

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

**WEDNESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2023
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

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

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

The following staff members were present:

- Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

- Ferdinand Morrison
- Harrison Finberg
- Meredith Trego, Esq., Ballard Spahr
- Steven Peitzman
- Barbara Hauck-Mah, Bella Vista Neighbors Association
- Hal Schirmer, Esq.
- Ruth I. Birchett
- Douglas Green
- Steph Garcia
- Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance
- Marie-Line Germain
- Judith Robinson
- Drew Barnhart, Society to Preserve Philadelphia African American Assets
- Lili Razi
- Jonathan Hugg
- Deborah Gary, Society to Preserve Philadelphia African American Assets

Kevin McMahon
David J. Koeppe
Amber N. Wiley, Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites
Ed Senenman
Alex Balloon
Ralph Marano, Bella Vista Neighbors Association
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society
Jacqueline Wiggins, Society to Preserve Philadelphia African American Assets
Nancy Pontone
John Coleman, Esq.
Allison Weiss, SoLo/Germantown Civic Association
Randy Mason, Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 1402-04 W OXFORD ST

Name of Resource: Barber's Hall

Review: Designation

Property Owner: 1402 West Oxford Street Realty Holding Company

Nominator: Drew Barnhart, Society for the Preservation of Philadelphia African American Assets, Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites

Staff Contact: Ted Maust, theodore.maust@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes designating the property at 1402-04 W. Oxford Street as historic and listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building, constructed as an Italianate rowhouse between 1863 and 1868, and then renovated into a clubhouse for the Quaker City Wheelmen in 1895, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and J. The nomination argues that the façade, which dates from the 1895 renovation, embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Renaissance Revival style, satisfying Criterion D. The nomination further argues that the building's use by a wide variety of social clubs including several cycling clubs, the Philadelphia Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, the Arion Gesang Verein, and the National Barber's Sunshine Club makes it eligible for designation under Criterion J. Finally, the nomination argues that the history of musical performances at the building by acts including Boyz II Men satisfies Criterion A.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1402-04 W. Oxford Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:04:30

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Maust presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Drew Barnhart and Deborah Gary, of the Society to Preserve Philadelphia African American Assets (SPPAAA), represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cohen complimented the nominators on the quality of the research. He stated that he was unaware of the existence of over 100 bicycle clubs in the late nineteenth

century, but that, from what he had seen, the various cycling clubhouses were distinctively designed in a “recreational architecture.” Mr. Cohen emphasized that the style of this particular clubhouse was that of a chapter of the Renaissance Revival specific to the 1890s, distinct from earlier Classical Revival aesthetics.

- Ms. Milroy applauded the nominator for capturing the story of the subject property's importance to the various communities which have called the area home, with special emphasis on the neighborhood today.
- Ms. Barucco noted that the property is part of a growing set of former clubhouses that have been nominated recently. She expressed support for the designation.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Judith Robinson opposed the designation, citing the property owner's lack of involvement.
- Amber Wiley, director of the Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights Sites which acted as a co-nominator, supported the nomination.
- Jacqueline Wiggins, SPPAAA member, supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The subject property is an example of a particular era of the Renaissance Revival Style typified by delicate scale and use of Pompeian brick.
- As a place for societies and clubs to gather, the subject property has been representative of various demographic groups which have made the surrounding neighborhood their home over time.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion A for its history as a performance venue, in that it has hosted locally and nationally important musical acts including Boyz II Men.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion D as an example of the Renaissance Revival style.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion J as a gathering place for many different clubs and associations over its existence, which in turn exemplifies the cultural and social history of the neighborhood.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1402-04 W. Oxford Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and J.

ITEM: 1402-04 W OXFORD ST MOTION: Designate; Criteria A, D, J MOVED BY: Barucco SECONDED BY: Miller					
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: 1538 KERBAUGH ST

Name of Resource: Roy "Campy" Campanella Childhood Home

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: James A. Pender Jr.

