

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

**3 DECEMBER 2020, 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:

| <b>Committee Member</b>       | <b>Present</b> | <b>Absent</b> | <b>Comment</b> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair | X              |               |                |
| Suzanna Barucco               | X              |               |                |
| Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.             | X              |               |                |
| Bruce Lavery                  | X              |               |                |
| Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.       | X              |               |                |
| Douglas Mooney                | X              |               |                |

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

The following staff members were present:

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

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Leah Silverstein  
Father Carl Braschoss  
Nick Kraus, Heritage Consulting Group  
Cecil Baker  
Georgette Bartell  
Jonathan Goins  
Dina Bleckman  
Carl Primavera, Esq., Klehr Harrison  
Mathew Huffman  
Joseph Matozzo  
Oscar Beisert  
Maureen Flanagan  
Henry Clinton, Esq.

Basil Merends  
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance  
David Traub, Save Our Sites  
Connor Burke  
Cathie Dopkin  
Harrison Haas, Esq., Cozen O'Connor  
Seth Brown  
Jeff Gelles  
Stella Wong  
Matt McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr  
Kelly Wiles  
Brett Feldman, Esq., Klehr Harrison  
Adrian Trevisan  
Maggie Manzer, Penn Knox Neighborhood Association  
Virginia Baltzell  
Stephen Kay  
Ben Leech  
Suzanne Biemiller  
Jeffrey Ogren, Esq., Bochetto & Lentz  
Steven Peitzman  
Hewson Baltzell  
Lori Salganicoff, Chestnut Hill Conservancy  
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance  
Dana Fedeli  
Sue Patterson  
Dan Ciolino, Varenhorst  
Carol & Jim Fitz  
Susan Wetherill  
Mary McGettigan  
Michael Phillips, Esq., Obermeyer  
Chris Mejia-Smith  
Nancy Pontone  
Marion Dinofa  
George Poulin  
Nissa Eisenberg  
Leo Addimando, Alterra  
Amie Leighton  
Jim Duffin  
Jay Farrell  
Mark Zimmaro  
George Sumner  
Henry Sullivan

## **CONTINUANCE REQUESTS**

### **ADDRESS: 156 W SCHOOL HOUSE LN**

Name of Resource: Boxwood

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Teen Challenge Training Center Inc.

Nominator: Penn Knox Neighborhood Association

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 156 W. School House Lane and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues that Boxwood reflects the Colonial Revival style of architecture as applied to upper-class suburban residences in late nineteenth-century Philadelphia. The nomination further argues that the “cottage-stable” at the rear of the property represents Gothic Revival cottage motifs popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Under Criterion D, the nomination asserts that Boxwood was designed by Mantle Fielding, a prolific and significant architect who influenced the built environment in Northwest Philadelphia at the turn of the twentieth century.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 156 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. However, the staff asserts that the so-called “cottage-stable” at the rear of the property does not reflect the Gothic Revival style and, therefore, does not satisfy Criteria C and D as presented in the nomination. While the building has a cross gable, a typical feature of the Gothic Revival, it does not have any other features characteristic of the style. The building may have served as a barn, potentially for an earlier residence predating Boxwood, and was later updated with a cross gable. The staff recommends that the so-called “cottage-stable” contributes to the site’s historical significance but does not exhibit sufficient character-defining features to be considered reflective of or exemplary of the Gothic Revival style.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:08:00

#### **PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Matt McClure represented the property owner. Mr. McClure explained that the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf recently purchased the property, which is adjacent to its property. The school is undertaking a master planning effort and would like to better understand how it plans to use the property before the review of the nomination proceeds.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society represented the nomination and stated that the neighborhood organization is working with the school to find a compromise. He did not object to the continuance request.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

#### **COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction during the continuance period.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** See below.

**ADDRESS: 121 PLEASANT ST**

Name of Resource: The Joseph Meehan House & Grounds

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: CDPHI LLC

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the building at 121 Pleasant Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the house is significant owing to its association with the life and work of Joseph Meehan, "a prominent editor, horticulturalist, landscape gardener, nurseryman, writer and veteran of the Civil War..." Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the Joseph Meehan House & Grounds is significant as a representation of the "commercial and cultural legacy of the larger Meehan family in Mt. Airy, Germantown, and Philadelphia."

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the building at 121 Pleasant Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:08:00

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Michael Phillips represented the property owner.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction during the continuance period.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** See below.

**ADDRESS: 222-48 N BROAD ST**

Name of Resource: Hahnemann Hospital

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Broad Street Healthcare Properties LLC

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:**

This nomination proposes to designate a portion of the property known as 222-48 N. Broad Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination is limited to the boundaries of the Neo-Gothic building constructed in 1928 for Hahnemann Medical College & Hospital. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, F, and J. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Neo-Gothic style, including the main Gothic arch entrance, buttresses, and tracery, as applied to skyscrapers in the 1920s. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination contends that subject building important in exhibiting the heritage of Hahnemann Medical College & Hospital, which opened in 1848 and became a major source of general medicine and surgical care for numerous Philadelphians, particularly the poor and working class people of North Philadelphia, which represents a shift in the cultural, economic, and social mores of the period, when the lower classes would first gain access to healthcare in a modern medical facility. Under Criterion F, the nomination argues that the 1928 Hahnemann Hospital represents both innovation in the design of medical colleges and hospitals in the first and second quarters of the twentieth century and the broader development of modern hospitals in the Philadelphia region, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the larger nation.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the 1928 Hahnemann Hospital building, a portion of 222-48 N. Broad Street, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, F, and J.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:12:43**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Jeffrey Ogren represented the property owner.
- Steven Peitzman and Oscar Beisert represented the nominator and opposed the continuance request.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Ogren explained that they initially requested a continuance to the December 2020 Committee on Historic Designation meeting, anticipating that they would be prepared to move forward at that point, but that they have been hampered by the COVID situation. He noted that they requested a continuance to the February Committee meeting but were informed by the staff that there would not be a February 2021 Committee meeting.
- Mr. Beisert opined that COVID is not a reasonable excuse and that he finds it difficult to believe that there is no internet in Los Angeles.
- Mr. Peitzman noted he has no objection to an initial continuance request, but does oppose a second continuance request, particularly if it comes late. Continuance requests that arrive shortly before a meeting are abusive to the public and members

of the Committee, he opined. He agreed with Mr. Beisert that an inability to participate in a virtual meeting remotely is implausible. He objected to the request to continue the nomination to the March 2021 Committee meeting, noting that it would have been almost a year from the date the nomination was submitted to the Commission's ultimate decision.

- Ms. Barucco initially moved to continue the nomination to the March 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting.
- Mr. Cohen objected to the continuance, questioning whether it is longer than necessary.
- Ms. Barucco modified her motion to continue the nomination to the January 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction during the continuance period.
- The nomination should be continued to the January 2021 rather than the March 2021 Committee on Historic Designation meeting.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** See below.

