

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION

The thirty-seventh meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation began at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, 17 July 1990, in Room 791 City Hall.

Present: David Brownlee, Chairman of the Committee on Historic Designation
David Baldinger, Deputy Director, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Janet Klein
Sandra Tatman

Randal Baron, Preservation Planner
Ira Kauderer, Preservation Consultant

NEW BUSINESS

At the request of the Commission the Committee reviewed the significance of the buildings on Germantown Avenue now under review for demolition. The Committee received information from the Preservation Coalition and reviewed the files. The dates of the buildings determined from visual analyses and chain of title are as follows:

5324: c.1813
5326: c.1825, altered c.1890
5328: c.1825, altered c.1890

The buildings possess significance as examples of the early settlement of Germantown and the commercial history of Germantown Avenue in the late 19th century. They also are important to the streetscape of the National Historic Landmark Germantown Avenue and the proposed Penn Knox Historic District.

The Committee reviewed nominations for

The Philadelphia Inquirer Complex	400-440 N. Broad Street
Elverson and Rotogravure Buildings	
Rankin, Kellogg & Crane	1923
Albert Kahn Associates	1948

The buildings of the Philadelphia Inquirer Complex possess significance as fine examples of their style, as examples of the work of important architectural firms and as the embodiment of the history of this locally and nationally important newspaper. The Elverson Building, a landmark of the Philadelphia skyline demonstrates the characteristics of Modern Classicism in the 1920s. Its tall setback shape incorporates steel frame technology and classical Terra-cotta details. The firm of Rankin, Kellogg and Crane was one of Philadelphia's most important in the early twentieth century producing a number of Beaux-Arts governmental buildings around the country. In Philadelphia they designed the Marine Club building at Broad Street & Washington Avenue and the Provident Trust Company at 17th and Chestnut Streets. Albert Kahn & Associates, architects for the Rotogravure building are famous for revolutionizing the form of the industrial building. Mr. Kahn and his firm designed thousands of factory buildings using his "all under one roof" and "all on one floor" designs in both the United States and the Soviet Union. The buildings also possess significance as the home of the Philadelphia Inquirer, America's third oldest surviving newspaper and a major cultural institution in the City of Philadelphia and the region.

The Committee discussed the significance of the Elverson building and the attached Rotogravure plant. They agreed that the firm of Albert Kahn was very significant, but that the discussion of the firm needed to be strengthened in the nomination. They decided to vote separately on each of the buildings. The Committee voted 4-0 in favor of recommending the Elverson Building for designation and 3-1 in favor of recommending the Rotogravure building for designation.

1021 Chestnut Street	Mercantile Library
Martin, Stewart & Noble, Architects	1952

The Mercantile Library possesses significance as a fine and rare example of the International style in Philadelphia, as an important work of architect Sydney E. Martin and as the home of the Mercantile Library.

This building represents a particularly intact example of the International Style. Introduced in the late 1920s, this modern style exploited the technological possibilities of steel and glass to produce smooth curtain wall clad volumes. This style which placed high value on simplicity and clean lines altered architectural values for the better part of the 20th century. Sydney Martin, architect for the library had a very active career and served as president of

the Philadelphia Chapter of the A.I.A.. The design of the library proved so successful that it won the American Institute of Architects Gold Medal Award for 1952 and the Free Library commissioned the firm to build several of its branches. The building has additional importance as the home of the Mercantile Library, a private business library founded in 1822.

The Committee voted 4-0 in favor of recommending the Mercantile Library for designation.

1606 Chestnut Street
Albert W. Dilks

Isaac S. Miller Store
1890

The Miller Store possesses significance as a fine example of Victorian eclectic style and as the work of late 19th century architect, Albert W. Dilks. In the late 19th century architects felt free to use past styles arranged together in new ways to create picturesque buildings which solved modern architectural problems. Consistent with this stylistic eclecticism, the Isaac S. Miller store melds Queen Anne Revival asymmetry and coloration with Romanesque rusticated stonework and arches and Commercial Style bays and three part fenestration. The Philadelphia architect Albert Dilks produced distinctive eclectic commercial designs several of which grace the City's downtown. This highly intact structure remains as one of the earlier downtown commercial buildings west of Broad Street.

The Committee voted 4-0 in favor of recommending the Miller store for designation.

1320 Locust Street
attributed to Furness and Evans

James Gardiner Cassatt House
1883

The Cassatt House at 1320 Locust Street possesses significance as a fine and rare example of the work of one of Philadelphia's most creative 19th century firms, Furness and Evans, as an outstanding example of that firm's interpretation of the Queen Anne Revival Style and as part of the history of residential development in downtown Philadelphia. Frank Furness designed many important Philadelphia buildings including the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Rodeph Shalom Synagogue of 1869 and the Provident Trust Company building of 1879 using his unique and eclectic architectural vision. Allen Evans contributed greatly to the firm, helping to gain many clients through his social connections and more restrained conservative design. The attribution of this building to the firm is based on the building's Furnessian details and to the strong social and professional connections between the owner James Cassatt and Furness and Evans. The house with its multicolored masonry work, projecting bay and half timbered gable is also a fine interpretation of the Queen Anne Revival style. This house anticipated the redevelopment of the 1200 and 1300 blocks.

of Locust Street into an enclave of unique high style mansions.