Nominator: Historical Commission staff

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination contends that the property at 1538 Kerbaugh Street, known as the Roy "Campy" Campanella Childhood Home, is historically significant and should be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination asserts that the property satisfies Criterion for Designation A; it "is associated with the life of a person significant in the past," Roy Campanella, a Hall of Fame catcher who helped break the color barrier in professional baseball in the United States. Roy Campanella was born on November 19, 1921. His parents, John and Ida Campanella, purchased the property at 1538 Kerbaugh Street in 1928, when Roy was six years old, about to turn seven. Roy lived in the house for the remainder of his childhood, until he was 16, when he left to play professional baseball, but returned to visit throughout the Campanella family's ownership of the property until 1988. Roy Campanella is considered one of the greatest catchers to play baseball. The child of a Black mother and Sicilian father, Campanella played in the Negro League before overcoming racism and intolerance to break the color barrier and join the Brooklyn Dodgers, playing alongside Jackie Robinson. A superstar, Campanella holds numerous records, was selected as an All Star and Most Valuable Player several times, and won a World Series before an injury in an automobile accident cut his career short. In 1969, he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, baseball's highest honor.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the property at 1538 Kerbaugh Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A for its association with baseball legend Roy Campanella.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:29:15

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Milroy commended the nomination as a model of research and detail in documenting Roy Campanella's childhood and continued connection to the city. She noted that the nomination also provides an interesting insight into the history of disability, noting Campanella's sister is quoted as saying it was difficult for him to visit the home following his accident because he was in a wheelchair.
- Ms. Barucco conceded that she had never heard of Roy Campanella before the nomination and was blown away by his story. She noted that she found all the baseball statistics difficult to wade through but loved the extent of the research in the nomination and that the writer's affection for Campanella and baseball was evident. She opined that Figure 41, which shows Campanella in the wheelchair with everyone in the Los Angeles stadium celebrating him with lit matches and creating a background of points of light, captured Campanella's ebullient personality. She noted that Campanella was an amazing person to have pushed through so much discrimination and adversity following the accident and still emerged as a positive person.
- Mr. Cohen joked that he suspects the writer had a baseball card collection. He noted that even though nomination cites only Criterion A, it also provides an interesting history and description of middle-class housing in North Philadelphia.
- Ms. Miller noted that she actually has an original Campy Campanella baseball card and agreed that the nomination was wonderfully researched and written. She agreed with Ms. Milroy that in addition to its argument for Campanella's significance, it provides an interesting history of disability and how it has an impact on the built environment and ultimately led to the Americans with Disabilities Act. She also commented that there is an interesting immigration component to the Campanella story with his Sicilian father.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance supported the nomination. She noted that the property was recently profiled in the "Unlisted" section of the Preservation Alliance's Fall 2023 magazine *Extant* and was happy to learn that the Historical Commission staff was working on a nomination. She stated that she spoke with the property owner during their research, and he was aware of the history of the home and proud of it. She stated that she hopes he has heard about the nomination.
- Judith Robinson supported the nomination, noting that Campanella was a world-class athlete. She commented that the Historical Commission must be careful about the designation process and its impact on black people's economic stability. She stated that the Committee on Historic Designation lacks diversity.
- Deborah Gary of the Society to Preserve Philadelphia African American Assets supported the nomination. She noted that Campanella has a state historic marker in front of Gratz High School, and that there are many sites around the city that may have state recognition but not city designation. She acknowledged that not every property needs to be designated, but that it is nice to see this property recognized and added to the Philadelphia Register.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- Roy Campanella lived at this property from 1928 to around 1946, when he began his professional baseball career, but frequently visited his family home until it was sold in 1988.

- Campanella was the child of a Black mother and Sicilian father and played in the Negro League before overcoming racism and intolerance to break the color barrier and join the Brooklyn Dodgers, playing alongside Jackie Robinson.
- Campanella was paralyzed in a car accident in 1958 and used a wheelchair for the remainder of his life, which made it difficult for him to access his family home.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion A for its association with Roy “Campy” Campanella, a Hall of Fame catcher who helped break the color barrier in professional baseball in the United States.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1538 Kerbaugh Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A.