**ADDRESS: 1826 CHESTNUT ST**

Name of Resource: Aldine Theatre

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Sam's Place Realty Associates LP

Nominator: Kevin Block, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1826 Chestnut Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Aldine Theatre, constructed in 1921, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, E, and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the theatre has significant character, interest, or value as one of the last remaining first-run movie palaces in Philadelphia. Under Criterion E, the nomination explains that the Aldine was the work of prominent local builders William Steele & Sons. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the Aldine represents the commercial development of Chestnut Street in the prestigious Rittenhouse Square neighborhood after the turn of the twentieth century.

Following the submission of the nomination and notification to the property owner, the nominator uncovered additional information not presented in the nomination, which is posted on the Historical Commission's website as additional information.

The Committee on Historic Designation previously reviewed a nomination for the property in March 1986 and recommended against designation owing to the loss of architectural integrity of the interior and the front doors. The Historical Commission adopted the recommendation of the Committee at its April 1986 meeting and declined to designate the property. The staff notes that

the interior of the property is not under consideration, and that the Historical Commission routinely designates properties that have alterations.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1826 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:15:14

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Harrison Haas represented the property owner, and noted that his client is having ongoing conversations with the Preservation Alliance and the Center City Residents Association, which they would like to wrap up before moving forward with the nomination.
- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia represented the nomination and supported the continuance request, reiterating that they are participating in a stakeholder process.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction during the continuance period.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Ms. Barucco moved to continue the reviews of the nominations for 156 W. School House Lane, 121 Pleasant Street, and 222-48 N Broad Street to the January 2021 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation and to continue the review of the nomination for 1826 Chestnut Street to the March 2021 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

|                                                                                        |            |           |                |               |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>ITEM: Continuance requests</b>                                                      |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>MOTION: Continue and remand to later Committee on Historic Designation meetings</b> |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b>                                                               |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b>                                                             |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>VOTE</b>                                                                            |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>Committee Member</b>                                                                | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Abstain</b> | <b>Recuse</b> | <b>Absent</b> |
| Emily Cooperman, chair                                                                 | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Suzanna Barucco                                                                        | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Jeff Cohen                                                                             | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Bruce Lavery                                                                           | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Elizabeth Milroy                                                                       | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Douglas Mooney                                                                         | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Total                                                                                  | 6          |           |                |               |               |

## **RESCISSION REQUEST**

### **ADDRESS: 1106-14 SPRING GARDEN ST**

Name of Resource: Woodward-Wanger Co.

Proposed Action: Rescind Designation and then Reconsider Nomination

Property Owner: Mapleville, LLC, Stella and Nga Wong

Applicant: Matt McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr

Individual Designation: 3/9/2018

District Designation: None

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

**OVERVIEW:** This request asks the Historical Commission to rescind the individual designation of the property at 1106-14 Spring Garden Street and then remand the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation for an entirely new review in which the property owner can participate. The rescission request contends that the property owner was not notified of the consideration of the nomination by the Committee on Historic Designation and the Historical Commission that led to the designation on 9 March 2018 and, therefore, did not have an opportunity to participate in reviews. The request asserts that the Historical Commission sent the first and final notice letters for the property owner to the wrong address because the City failed to correctly update its property tax records. The other set of notice letters, those to the property, were sent to a vacant building, where mail could not be received. Documents included with the rescission request seem to indicate that the claim is correct. It appears that the Historical Commission sent the first and final notice letters for the property owner to an outdated address. The owner did not participate in two public meetings at which the nomination was reviewed. The request indicates that the owner did not learn of the designation until 2020, when applying for a permit from the Department of Licenses & Inspections. The staff sought the advice of the Law Department, which considered various paths for addressing the potential notice problem. The Law Department attorney did not object to this process, proposed by the owner's attorney.

The request asks the Historical Commission to rescind the designation and remand the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation for a new review in which the owner can participate. The matter is listed on the agenda of the meeting of the Committee of Historic Designation on 3 December 2020 as a means to get it before the Historical Commission to consider the rescission request. In that the rescission request raises legal and factual questions only, not architectural or historical questions, the Committee of Historic Designation has no clear role in this matter unless and until the Historical Commission remands the nomination to it for a new review. The Committee is not asked to reconsider the merits of the nomination or offer a recommendation at its 3 December 2020 meeting, but it should provide an opportunity for the applicant to present the request and the public to comment.

Copies of the notice letters and the Historical Commission's minute for 9 March 2018 are included in the applicant's exhibits. The Committee on Historic Designation's minute of 14 February 2018 as well as the nomination are attached as well.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the Historical Commission rescind the individual designation of 9 March 2018 and hold new reviews of the nomination at the meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation on 20 January 2021 and at the meeting of the Historical Commission on 12 February 2021, with the understanding that the property owner will have been given official notice of the new review of the nomination at the time of the rescission



and the property therefore remains under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission while the new review of the nomination is pending.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:25:43**

**RECUSAL:**

- Mr. Reuter recused from the review, owing to his earlier representation of an adjacent property owner who opposed the redevelopment of this site.

**PRESENTERS:**

- Mr. Farnham presented the rescission request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Matt McClure represented the request.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. McClure explained that his client was not notified of the consideration of the nomination when it was reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission in 2018. The American legal system is founded on the premise that participants are notified and have an opportunity to “have their day in court.” He stated that he will not debate the merits of the nomination today, but simply wants the Historical Commission to rescind the designation and restart the review of the nomination with his client in attendance. He reviewed the notice letters and tax records for his client and showed that the notice letters were sent to an incorrect address. He stated that the Office of Property Assessment website that provided the address for the notice letters was not updated, despite the fact that the City had the correct address for his client and was sending the tax bills to that correct address. He concluded that his client did not receive any notice of the reviews.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Lori Salganicoff asked if the Historical Commission’s jurisdiction over the property would lapse if the Commission rescinded the designation, before it reconsidered the nomination.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that the Historical Commission’s jurisdiction would not lapse because the Commission would notify the property owner of the new review of the nomination at the same time it rescinded the current designation, thereby maintaining jurisdiction between the rescission and the new review of the nomination. He noted that Mr. McClure had acknowledged the continuity of jurisdiction between the reviews.
  - Mr. McClure stated that he agreed with Mr. Farnham’s statement and would stipulate that the Historical Commission was issuing new notice at the time of the rescission and that the Commission’s jurisdiction over the property would continue until the new nomination was reviewed.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property would remain under the Historical Commission’s jurisdiction if rescinded, from the time of rescission to the time of the new consideration of the nomination.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- A recommendation from the Committee on Historic Designation on the rescission request is not necessary because the request raises issues that are outside the Committee's purview and expertise.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Ms. Milroy moved to offer no recommendation to the Historical Commission on the request proposing the rescission of the designation of 1106-14 Spring Garden Street and the reconsideration of the nomination for 1106-14 Spring Garden Street by the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

| <b>ITEM: Rescission and reconsideration of 1106-14 Spring Garden St</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>MOTION: No recommendation</b>                                        |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOVED BY: Milroy</b>                                                 |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>SECONDED BY: Cohen</b>                                               |     |    |         |        |        |
| VOTE                                                                    |     |    |         |        |        |
| Committee Member                                                        | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair                                                  | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Suzanna Barucco                                                         | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Jeff Cohen                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Bruce Laverty                                                           | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Elizabeth Milroy                                                        | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Douglas Mooney                                                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                   | 6   |    |         |        |        |