The Committee voted 4-0 in favor of recommending the James Gardiner Cassatt House for designation.

Furness Wister House	1322 Locust Street
attributed to Frank Furness Architect	1883

The Furness Wister House possesses significance as a rare extant example of the work of one of Philadelphia's most creative and prolific 19th century architects, Frank Furness, as an example of his Victorian Eclectic Style and as part of the history of a unique residential development in downtown Philadelphia. During the 1870s Frank Furness established himself at the forefront of Philadelphia architects. A few of the spectacular examples of design to come from his office include The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, The Fine Arts Library at University of Pennsylvania and The Provident Trust Company of 1879. The attribution of this building to Furness stems from the similarity of its forms to other Furness designs and because it was built for his sister the famous translator Annis Furness and her husband Casper Wister. The building demonstrates Furness's combining of Queen Anne Revival elements to produce something unique. This house with its neighbor stand as a fragment of the redevelopment of the 1200 and 1300 blocks into an enclave of unique architect designed mansions.

The Committee discussed the building and agreed with its significance but pointed out its severe loss of integrity. The building has lost its stoop and second floor front bay and has been altered for a restaurant on its bottom two floors. The Committee voted 4-0 against recommending the building for designation because of its lack of integrity.

Peter Thomson Store	1118 Walnut Street
Edward P. Hazelhurst, Architect	1901

The Peter Thomson Store possesses significance as a fine and rare example of the Beaux-Arts French Baroque Style in Philadelphia, as the work of architect Edward Hazelhurst and for its association with the retail history of Walnut Street in Center City Philadelphia. This store exemplifies the philosophy of Beaux-Arts design espoused in this country by Ernest Flag. It uses classical, in this case French Baroque details, while expressing the "load bearing masonry cage with emphasized corner piers" that allows for a great deal of light to enter the clearly commercial structure. The building also exemplifies the work of the important Philadelphia architect Edward P. Hazelhurst. Together with Samuel Huckel he designed many high style buildings in the area including Mother Bethel Church and the

mansion house at Rosemont College. The building, constructed for a merchant tailor, represents a concentration of the custom clothing industry on the 1100 block of Walnut Street.

The Committee voted 4-0 in favor of recommending 1118 Walnut for designation.

Beale and Lewis Houses	240-242 S. 13th Street
attributed to Furness and Evans architects	1883

The Beale and Lewis houses at 240-242 South 13th Street possess significance as fine and rare extant examples of one of Philadelphia's most creative and prolific 19th century architectural firms, Furness and Evans, as outstanding examples of that firm's Victorian eclectic style and as part of the history of a unique residential enclave in downtown Philadelphia. During the 1870s, Furness established himself at the forefront of Philadelphia architects with his creative interpretations of Victorian Gothic and Queen Anne Revival designs. Allen Evans his partner contributed greatly to the practice through his social connections and his more subdued and eventually more popular designs. Some of the firm's most famous buildings include the University of Pennsylvania Library of 1886 and the Pennsylvania Railroad Station. These houses with their fine brickwork, projecting dormers and chimneys and Furnessian scroll details exemplify the Queen Anne Revival as interpreted by Furness and Evans. The attribution to these architects stems not only from details but also because of the close familial and professional connections of Mr Evans to John Lewis and Edward Beale for whom the houses were built. The houses also stand as part of an enclave of unique architect designed residences which centered around the 1200 and 1300 blocks of Locust street.

The Committee voted 4-0 in favor of recommending 240-242 S. 13th Street for designation.

Park Avenue Historic District	1800-1946 Park Mall
	1872-1890

The west side of Park Avenue, from Montgomery Avenue to Norris Street, possesses significance as one of the most intact remnants of the of speculative rowhouse development that came to dominate North Philadelphia during the late 19th Century, its period of greatest growth and prosperity. This type of upper middle class development reflected massive increases in population, growth of a large managerial class, increases in available capital, and growth of the streetcar system. The rowhouses represent good examples of Second Empire and Italianate design, while two churches designed by Hazelhurst and Huckel add fine examples of Gothic revival to the

streetscape. The buildings have been incorporated into Temple University's campus, a school that has had a history of utilizing rowhouses for educational purposes.

The Committee recommended the Park Avenue district for designation by a vote of 4-0.

Street Paving Thematic Resource Nomination

The examples of street paving included in this multiple resource nomination, possess significance as rare surviving fragments of the history of street paving in the City of Philadelphia, and as landmarks forming a visual record of the way that Philadelphia looked in the past. Paving has had continual importance in helping to facilitate transportation both by foot and vehicle, and has played an important role in the health of the City by easing the maintenance of the roadway, thereby providing a cleaner environment. Because of the high costs of street improvements, historians have associated the evolution of urban paving with the development of the municipal government. Further, paving has played an important role in creating access between areas of the city and so relates closely to the commercial and residential development of the city. Finally, the development of different paving types forms a small chapter in the history of technology and engineering.

This nomination stems from a survey presented to the Commission by a neighborhood group interested in preserving their brick street pavement. They surveyed all of the streets in their section of the City to locate examples of brick, cobblestone, and Belgian Block streets. The staff presented the idea of creating a multiple resource nomination that at first would include only Northwest and Center City Philadelphia but could be expanded from time to time when surveying in other sections of the City was complete. The Committee agreed with this approach and voted to recommend approval of the Statement of Significance by a vote of 4-0.