ITEM: 1538 KERBAUGH ST MOTION: Designate; Criterion A MOVED BY: Milroy SECONDED BY: Miller					
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: 915-17 S 11TH ST

Name of Resource: South Philadelphia State Bank

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: White Birch Ventures LLC

Nominator: Bella Vista Neighbors Association

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 915-17 S. 11th Street, historically known as the South Philadelphia State Bank, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J. Constructed in 1919 to serve Italian immigrants, the building is an excellent example of an Italian Renaissance Revival style bank, satisfying Criterion C. The South Philadelphia State Bank was an important institution that allowed immigrants to send funds back to relatives living in Italy and accrue savings for their new lives in the United States, satisfying Criterion J. The period of significance is 1919 to 1924, during the period when the bank occupied the building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the property at 915-17 S. 11th Street, the South Philadelphia State Bank, satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:41:38

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Ralph Marano of the Bella Vista Neighbors Association represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Milroy inquired about the aftermath of the banking scandal described in the nomination as it relates to Criterion J. She observed that the bank was closed after the scandal broke but was curious what happened to the building. Ms. Milroy wondered if the community associated it with the scandal and if members of the community had negative feelings about it. She commented that it would have been helpful to include more history of the building after the bank vacated, rather than learning only about 10 years of the building's history.
 - o Mr. Marano responded that he does not know what the building was used for after the bank closed but before it was converted to apartments in the 1980s.
- Mr. Cohen noted that the property is highly visible, owing to the width of 11th Street, which was historically wide to accommodate a street market.
- Mr. Cohen opined that the building is more of a medieval style rather than Romanesque.
- Ms. Barucco noted a correction needed for the source of Figure 12 in the nomination.
- Ms. Cooperman pointed out that some of the details had been removed but the attic story/parapet remained. Some Committee members recommended revising wording in Figure 9 to clarify this fact.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the building's Neo-Classical details are very much of their construction period rather than of the Italian Renaissance.
- Ms. Barucco thanked the Bella Vista Neighbors Association for submitting the nomination.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The nomination solely focuses on the time when the South Philadelphia State Bank occupied the building from 1919 to 1924. Additional history about subsequent occupants and types of use during its existence would have added another dimension to the nomination's narrative.
- The building's design includes Neo-Classical detailing and subtle brickwork that were hallmark elements of bank design during the early twentieth century.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates the building is a fine example of an early twentieth-century bank design inspired by Romanesque and Classical styles, satisfying Criterion C.
- The nomination demonstrates that the South Philadelphia State Bank was an important institution to its community and neighborhood, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 915-17 S. 11th Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J.

ITEM: 915-17 S 11TH ST MOTION: Designate; Criteria C and J 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
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				1

ADDRESS: 2037 S BROAD ST

Name of Resource: Beneficial Savings Fund Society, South Philadelphia Branch

Proposed Action: Designate

Property Owner: Moday Realty LLC

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2037 S. Broad Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the former Beneficial Saving Fund Society Bank building, constructed in 1928, satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. This location served as the second branch office of this well-known local banking institution headquartered at 12th and Chestnut Streets. Beneficial engaged the prominent architectural firm of Horace Trumbauer to design the South Philadelphia branch building; the firm also designed the Beneficial headquarters at 1200 Chestnut Street. Sources suggest that Julian Abele, the first Black graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's architecture department in 1902 and Trumbauer's chief designer from 1909 to 1938, likely oversaw the design of the building.

As Philadelphia's residents moved further away from Center City during the early part of the twentieth century, banks increasingly constructed branches in outlying neighborhoods to serve their customers' banking needs. The branch banks including Beneficial's South Philadelphia branch were often among the most prominent and architecturally distinctive buildings in their neighborhoods. This building stands as a high-quality example of the Classical Revival neighborhood bank of the 1920s, satisfying Criteria C and D. It is an important work by the renowned Philadelphia architectural firm of Horace Trumbauer, with Julian Abele serving as chief designer during this period, satisfying Criterion E. The proposed period of significance is 1928 to 2012, which represents the year of construction through the year the bank sold the building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2037 S. Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:54:56