## **NOMINATION REVIEWS**

### **ADDRESS: 3701-15 CHESTNUT ST**

Name of Resource: International House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: CSC Coliving

Nominator: University City Historical Society

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3701-15 Chestnut Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, H, and J. The nomination argues that the property satisfies Criterion A for its association with the International House organization, the oldest institution of its kind in the United States to support international students. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the building is a significant example of Brutalist architecture. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that architecture firm Bower & Fradley influenced the architectural development of Philadelphia, contributing designs to the city from the 1960s to the present day. Under Criterion H, the nomination contends that the International House building occupies a unique location in the heart of University City and, together with Criterion J, stands as one of the first high-rises in the neighborhood that was constructed as part of the West Philadelphia Corporation and Redevelopment Authority's efforts for urban renewal.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3701-15 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, and J, but not E and

H. The influence of Bower & Fradley is limited. For a very large building, it has a limited impact on the streetscape. Owing to its setback and mid-block location, it cannot be considered an established and familiar visual feature like City Hall or the Art Museum

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:41:03**

**RECUSAL:**

- Ms. Cooperman recused from the review, owing to her involvement in one of the organizations that nominated the property. Ms. Barucco assumed the chair.

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Developer Leo Addimando represented the property owner.
- Nominators George Poulin and Kelly Wiles represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Addimando stated that he represents the group that owns the property. He stated that he is not necessarily opposed to the designation of the property, but is seeking to ensure that he is able to redevelop the property in way that preserves its architecturally significant features, but also allows for additional retail and residential space. He explained that he presented an in-concept application to the Architectural Committee on 17 November, which will be reviewed by the Historical Commission next week. That application proposes the addition of a tower at the rear and a one-story retail space at the front, along Chestnut Street. He noted that the Architectural Committee was supportive of the rear tower, but not the front retail space. He stated that he is not contesting the designation now, but would be compelled to contest it at the Historical Commission meeting if the Commission does not approve a program for the redevelopment of the site. He stated that he personally does not consider the building to be worthy of designation, but he will not make that case now. He described his redevelopment program for the building, calling it a reasonable compromise that allows the building to be preserved and the owner to redevelop it in a financially feasible manner. Mr. Addimando informed the Committee that he would be forced to submit a hardship application for the building if the Commission designates the property and denies his in-concept application for the massing of the additions. He stated that the hardship route is not his preference; he stated that he prefers to preserve and redevelop the building. He stated that they have studied the redevelopment of this property intensively and are limited by the economic realities. He observed that rehabilitating the building will be very expensive because of its configuration and condition.
  - Ms. Barucco asked Mr. Addimando to limit his remarks to the merits of the nomination and the historical significance of the property.
  - Mr. Addimando stated that his group is opposed to the designation unless the Historical Commission approves the conceptual redevelopment plan. He stated that the building does not satisfy the Criteria for Designation proposed in the nomination. He stated that this nomination is yet another example of a nominator's attempt to prevent redevelopment of a building. He observed that the nomination was not submitted until International House of Philadelphia announced that it was selling the building.
- Mr. Poulin stated that he represents the University City Historical Society, which nominated this property with DOCOMOMO Philadelphia, an organization that

promotes the preservation of Modernist architecture. He stated that International House is a unique structure and one of the best examples of Brutalism in Philadelphia. It was constructed during the urban redevelopment period in West Philadelphia. The University City Historical Society was founded as a result of the wholesale demolition in West Philadelphia during this time. He described what he considered to be the character-defining features of the building including the cast-in-place concrete, tiered balconies, functional expression on the exterior, and the open plaza at the front. He stated that his organization has no opinion on the proposed additions at this time.

- Kelly Wiles of the University City Historical Society stated that she and Allee Davis of DOCOMOMO wrote the nomination and stand by the claims it makes.
- Ms. Milroy stated that this is a timely nomination, given that the building is just 50 years old.
- Mr. Lavery disagreed with the staff and asserted that the architectural firm of Bower & Fradley was influential. The firm designed Vance Hall at the University of Pennsylvania as well as the Gallery and 1234 Market Street in Center City. The firm materialized the visions of Ed Bacon and Louis Kahn.
- Ms. Milroy disagreed with the staff and asserted that the building satisfies Criterion H. It is a dominant and much-loved feature of West Philadelphia.
- Mr. Cohen stated that this was one of the most exciting designs of the mid 1960s. The building was recognized by other architects as one of the most prominent designs of its times. He discussed the unique aspects of the design. He stated that the building is “remarkably well thought out.” He stated that the plaza is important. It creates space and gives it a campus-like feel. He said that it is an “extraordinary building.” He stated that John Bower was an important architect. He observed that the label Brutalism does not capture the essence of this building. He stated that this building is a landmark in West Philadelphia.
- Ms. Milroy concurred with Mr. Cohen. She noted that this building is in conversation with other buildings in the city, including Society Hill Towers and Synagogue Beth Shalom.
- Mr. Lavery noted the relationship between this building and the Harvard School of Design building.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance stated that his organization supports the nomination and the Criteria for Designation it cites. He stated that Bower & Fradley is an important architectural firm and the building is an established and familiar visual feature in the neighborhood.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination.
- Steven Peitzman supported the nomination. Mr. Peitzman stated that it is “logically incorrect” for the Historical Commission to review an application proposing alterations to a building before the building has been designated.
  - Mr. Farnham disagreed with Mr. Peitzman and stated that the historic preservation ordinance not only authorizes the Historical Commission to review alteration permit applications while a designation is pending, but obligates the Commission to review them. He observed that such applications would be automatically approved if the Commission merely declined to review them as Mr. Peitzman suggests. He added that simultaneous reviews of nominations and permit applications often promote preservation. Mr. Farnham noted the recent case of 527-37 W. Girard Avenue, in which the owner was initially opposed to

designation, but, after receiving an approval in concept for the redevelopment of the property in accordance with preservation standards, supported the designation. Mr. Farnham concluded that, contrary to some recent misguided claims that negotiation during the designation process is detrimental to preservation, negotiation and compromise can actually produce better preservation outcomes.

