

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Brownlee, Chair

**Commission Conference Room, One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street 18th Floor
30 June 2000**

Present

David Brownlee, Ph.D., Chair

David Baldinger, Deputy Executive Director, City Planning Commission

Bruce Lavery, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia

Hyman Myers, The Vietta Group

Sephania G. Wolf, Ph.D.

Elizabeth Harvey, Historic Preservation Planner

Diane M. Hughes, Executive Secretary

Laura Spina, Historic Preservation Planner

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Also

Richard Waldron, American Swedish Historical Museum

Theresa Stuhlman, Fairmount Park Commission (FPC)

Thomas J. Shelly, Lakeside Tennis Association

John Furey, President, Broad Street West Civic Association

Jody Della Barba, President, Girard Estate Area Residents

Tom Dougherty, FPC

Maria A. Moraci, FDR Park Friends Group (FDRPFG)

Michael A. Salvato, FDRPFG

Jennifer Lisko, FPC

Adrian Jellenich, FDRPFG

Hester Handforth

Donna Handforth, Nomination Preparer

Michael Vahey, FDRPFG

Mr. Brownlee, Chair, recognized the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

1316 Walnut Street, University Club

Mid-City Camera Exchange, Owner

Mr. Brownlee noted that the Committee had considered this property at its meeting of 19 May 2000. The Committee then tabled the nomination pending a site visit by Committee members to evaluate the historical integrity of the building. The Committee conducted this inspection on 22 June.

Laura Spina made an illustrated presentation of the nomination. Erected in 1887, this building possesses significance as a rare surviving early work of Wilson Eyre, Jr., as fine example of

Eyre's interpretation of Venetian Gothic Revival architecture, and as the first clubhouse of the newly formed University Club, an organization whose membership included many of Philadelphia's social and professional elite. The building meets criteria a, d and e of the Historic Preservation Ordinance as prescribed at Section 14-2007(5) of the Philadelphia Code. In June 1991, the Committee on Historic Designation had recommended the entry of the University Club on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

In response to questions by Committee members during the site visit of 22 June, Ms. Spina reported that research by the staff demonstrates that the rear ell was constructed early in the ownership of the property by the University Club.

Ms. Wolf made a motion to recommend to the Commission the entry of the University Club, 1316 Walnut Street, on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Baldinger seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

League Island Park, now Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park, Historic District

Ms. Spina gave an oral illustrated presentation of the nomination. This included a map of the proposed district with the buildings and principal landscape features delineated. South Broad Street, Pattison Avenue, a line extending the course of South Twentieth Street into the Park and I-95 form the boundaries of the nominated district.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park satisfies criteria a, b, d, e, g and h of the Historic Preservation Ordinance as defined at Section 14-2007(5) of the Philadelphia Code. As an expression of the park movement of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Park (a) "has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation..." As the site of the Sesquicentennial Exposition of 1926, the Park (b) "is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation." The plans for the Park and the land reclamation required for its execution embody (d) "distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen." As the creation of the Olmsted Brothers office, it (e) "is the work of a ... landscape architect or designer... whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation." As the site of the Sesquicentennial celebration and as the work of the Olmsted firm, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park (g) "is part of or related to a ... park ... which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif." Finally, (h) "Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, [the park] represents an established and familiar feature" of the South Philadelphia neighborhood.

The Committee members discussed the nomination and determined that it adequately demonstrated that Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park meets the criteria set forth in the Historic Preservation Ordinance for listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. They also agreed that it conformed better to the Ordinance's definition of a district than of a site.

The Committee members made several suggestions for the strengthening of the inventory. They recommended a fuller description of the landscape, water features and furniture of the Park, including paving, bridges, lamp standards and structures. They thought an overview by quadrant, rather than an exact inventory, could achieve this objective. They also asked that the staff conduct further research to identify the architects and dates of the Park's buildings and structures and to identify those features associated with the Olmsted Brothers plan, those with the

Sesquicentennial Exposition, and the subsequent changes to them. The Committee agreed that, subject to their approval by the Chair, these revisions need not come before it for review.

Members of the public expressed their support for the listing of the Park on the Philadelphia Register. The included Richard Waldron of the American Swedish Historical Museum; Thomas J. Shelly of the Lakeside Tennis Association; John Furey, President of the Broad Street West Civic Association, and Maria Moraci, President of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park Friends Group.

Mr. Myers offered a motion to recommend to the Commission the listing of Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places subject to the revision of the inventory and review by the Chair of these revisions. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Tyler
Historic Preservation Officer