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance represented the nomination.
- Attorney John Coleman, Douglas Green of MSC Retail, and Ed Senenman of Moday Realty represented the property.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Coleman expressed opposition to the historic designation of the property. He stated that it is quite clear that the nomination has failed to demonstrate satisfaction of any Criteria. Mr. Coleman pointed to the images in the presentation of the building and stated that 2037 S. Broad Street is a pleasant but pedestrian bank building and, based on the evidence presented in the nomination, it was designed by an unknown architect. He added that, for these reasons alone, the nomination should be denied. Mr. Coleman stated that the primary basis of the nomination is the tenuous possibility that Julian Abele designed this building, which would satisfy Criterion E. He stated that, as the Committee heard from the nominator and was also outlined in the written opposition provided in advance of the meeting, there is only a limited possibility or likelihood that Mr. Abele oversaw the design of this building. He noted that the nomination points to the fact Mr. Abele was rarely, if ever, credited with the design of the buildings at Horace Trumbauer's firm. Mr. Coleman disputed this, stating that a mere glance into the history of Mr. Abele shows that this was not the case, noting that there have been multiple buildings such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Widener Library, and Duke Library, among others that have all been attributed to Mr. Abele. He said there is nothing submitted in the historical record that shows any explicit connection of Mr. Abele to the design of this building, aside from the fact that he was the lead architect at the Trumbauer firm at this time. Mr. Coleman pointed out that the Trumbauer firm designed over 400 buildings and contended that it would be wholly improper to designate every single one of them because Mr. Abele was the lead architect for the firm at the time. He concluded that designating this property because Mr. Abele was somehow involved with this building would not only be a mistake but exceed the statutory authority of the Committee. Mr. Coleman stated his intent to address other claims made in the nomination. He noted that the nomination claims that the building is an embodiment or reflection of the Classical Revival architectural era. Mr. Coleman cited the other examples in the nomination and contended that 2037 S. Broad Street does not meet the standard set by the other example buildings shown. He emphasized that it is a plain limestone bank building. He concluded that it is clear that the nomination has failed to demonstrate satisfaction of the Criteria for Designation required to designate it as historic.
- Mr. Green stated that his area of expertise is finding tenants for retail properties in Philadelphia. He stated that a historic designation of this property would create an undue hardship on the owner and have a significant negative impact on the value of the property. Mr. Green explained that he came to this conclusion after studying leasing efforts, visiting the property, and studying similar properties on the market.
 - o Ms. Cooperman explained that the purview of the Committee on Historic Designation is to make recommendations to the Historical Commission on whether a property meets one or more Criteria for Designation listed in the historic preservation ordinance. She explained that the Committee does not

- weigh in on economic matters and therefore cannot consider Mr. Green's assessment in their final recommendation to the Historical Commission.
- o Mr. Coleman stated that Mr. Green's testimony is relevant. He asked that Mr. Green's report and letter be recognized and provided to the Historical Commission when it reviews this nomination and associated materials.
 - o Ms. Cooperman noted that these materials are already available to the public and will be available to the Historical Commission prior to its meeting.
 - Mr. Senenman explained that the last tenant vacated the property in July 2020, and it has been marketed for sale and lease since that time. He stated that there has not been much interest, and the burden of designation will add an additional hurdle on the leasing and marketing efforts.
 - Ms. Milroy stated that the nomination makes an argument for historic significance. She noted two points to consider, first, that this would have been a suburban type of bank with a smaller scale than Center City banks, and, second, that the nomination does an acceptable job of demonstrating that there is a connection to Mr. Abele, as Trumbauer's chief of design, who would have seen this design and was likely involved in approving it and moving it forward with the client.
 - Ms. Cooperman opined that it would be rare and particularly unlikely in Trumbauer's office to ascribe a specific project to one designer; however, the building is a product of the Trumbauer office and Horace Trumbauer's name is on it. She explained that Mr. Abele's title in the office was Chief of Design, so he was supervising design in the office at the time this building was designed and built. Ms. Cooperman continued that the extent of Mr. Abele's involvement in the design of this building is unknowable and there is no paper record. She said the author of the nomination, Kevin McMahon, addressed Mr. Abele's role in a measured, balanced, and accurate way, and there is no claim made that it is known for certain that Julian Abele designed this building. She commented that as Chief of Design, Mr. Abele would have had a hand in all projects in the office, and Mr. Trumbauer too, but there is no record of the specific architect that designed this building, if there even was only one architect. Ms. Cooperman stated that the thing that can be said for certain is that this is a Horace Trumbauer office design, and that Julian Abele was Chief of Design at the time this building was designed and built, and those are the facts that can be established.
 - Ms. Barucco remarked that the significance outlined in the nomination does not rest solely on Mr. Abele's participation in the project. She opined that the nominator makes a cogent argument for Criteria C and D regarding the style of the building and its connection to other bank buildings.
 - Ms. Milroy commented on the smaller scale and related context of the property owing to its South Philadelphia location.
 - Mr. Cohen expressed support for the nomination, and in particular the discussion of the cultural moment embodied in the Victorian designs in terms of their individuality and extravagance, and how this building reflects a different cultural moment in the 1920s. He pointed out the monumentality of the doorway and the complete stone front and sides which makes the building stand out. He stated that the building has a thoughtful design made to associate itself with a kind of Classicism that was becoming a kind of civic language that banks bought into. Mr. Cohen concluded by commenting that the original building plans would have been stamped with something like "The Office of Horace Trumbauer" and the authorship would have been to this office.