- Oscar Beisert stated that the Keeping Society supports the nomination. He noted that, although he is not in favor of the current design proposals, they do save the historic building. He stated that he strongly supports the notion that preservationists and property owners find ways to compromise and appreciates the fact that the owner of this property is seeking a compromise that will allow for both preservation and development.
  - Mr. Addimando thanked Mr. Beisert for his comments. Mr. Addimando stated that he has served on the board of the Preservation Alliance and on the Mayor's Task Force for Historic Preservation. He stated that his development company has undertaken numerous preservation projects and has a preservation ethos. He noted that he would not be taking the position that he is with this property and its historic designation if economic realities allowed for alternatives. He stated that this property cannot be reused in a financially feasible manner without some additions. He noted that he is trying to follow the Historical Commission's processes. He stated that there has to be a balance of preservation and economics. He stated that this building was difficult to reuse before the pandemic and the pandemic has made it that much more difficult. The building is very challenging from a code perspective. It does not allow for modification to provide private living and bathroom spaces that are needed in this post-pandemic world. The pandemic has created great uncertainty. Mr. Addimando concluded that he takes the process and preservation seriously and does not like to be in a position where he has to oppose designation, but he feels that he has no choice.

#### **COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property satisfies Criterion A for its association with the International House organization, the oldest institution of its kind in the United States to support international students.
- The property satisfies Criterion D; the building is a significant example of Brutalist architecture.
- The property satisfies Criterion E because architecture firm Bower & Fradley influenced the architectural development of Philadelphia.
- The property satisfies Criterion H; the International House building occupies a unique location in the heart of University City.
- The property satisfies Criterion J; International House was one of the first high-rises in the neighborhood constructed as part of the West Philadelphia Corporation and Redevelopment Authority's efforts for urban renewal.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3701-15 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, H, and J. Ms. Milroy seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

| <b>ITEM: 3701-15 Chestnut St</b><br><b>MOTION: Designate, A, D, E, H, J</b><br><b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: Milroy</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                                                |     |    |         |        |        |
| Committee Member                                                                                                                    | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair                                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Suzanna Barucco                                                                                                                     | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Jeff Cohen                                                                                                                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Bruce Lavery                                                                                                                        | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Elizabeth Milroy                                                                                                                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Douglas Mooney                                                                                                                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                                               | 6   |    |         |        |        |

**ADDRESS: 2101 E WESTMORELAND ST AND 3320 COLLINS ST**

Name of Resource: Scholler Bros., Inc.

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: ARAWA Holding Corp

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the properties at 2101 E. Westmoreland Street and 3320 Collins Street and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the properties satisfy Criterion for Designation J. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the properties comprised an industrial complex known as Scholler Brothers Incorporated where textile soaps, softeners, and other textile chemicals were manufactured. The nomination contends that the company and its associated buildings are representative of Kensington's larger historic textile industry. The buildings on the Westmoreland lot are in very poor condition. Most of the structures have lost their roofs and are vacant shells of buildings.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the properties at 2101 E. Westmoreland Street and 3320 Collins Street satisfy Criterion for Designation J. While Scholler Brothers is an example of the manufacturing firms that collectively comprised the Kensington textile industry, it is not an exemplar. To qualify under Criterion J, a site must exemplify, not merely be an example of the heritage of a community. Each criterion in the preservation ordinance establishes a standard that some but not all properties can meet. If the ordinance were intended to permit the designation of all properties regardless of merit, it would not have included Criteria for Designation. Moreover, the poor condition of much of the complex argues against designation. The preservation ordinance authorizes the Historical Commission to mandate the preservation, but not the reconstruction, of historic buildings.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:18:25**

**PRESENTERS:**

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

#### **DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Cooperman asked whether the property owner was present. No one responded.
  - Ms. Keller explained that the staff attempted to find an alternative mailing address and contact information for the owner but was unsuccessful. She noted that the mailing address listed by the Office of Property Assessment for the property owner is 3320 Collins Street, which appears to be vacant, so the staff is unsure whether the owner received notice.
- Mr. Beisert opposed the staff recommendation, commenting that some community members in Kensington contacted him to nominate the building due to their affinity for the property. He noted that as he researched the property, he found that it was related to the textile industry and that the company was one of the most important manufacturers of textile softeners. He contended that their product was an important contribution to the textile industry, adding that the company was a large employer and powerhouse industry in Philadelphia. He argued that the significance is due to the firm's importance in the industry and that the company operated within a city that was a leader in the industry. He further noted that the company's foundation exists today.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that it is important to make a distinction between an "example of" and "exemplify," adding that it is difficult to determine where the line gets drawn. She commented that a property can be an example of something that has no significance. She remarked that the Committee will need to determine if there is some distinctive aspect of this particular example that would allow it to "exemplify." The Committee, she continued, must decide between what is historic and what is historically significant.
  - The Committee discussed the semantics of exemplify and exemplar.
  - Ms. Milroy stated that if a building is the only survivor, it is not necessarily the model example.
  - Ms. Cooperman argued that a property, to be a model example, had to have had significance in its own right. Just because it is the last extant example of a particular type of property does not mean it ever had significance. She asked that the Committee determine whether the nominated properties ever held historical significance and asked that the Committee reach a decision about the meaning of exemplify to provide advice to the Historical Commission.
  - Mr. Cohen commented that a property can both exemplify and be typical. He stated that the building that serves as the representation would have to be articulate of the type. He questioned whether the properties at 2101 E. Westmoreland Street and 3320 Collins Street are articulate representations of their type, adding that he did not know.
  - Mr. Mooney stated that the Committee often hears a similar argument when a property owner opposes designation, in which they state that better examples exist elsewhere. He contended that the purpose of designation in Philadelphia is not to only nominate the best examples; otherwise, it would defeat the purpose of the preservation ordinance.
- Ms. Cooperman asked what the properties are a representation of if they are recommended for designation.
- Ms. Barucco noted that the properties were nominated under Criterion J, stating that the nomination contends that the properties were an integral part of the textile industry in Philadelphia. She added that the nomination did not claim that it was the best or the greatest, but was a part of the heritage. Ms. Barucco commented that being a part of the city's heritage satisfies Criterion J. She further elaborated that her

interpretation of Criterion J is that a property must be an example of the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage.

