

ADDRESS: 6930 HEGERMAN ST

Name of Resource: Tacony Baptist Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Tacony Baptist Church

Nominator: Tacony Community Development Corporation

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 6930 Hegerman Street, historically known as Tacony Baptist Church, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination asserts under Criterion J that the congregation is one of the oldest religious institutions in Tacony and has been a part of the community's religious, social, cultural, and industrial history since its founding in 1881. The church, initially planned in 1883 and construction completed in 1885, is significant through its connection to the Disston family and as a gathering place for community members for over 135 years.

Under Criterion F, the nomination states that the 1915 addition was constructed of 2500 discarded grindstones from the nearby Disston Saw Works and is the only known sandstone church in the United States built of industrial by-products, thus earning the nickname "The Grindstone Church." In their original industrial and circular form, grindstones were used to sharpen saws during the production process but would be discarded after a few months of use. The use of grindstones in the construction of the church's sanctuary exemplifies the building's industrial roots in the Tacony neighborhood.

The proposed period of significance is 1883 to 1959. This date span reflects the 1883 date of construction planning through the establishment of the Northeast Geriatric Clinic at the church in 1959.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the building at 6930 Hegerman Street satisfies Criteria for Designation F and J. The staff also recommends a correction be made to the nomination on page 11. The church did not close during the Covid-19 pandemic but implemented alternate ways of meeting to protect the health of its members.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:59:55

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Alexander Balloon and Amarynth Ruch represented the nomination.
- Reverend Evelyn Barnes represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Reverend Barnes stated she is the interim pastor at the Tacony Baptist Church located at 6930 Hegerman Street. She said that Tacony Baptist is arguably one of the oldest churches in Philadelphia having existed since 1884 without ceasing its operation or compromising its identity or integrity as an organized Christian body. Rev. Barnes stated on behalf of the church that the congregation expresses its gratitude to the Committee on Historic Designation for considering the nomination and to the nominator, the Tacony Community Development Corporation, for writing and submitting the nomination. She noted that while her church only recently became aware of the nomination, the church members at Tacony Baptist have long been aware of their uniqueness and historic significance of the church edifice, the remarkable structure, and rich history, which have been a cause for much Thanksgiving and celebration for many years. Rev. Barnes noted that there has been interest in pursuing historic designation by some of their members. She acknowledged limited understanding regarding the significance of designation. Rev. Barnes concluded her remarks stating that she enthusiastically expresses the congregation's desire to have a favorable recommendation from the Committee and final approval from the Historical Commission.
- Ms. Cooperman said she is very pleased to see this nomination as she has spent a fair amount of time in Tacony researching historic resources. She noted that the Tacony Baptist Church has played a crucial role in the history of Tacony and it is wonderful to see this nomination before the Committee.
- Ms. Barucco expressed her appreciation for Reverend Barnes and her congregation's enthusiasm for the proposed nomination.
- Mr. Cohen asked Ms. Cooperman if the architect Hazelhurst & Huckle were active in Tacony.
 - o Ms. Cooperman responded there is very little evidence about any architect being involved in anything in Tacony and it is an odd anomaly. She noted there was kind of an inside building works within Keystone Saw Works and the Disstons. Ms. Cooperman said it seems like they often built things without the need of an architect. She suggested that she was not aware of Hazelhurst & Huckle doing design work in Tacony but it is possible that may have happened.
- Mr. Cohen said Hazelhurst & Huckle could have been one of many architects that may have designed the original church, but he does believe it was done by a professional architect. He pointed out that although it is called Shingle Style in the nomination, Queen Anne is more accurate.
- Ms. Cooperman said she agreed that it was done by a professional architect. She added that it is remarkable how information about Tacony failed to make it into the Builders Guide, for example, and she is not sure why that is.
- Mr. Cohen said the nomination is very well done and is certainly a building worthy of being included in the Philadelphia Register. He heartily endorsed it.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property owner supports the designation.
- Although an architect has not been identified, the original section of the church was likely designed by a professional architect.
- Architectural style is Queen Anne rather than Shingle Style as described in the nomination.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The 1915 addition was constructed of 2500 discarded grindstones from the nearby Disston Saw Works and is the only known sandstone church in the United States built of industrial by-products, satisfying Criterion F.
- The Tacony Baptist Church congregation is one of the oldest religious institutions in Tacony and has been a part of the community's religious, social, cultural, and industrial history since its founding in 1881, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 6930 Hegerman Street satisfies Criteria for Designation F and J.

ITEM: 6930 HEGERMAN ST					
MOTION: Satisfies Criteria F and J					
MOVED BY: Barucco					
SECONDED BY: Lavery					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy					X
Total	5				1

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 12:43 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.