- Ms. Cooperman stated that this building is recognizable as a design of Trumbauer's office, owing to the scale of the openings, the detailing of the masonry, and the proportions of the parapet.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Judith Robinson commented in opposition to the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The nomination addressed the involvement of architect Julian Abele's role in a measured, balanced, and accurate way. He was Chief of Design in Horace Trumbauer's office at the time the bank building at 2037 S. Broad Street was designed and built. The nomination does not make a claim that it is known for certain that Julian Abele designed this building, but that as Chief of Design, Mr. Abele would have been involved with all projects in the office including this building.
- The nomination argues successfully for Criteria C, D, and E, and does not rely on Mr. Abele's involvement alone for significance.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the building satisfies Criteria C and D as an excellent example of a Classical Revival neighborhood bank of the 1920s.
- The nomination demonstrates that the building satisfies Criterion E as an important work by the renowned Philadelphia architectural firm of Horace Trumbauer, with Julian Abele employed as Chief of Design during this period.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2037 S. Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E.

ITEM: 2037 S BROAD ST					
MOTION: Designate; Criteria C, D, E					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
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: 684-86 N BROAD ST

Name of Resource: American Trust, Loan, and Guaranteed Investment Company

Proposed Action: Designate

Property Owner: Gloria and Justo Guzman

Nominator: Historical Commission staff

Staff Contact: Heather Hendrickson, heather.hendrickson@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 684-86 N. Broad Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building, constructed for the American Trust, Loan, and Guaranteed Investment Company in 1890, satisfies Criteria for Designation D, H, and J. Under Criterion D, the nomination maintains that the building, designed by the architectural firm of Baker & Dallett, embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Under Criterion H, the nomination argues that owing to its unique location at the intersection of Broad Street, Ridge Avenue, and Fairmount Avenue, and owing to it being one of only two remaining structures from the 19th Century at this intersection, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, and city. The nomination illustrates the building, erected during the heyday of Philadelphia's Gilded Age and originally serving the *nouveau riche* community of North Broad Street, was later repurposed to accommodate a new identity when North Broad Street transformed into an automotive landscape, exemplifying the cultural, political, economic, and social heritage of the community and satisfying Criterion for Designation J. The period of significance for this property is proposed as starting in 1890, the year it was constructed, and ending in 1928, the year the Broad Street line subway entrance was completed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 684-86 N. Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, H, and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:30:46

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman explained that the Historical Commission has the authority to designate buildings in poor condition. She opined that much of the building remains under the billboard, but that the tower has been lost.
- Ms. Milroy pointed to another similar important five-point intersection in Philadelphia at 40th Street and Lancaster Avenue which boasts a similar massive financial building, the West Philadelphia Title and Trust Company. She expressed difficulty in understanding the requirements for satisfaction of Criterion H.
 - o Ms. Cooperman explained the definition of a "landmark" was not set in stone but must rise above merely being a familiar building.
- Mr. Cohen opined that even though the tower did not survive, the tower claimed it to be a landmark. He added that if the billboard were removed, its uncovered diagonal face would give it more presence.
 - o Ms. Cooperman commented that the presence of the Divine Lorraine at the same intersection made it more difficult to determine if this property could be considered significant under Criterion H.