- Mr. Lavery remarked that he wished the staff had not included in its recommendation the comment about the properties' poor condition, adding that the Committee states at the start of its meetings that it does not consider condition.
  - Ms. Cooperman agreed, adding that condition and significance are separate.
- Ms. Barucco asked whether the Committee considers integrity in designation.
  - Ms. Cooperman answered that integrity is not discussed in the preservation ordinance, adding that the definition of integrity is most commonly defined by the National Register, which she noted is very different from the local register. She elaborated that the Committee may choose to take a commonsense approach to materiality, or the amount of extant historic fabric, relative to the criteria selected by the nomination. She proffered the example of a building nominated under Criterion E for its significance related to an architect. She added that if key elements of the design have been lost, causing the design to be severely compromised, the property would no longer satisfy the criterion.
- Mr. Lavery compared this nomination to the nomination for Sigma Sound Studios, stating that the building that housed Sigma Sound Studios lacked a significant design but drew its importance from the events that occurred inside the walls. He commented that if the same criterion is applied to the Westmoreland and Collins properties that the Committee should focus on the Scholler company. He questioned whether Scholler Brothers' soap was critical to Philadelphia's textile industry.
- Ms. Barucco stated that the Committee has not been tasked to recommend that every example of every building that supported some textile function in Kensington be designated.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Jim Duffin supported the nomination and argued that cultural significance is not necessarily linked to a building's appearance. Buildings, he continued, are the physical manifestation between historic events and the present and noted that it is important for people to see a physical site related to an important historical concept.
- Steven Peitzman requested clarification on the boundaries of the nominated properties. He contended that exemplify simply means "example of," adding that many nominations have used that meaning in arguing significance.

#### **COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The buildings are in extremely poor condition with several missing roofs.
- Scholler Brothers Inc. operated out of the buildings for decades and manufactured soap for the textile industry.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- Not all examples of cultural, political, economic, social, and historical heritage are significant enough to satisfy Criterion for Designation J.
- Scholler Brothers Inc. was not a significant enough company to warrant designation.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the properties at 2101 E. Westmoreland Street and 3320 Collins Street satisfy Criterion for Designation J.



| <b>ITEM: 2101 E. Westmoreland St and 3320 Collins St</b><br><b>MOTION: Decline to designate</b><br><b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                                                                      |     |    |         |        |        |
| Committee Member                                                                                                                                          | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair                                                                                                                                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Suzanna Barucco                                                                                                                                           | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Jeff Cohen                                                                                                                                                | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Bruce Lavery                                                                                                                                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Elizabeth Milroy                                                                                                                                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Douglas Mooney                                                                                                                                            | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                                                                     | 6   |    |         |        |        |

**ADDRESS: 208-10 REX AVE**

Name of Resource: Hirst-Duhring House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Virginia, William H. & Hewson Baltzell

Nominator: Chestnut Hill Conservancy

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 208-10 Rex Avenue in Chestnut Hill and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the house, constructed about 1857-60, with alterations around 1893 and a substantial rear addition in 1927, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and E. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the property has significant character as one of the early prominent suburban villas constructed in the first period of the development of the suburban character of the Chestnut Hill section of the city after the extension of the first railroad to the area. The nomination also argues that the building is significant under Criterion A for its association with architect H. Louis Duhring, who owned and lived in the house between 1919 and 1946, and under Criterion E as a representative example of Duhring's influential architectural work. The nomination also contends that the property is significant under Criterion C as reflecting the environment of both the period of its original Italianate construction and its Arts and Crafts addition.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 208-10 Rex Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and E.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 01:55:32

**RECUSAL:**

- Ms. Cooperman recused owing to her association with the Chestnut Hill Conservancy in 2017 when the property was nominated.

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Carl Primavera, architect Eric Leighton, and owner Hewson Baltzell represented the property owner.

- Lori Salganicoff of Chestnut Hill Conservancy and consultant Ben Leech represented the nomination.

#### DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Primavera noted that they are generally opposed to the nomination and designation, but that many of his comments will be reserved for the full Historical Commission. He requested that if the property is designated, a portion of the property, a separately deeded parcel known as 210 Rex Avenue, be excluded from the designation. He opined that the parcel has a disruptive history of being sold and acquired, and may have been part of the adjacent coal yard in the past. He opined that that portion of the parcel does not contribute to the character of the property, noting that the historic building sits fully on the 208 Rex Avenue parcel.
- Mr. Primavera commented that the large property has been problematic to sell because of the condition of the building and the cost to restore it. Experts have advised them that the way to offset the rehabilitation costs is to create infill development of the property, which would occur primarily in the side lot. Mr. Primavera explained that they will submit an application for the redevelopment of the property to the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission, and that the proposed new construction will overlap the deeded parcel boundaries. He acknowledged that the Historical Commission will have full jurisdiction over the proposed construction, but argued that the side parcel is not one of the character-defining features of the property. He noted that architects Cecil Baker and Eric Leighton are in attendance, as are owners Virginia and Hewson Baltzell who can speak to the viability and hardship. He noted that they can speak to the history of the side parcel as well.
- Committee members and owner representatives discussed the location of the side parcel in question, determining that it is described under section 5, Boundary Description, of the nomination as parcel 128-N-11-0022. It is located on the southwest side of the property, occupying 60 feet along Rex Avenue and extending of that width the depth of the property.
- Ms. Barucco questioned when the parcel was subdivided and consolidated, noting that the larger parcel is shown as a single parcel in early maps.
  - Mr. Primavera responded that he does not think the portion of the parcel known as 210 Rex Avenue is part of the original parcel, opining that it was originally part of a coal yard and owned by Arthur Teague and its ownership bounced around. He opined that it should not be part of the designation of the house.
- Mr. Reuter explained that there are two deeded parcels within the tax parcel identified by the Office of Property Assessment as 208-10 Rex Avenue, but noted that they appear to have the same boundary as that identified previously or concurrently as 208 Rex Avenue. He noted that this may be a situation where there had been a subdivision and consolidation, and perhaps a deed of consolidation was never submitted, which does not matter from a zoning perspective if it happened prior to 2012.
  - Mr. Primavera responded that there have been numerous deeds, many inter-family between the Duhrings and their descendants the Baltzells. Mr. Primavera explained that family lore suggests that they would sell the parcel at 210 Rex Avenue when money was tight and repurchase it again. He stated they are getting title information, but that it is their assertion that 210 Rex Avenue is its own distinctive parcel and they intend to build there, although it will be part of an integrated construction project. He opined that there should not be the same

- amount of interest or significance attributed to the 210 Rex Avenue portion of the parcel as there is to 208 Rex Avenue.
- Mr. Reuter noted that the nomination covers both deeded parcels within the single OPA parcel or 208-10 Rex Avenue. Mr. Reuter clarified that Mr. Primavera is asking to have 210 Rex Avenue carved out of the designation.
  - Mr. Primavera confirmed that is his request.
  - Ms. Milroy noted that the nomination was submitted in 2017 and that there is no discussion of the severance of the parcel.
    - Mr. Primavera responded that their initial plans to redevelop the property were uniformly unacceptable to the neighborhood, so Cecil Baker's office has put together a new plan.
  - Ms. Milroy questioned the status of the property and the parcels during Duhring's ownership between 1919 and 1946.
    - Mr. Primavera responded that he is not certain.
  - Ms. Milroy noted that, as a landscape historian, she is curious about the side parcel and whether the shifts in ownership were about more than just controlling the land. She explained that her sense is that if the side parcel was reattached during Duhring's residence, it may have had some significance with the siting of the house and its landscape. However, such a discussion, she noted, is not presented in the nomination.
  - Ms. Salganicoff explained that historic parcel includes the entire current property of 208-10 Rex Avenue.
  - Mr. Leech noted that the staff included additional atlases with the overview of the nomination that show the history of the property, including the side parcel. The coal yard that Mr. Primavera mentioned appears to have been located to the southwest of the 210 boundary. He noted that the house appears off-center of the parcel, as it does today, and that the curved driveway is in more or less the same position as it was historically. He noted that he cannot speak to whether the side parcel was ever subdivided and then re-consolidated, but as it was presented in historic atlases and as it stands today; it was always as a piece.
  - Ms. Milroy expressed curiosity over what happened to the cemetery that existed prior to the coal yard on the adjacent property, but agreed that it does not appear that the coal yard was part of the existing parcel.
  - Ms. Salganicoff noted that historically the building was not centered on the parcel, which is the same configuration as today. She explained that the building pre-dates other properties along what would become Rex Avenue. She argued that the open space around the building is a significant aspect of the historic property.
  - Ms. Barucco appreciated the nomination, noting that although she did not contribute to the nomination, she is familiar with the property and has been in the building several times over the years. She noted that it has incredible integrity on the interior, although she acknowledged that would not be under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction. She opined that the property is worthy of designation.
  - Mr. Cohen agreed, noting that there were two or three phases of design characteristics and it tells the story of the beginning of Chestnut Hill as a railroad suburb and the kind of development that happened on Summit Avenue and nearby. He noted that the nomination does not identify an architect for the original portion of the building, but that it is in keeping with the designs of J.C. Sidney and John Riddell and even Samuel Sloan, noting that he forgets which architect loved to extend brackets down to the attic windows. He opined that the later additions were sensitive to the original building and are significant in their own right.

- Ms. Barucco agreed, noting that Duhring's Craftsman style addition fits so well, even though it is so different.
- Mr. Cohen questioned the documentary basis for the 1893 additions, noting that the nomination only identifies them as the Chestnut Hill Historic District survey. He opined that it would be helpful to incorporate the original source of the information.
- Ms. Milroy noted that it is difficult to tell which trees may exist from Duhring's period, but that it is quintessentially Philadelphia that Duhring would build a large addition with huge windows directly facing the railroad. She noted that Philadelphians loved the railroad and is part of the Philadelphia aesthetic. She noted that this is balanced by the large lawn, and that she would be curious to know what the landscaping looked like historically. The old photograph in the nomination shows it as a fairly wooded property.
- Mr. Lavery opined that one could teach 90 years of architectural history just by walking around the house, and that it exemplifies several periods of construction.
- Mr. Lavery commented that Duhring was not only the owner and architect of the property, but was a significant and integral member of the Chestnut Hill neighborhood, and was associated with the Woodwards. Duhring, he noted, like many other architects, did not build a Woodward-style house for himself, but purchased a mid-nineteenth century home and made it work for him.
- Mr. Cohen commented that he purchased Duhring's Craftsman magazines from Ms. Baltzell at a sidewalk sale many years ago, and that they perfectly show Duhring's wavelength in the first decade of the twentieth century, where he bounces between Colonial Revival and Craftsman values.
- Mr. Baltzell noted that Ms. Baltzell put documents together showing that 210 Rex Avenue was owned in the 1950s by Arthur Teague.
  - Ms. Barucco responded that the Committee wants to know whether the lots were one during the period of significance of 1857-1946.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that the staff can provide the deed history for the property.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

#### **COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The original building was constructed in the mid-nineteenth century in the Italianate style popular with architects like J.C. Sidney, John Riddell, and Samuel Sloan.
- A sensitive Arts and Crafts/Craftsman addition was constructed in the early twentieth century by architect and owner H. Louis Duhring, Jr., who was a significant architect and member of the Chestnut Hill community.
- The so-called "side parcel" at 210 Rex Avenue appears to have been part of the historic property during the period of significance of 1857-1946.
- The property is characterized by a large lawn and mature trees, but original landscaping plans, if there were any, are not known.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property at 208-10 Rex Avenue has significant character as one of the early prominent suburban villas constructed in the first period of the railroad suburb development of Chestnut Hill, satisfying Criterion A.
- The nomination demonstrates that the building is also significant under Criterion A for its association with architect H. Louis Duhring, who owned and lived in the house

between 1919 and 1946, and under Criterion E as a representative example of Duhring's influential architectural work.

- The nomination demonstrates that the property is significant under Criterion C as reflecting the environment of both the period of its original Italianate construction and its Arts and Crafts addition.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 208-10 Rex Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and E.

| <b>ITEM: 208-10 Rex Ave</b>                |     |    |         |        |        |
|--------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>MOTION: Designate, Criteria A, C, E</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b>                     |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>SECONDED BY: Laverty</b>                |     |    |         |        |        |
| VOTE                                       |     |    |         |        |        |
| Committee Member                           | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair                     |     |    |         | X      |        |
| Suzanna Barucco                            | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Jeff Cohen                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Bruce Laverty                              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Elizabeth Milroy                           | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Douglas Mooney                             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                      | 5   |    |         | 1      |        |