- o Ms. Milroy pointed to the multiple street-fronting facades of 684-86 N. Broad Street, which differentiates it from the Divine Lorraine.
- Mr. Cohen pointed to some inaccuracies in the nomination including on page 11 which pointed to Romanesque Revival being influenced by the ideas of Ancient Rome. He disagreed with a description on page 32 referencing “Furness-inspired detailing”, and stated he believed the detailing was opposite Furness-inspired due to its delicate nature. He also noted an error on page 15 which stated that Broad Street was uninterrupted until 1872, adding that a Water Works was in the center of Penn square from 1799/1801 until 1827.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Allison Weiss, representing SoLo/Germantown Civic Association, commented in support of the nomination.
- Oscar Beisert, representing the Keeping Society, commented in support of the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The Historical Commission can designate properties even if they appear to be in a state of disrepair.
- The building on the property has lost its tower, but many other architectural details remain.
- The West Philadelphia Title and Trust Company on the corner of 40th Street and Lancaster Avenue is a similar property in terms of function and placement.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion D for its Richardsonian Romanesque style.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion H owing to its multiple street-facing facades and unique location at the intersection of Broad Street, Ridge Avenue, and Fairmount Avenue, being an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion J; it is a representative product of the North Philadelphia Gilded Age and adaptively reused over time to fill the needs of the community including being part of the Automobile Row landscape of N. Broad Street.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 684-86 N. Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, H, and J.

ITEM: 684-86 N BROAD ST MOTION: Designate; Criteria D, H, J MOVED BY: Cohen SECONDED BY: Milroy					
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: 5131-37 WALNUT ST

Name of Resource: The Louis G. Groh Building

Proposed Action: Designate

Property Owner: 5131 Walnut Property LLC

Nominator: Historical Commission staff

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5131-37 Walnut Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. A two-story steel and masonry commercial building known as the Louis G. Groh Building, designed by the architect Harry Gordon McMurtrie in the Art Deco style and built in 1929-30, stands on the property.

The nomination contends that the Louis G. Groh Building satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. It argues that the building reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style and embodies many of the distinguishing characteristics of the Art Deco architectural style as seen on commercial buildings, satisfying Criteria C and D.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5131-37 Walnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:45:00

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Milroy asked that page numbers be included on all nominations.
- Mr. Cohen commented that the nomination's discussion on style could have been more specific. He explained that the building looks atypical to be simply called Art Deco and that it looks to more be referencing its materials and features in a way that is uncommon to that style. He stated that trying to force it into a specific stylistic category is too simplistic in this case.

- Ms. Barucco agreed but also questioned what style name would be better suited to this building. She added that she also does not see a lot of Spanish Revival elements in the example either, as referenced in the nomination.
- Mr. Cohen commented that it is acceptable to take exceptions to rigid stylistic categories and call that out in a nomination.
- Ms. Cooperman added that the Committee on Historic Designation sees examples like this repeatedly and the problem is that the wording of the Criteria for Designation leads to issues like this. She went on to say that she sees this building as an example of the Commercial style with some Gothic and other features as well. She added that Art Deco is a term that was coined later and applied retroactively. She stated the building is a wonderful example of a commercial building from this time period. She highlighted the terracotta façade and added that she is reminded of west coast buildings.
- Mr. Cohen observed that the building references its steel construction with its large expansive window openings.
- Ms. Milroy commented that the Criteria as written do not specify that architectural style needs to be defined by any particular source but specifies style in general. She suggested that the Committee encourage nominators to think further about style to avoid pigeonholing buildings.
- Mr. Cohen observed that the houses designed by this architect look completely different than this building.
- Ms. Cooperman noted that architectural style terminology tends to result in pigeonholing. She commented that terminology is anachronistic and was often not used at the time of construction. She suggested that there may not have been a name for a set of details used on this building at the time it was constructed.
 - o Mr. Cohen agreed. He stated that nominations allow room for an author to say something more specific about a building's style.
- Ms. Miller commented that although she does not have expertise in architectural history, she is taken with terracotta buildings like this one. She noted that the nomination does not go into much discussion on why terracotta was chosen for this façade, and opined that the material deserves more attention, and its history can be explored.
- Mr. Cohen applauded the nominator for finding the drawings of the tile installation from the manufacturer.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the building is worthy of historic designation even if its style is complicated and difficult to define.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property has significant architectural features, though it does not cleanly fit into a specifically defined style.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion C in that it reflects the environment characterized by a distinctive architectural style.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion D in that it embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5131-37 Walnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

ITEM: 5131-37 WALNUT ST					
MOTION: Designate; 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 Lavery					X
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				1

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:02:20

ACTION: The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

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

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

§14-1004. Designation.

(1) Criteria for Designation.

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

- (a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or professional engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or nation;
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;

- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park, or other distinctive area that should be preserved according to a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.