**ADDRESS: 5700 N BROAD ST**

Name of Resource: North City Trust Company

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 5700 N Broad Street LP

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5700 N. Broad Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former North City Trust Company building, constructed in 1931 in the Art Deco style by architects Thalheimer & Weitz, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, B, E and H. Under Criteria A and B, the nomination provides a history of the North City organization and its founder, Frank H. Schrenk. Under Criterion E, the nomination provides a history of the architectural firm of Thalheimer & Weitz and its areas of work. The nomination form identifies Criterion H, and the architectural description notes that the building is a local landmark owing to its height in the context of the surrounding primarily one-story commercial buildings, but the statement of significance does not extrapolate on this Criterion. Details of the building's striking and remarkably intact Art Deco design are relegated to the architectural description, but not addressed in the statement of significance.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5700 N. Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation E and H, but not A and B. The staff additionally recommends that the property satisfies Criterion D, as it embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Art Deco style.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:31:03**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner. The staff confirmed that they have not had any contact with the property owner beyond sending the original notice letters.
- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and consultant Adrian Trevisan represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Grossi noted that North City Trust is one of a handful of notable properties along North Broad Street that are not listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.
- Mr. Trevisan clarified that he intended for Criterion A to represent the national significance of the National Depositors Committee rather than the local significance of the North City organization.
- Mr. Lavery noted that he lived nearby and is familiar with the building and that the nomination does an excellent job of parsing out the history of the property and its completion just at the time of the great banking crisis of 1933. He explained that the building sits at a high point on Broad Street and is a local landmark. He noted that there was a large neon sign on the roof in place of the existing billboard that was visible at night from great distances. Architects Thalheimer & Weitz were an underappreciated firm in terms of their productivity, but they can hold their own against the likes of contemporary architects. Mr. Lavery noted that there are numerous other historic bank buildings along N. Broad Street that merit designation.
- Ms. Cooperman agreed that the building is worthy of designation, and that the nomination provides great history of the building, but opined that it does not make any arguments for significance. She explained that a nomination is not a history. A nomination is history deployed as an argument for significance.
  - Ms. Milroy agreed, noting that it is a meritorious building, but the significance is not well articulated, and the date of construction not even formally identified.
- Ms. Milroy explained that the nomination left her with numerous questions, including why two floors were removed from the original proposal—suggesting perhaps that it was owing to the Depression—why the Art Deco style was chosen, and how many other bank buildings of the time were constructed in that style. She questioned whether Mr. Schrenk was the operative patron who made those decisions when he was not apparently associated with the property during the time of construction. She explained that the building otherwise seems like a very worthy candidate for designation.
- Mr. Cohen noted that Thalheimer & Weitz are not household names, but they did a considerable amount of work and received some interesting commissions.
- Ms. Milroy supported the staff's recommendation for Criteria, noting that the Criteria selected in the nomination are not supported by the nomination.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination, commenting that North Broad Street is lined with historic bank buildings that contribute to the character of the grand avenue.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property satisfies multiple Criteria for Designation, and the nomination presents a history of the property, but does not make solid arguments for the Criteria.
- The building at 5700 N. Broad Street is positioned at a high point along N. Broad Street and is highly visible from many locations.
- Thalheimer & Weitz are underappreciated but were a significant architectural firm.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Art Deco style, satisfying Criterion D.
- The property is the work of architects Thalheimer & Weitz, satisfying Criterion E.
- The property is a landmark along N. Broad Street, satisfying Criterion H.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5700 N Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and H.

| <b>ITEM: 5700 N Broad St</b><br><b>MOTION: Designate, Criteria D, E, H</b><br><b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: Milroy</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                                               |     |    |         |        |        |
| Committee Member                                                                                                                   | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair                                                                                                             | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Suzanna Barucco                                                                                                                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Jeff Cohen                                                                                                                         | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Bruce Lavery                                                                                                                       | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Elizabeth Milroy                                                                                                                   | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Douglas Mooney                                                                                                                     | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                                              | 6   |    |         |        |        |

**ADDRESS: 500 N CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS BLVD**

Name of Resource: Philadelphia Cold Storage Company

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 500 NCCB FEE LLC

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 500 N. Christopher Columbus Boulevard, located in the Callowhill neighborhood, as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Historically known as the Philadelphia Warehousing & Cold Storage Company, this complex of warehouses and supporting structures was constructed in phases between 1891 and 1910. The nomination argues that the property at 500 N. Christopher Columbus Boulevard satisfies Criterion C, as a key example of purpose-built cold storage warehouses and ice manufacturing plants during the last nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Philadelphia. The nomination contends the property satisfies Criterion E, as Warehouse A is the work of Philadelphia master builder Allen B. Rorke (1846-1899). It further claims that the property satisfies Criterion H, that the complex is a distinctive visual feature on the Delaware River waterfront. Finally, the nomination asserts that the property at 500 N.

Christopher Columbus Boulevard is significant for its association with the commercial and industrial growth and heritage of Philadelphia from the time of its founding through the first half of the twentieth century.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 500 N Columbus Blvd, satisfies Criteria for Designation C, E, H, and J, with a period of significance of 1891-1932. The staff recommends revising the boundary based on an agreement between the owner and nominator, dated 13 November 2020, with the exception of the Boiler House. The staff recommends classifying the Boiler House and 2001 flag mural (on the south elevation of Warehouse B) as non-contributing resources.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:43:00**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Mehley presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Property owner Seth Brown, preservation consultant Nick Kraus, and attorney Brett Feldman represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Mehley stated that the nominator recently identified the architect of the earliest buildings to be Otto C. Wolf. She explained that Mr. Beisert forwarded the information the day before the meeting. Ms. Mehley stated that Otto C. Wolf was the designer of Warehouse A, the Ice Machine House, Boiler House, and Stack.
- Mr. Kraus gave a detailed presentation on the existing property and the proposed changes to the boundary detailed in the original nomination. He described the discussions that occurred between the owner, nominator, Preservation Alliance, and Historical Commission staff and provided images of the original boundary submitted and the proposed revised boundary in addition to discussing all historic resources on the site. Mr. Kraus' presentation reflected the information included in the letter agreement submitted to the Commission dated 13 November 2020 and signed by the property owner Mr. Brown, the nominator Mr. Beisert, and Mr. Steinke of the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia. Mr. Kraus stated the owner agrees the site is historic.
- Mr. Feldman commended all parties for working together and asked the Committee to accept their agreement as proposed.
- Ms. Cooperman recognized the agreement signed by the interested parties but contended that the Committee makes a recommendation to the Historical Commission based on what it believes is the appropriate boundary, based on the Committee's experience and areas of expertise. She continued that she is very pleased that the owner, nominator, and Preservation Alliance came to a consensus, but the Committee makes its recommendation based on its evaluation of a nomination.
- Mr. Beisert explained that he was not aware until very recently that Otto Wolf was the architect of the early buildings. Mr. Beisert continued that drawings of these buildings were published in a book of Wolf's work, and apparently there is only one known copy of that book which is owned by a collector of brewery materials who recently shared this with him. Mr. Beisert commented that discussion between the interested parties was a positive path forward. He continued that a lot of it was about compromise, and while this does not mean that everything must be a compromise, it



- is important that to note they considered various aspects of what it will take to reuse a property of this size and magnitude.
- Committee members Mr. Cohen, Ms. Barucco, and Ms. Cooperman discussed Otto C. Wolf's renderings recently provided by Mr. Beisert and compared it to other images in the nomination. They questioned if what is shown in Wolf's drawing was constructed.
    - Mr. Kraus opined that as with all renderings, there was probably some license as to what may have existed on this site before and what was built and designed by Wolf. Mr. Kraus continued that he believes what is shown in Wolf's rendering does not match the aerial.
    - Mr. Beisert opined that Wolf's renderings may have been the architect's idea for this site, but the warehousing company's budget may not have allowed for it and the design was revised prior to construction.
  - Mr. Cohen observed that the Stack is being retained but the Boiler House is not. He continued that it appears that the argument is that the Boiler House has been altered substantially since its original construction.
  - Ms. Barucco asked if the Boiler House is proposed as non-contributing owing to its alterations over time, or if it is because it cannot be adapted for future use.
    - Mr. Farnham reiterated Mr. Kraus's suggestion that the Boiler House has been heavily altered over time and this would be the reason for classifying it as non-contributing.
    - Ms. Barucco thanked Mr. Farnham for the clarification. Mr. Cohen commented that he was trying to understand the logic in determining the Boiler House as non-contributing but he now understands the decision.
    - Ms. Barucco remarked it is great that the Stack is being retained as it is iconic.
  - Mr. Mooney took an opposing position to some of the sentiments expressed earlier. He stated that decisions were made that could potentially affect archaeological resources, without any consideration whatsoever of those resources. He stated that this is a major part of the problem with historic preservation in Philadelphia. Mr. Mooney observed that this Committee discussion is the first opportunity to address archaeological resources as it pertains to nominations. He added that he is not opposing the boundary changes that are proposed, but stated that the site has a huge potential for significant archaeological resources, owing to its location on the Philadelphia waterfront. Mr. Mooney stated that immediately to the west there are a series of intact archaeological sites that have been identified as part of the I-95 project, and more will be discovered in the near future. The parking lot immediately to the west contains what are believed to be the remains of the oldest gunpowder magazine in Philadelphia, dating to the late seventeenth century. He added that two blocks to the south is the West Shipyard. He explained that there are preserved waterfront features throughout this area, none of which were considered in discussions between interested parties about the proposed boundary changes. Mr. Mooney stated it is one of the things that frustrates him, because he is typically the first person that raises even minor considerations of archaeological resources. Mr. Mooney respectfully requested that Criterion I be added to the applicable Criteria for Designation.
    - Ms. Cooperman responded that she was hoping Mr. Mooney would offer these comments because this area is notably and demonstrably archeologically sensitive.
  - Mr. Mooney explained that the area between Front and Beach Streets was the Philadelphia waterfront. He explained that Beach Street effectively marked the edge

of the river and this area was developed by the mid to late eighteenth century, with a series of homes and businesses and redeveloped again by the late eighteenth century with a series of piers. Mr. Mooney discussed archaeological discoveries in the area near the property. He stated that evidence of the earlier waterfront and the people that lived along can stay preserved below ground surface despite the presence of later buildings.

- Ms. Cooperman asked Mr. Mooney if it was his opinion that the entire parcel is potentially archaeologically sensitive.
- Mr. Mooney confirmed this. He acknowledged that agreements were reached and there have been negotiations going on for some time. He reiterated that he is not opposing the boundary changes as agreed upon by the owner and nominator.
- Ms. Cooperman commented that the agreements are not with the Historical Commission.
- Mr. Mooney stated again that he recognizes that a lot of time and effort was put into discussions regarding the revised boundary.
- Ms. Cooperman commented that the Committee is pleased that the interested parties came to a consensus, but to call it an “agreement” is a bit of a stretch because the Historical Commission has made no decision, and the Committee will make a recommendation to the Commission. Ms. Cooperman added that while the Committee may appreciate that consensus, it may not agree with it. She opined that it would be irresponsible for the Committee not to consider the clear importance of Criterion I for this parcel.
- Mr. Mooney noted that including Criterion I for the entire parcel, if that is what the Committee recommends, does not preclude development or redevelopment in any of the areas that are indicated currently outside of the boundary. He added that it means one must first take into consideration any impacts to archaeological resources. Ms. Cooperman agreed and thanked Mr. Mooney for the clarification.
- Mr. Cohen inquired if Mr. Mooney believes it is likely that there are artifacts below the depth of the foundations of the larger buildings on the site.
  - Mr. Mooney replied that the West Shipyard was preserved below nineteenth century four-story brick buildings with foundations.
  - Ms. Barucco commented that she has seen what was unearthed as part of the I-95 work that Mr. Mooney’s firm has been involved in and it is extraordinary.
  - Mr. Mooney responded that this part of the I-95 project is only preliminary and more could be found in the coming years.
  - Ms. Cooperman commented that the fact that those remains are still intact speaks to the amount of nineteenth century fill in this area.
  - Mr. Mooney commented that the area east of Beach Street is all made land. He stated that this was infilled by the construction of a series of wharves and piers by the port of Philadelphia.
- Ms. Cooperman reiterated that she appreciates that the interested parties have been in communication, and she does not want to sound dismissive, but it is her opinion that it would be irresponsible to not take into account the archaeological potential of this area.
- Ms. Milroy moved with an initial recommendation that added Criterion I and reflected the staff recommendation for the boundary change. Mr. Cohen seconded this motion.
- Ms. Cooperman interjected and stated the Committee needs to address the boundary question.

- The Committee briefly discussed their recommendation based on Mr. Mooney's information related to Criterion I. Ms. Barucco suggested that the Committee recommend designating the property based on the original submitted boundary with the Boiler House being classified as non-contributing. She noted that she does not understand their jurisdiction over the mural so that should not be included. Ms. Barucco opined that if the Committee accepts the staff recommendation of the revised boundary, the inclusion of Criterion I makes less sense.
- Mr. Mooney stated that he appreciates the tremendous amount of time and effort by the interested parties to preserve this site. He stated that he would not oppose the boundary change if Criterion I is added to the area within the revised boundary.
- Ms. Barucco stated that based on Mr. Mooney's comments about archaeological potential, the original boundary included with the nomination should stand. She continued that the potential for archaeological resources in the parking areas and the whole site should be considered.
- Mr. Feldman stated that he is not trying to undermine the role that the Committee plays, but it is very troubling given the time and effort that the owner, nominator, and other parties put into these discussions, to see the Committee take a position contrary to it. He stated that it puts them in an awkward position going forward because they did not want to oppose the designation at the Historical Commission meeting. Mr. Feldman reiterated that they are going to be put in a difficult position going forward because of the Committee's recommendation, which runs contrary to countless hours put into the matter by the interested parties.
  - Ms. Cooperman responded that she hopes Mr. Feldman understands that the Committee appreciates their efforts, but that the Committee must take into consideration all of the historic resources. She stated that the Committee would not be doing its job and upholding its responsibilities if it ignored the fact that this is a site of potential archaeological importance. She stressed that the evaluation of archaeological potential is not a wild guess; rather it is based on experience, research, other excavation, and scientific modeling for sites that are in the immediate vicinity. Ms. Cooperman stated that Criterion I does not stop development or construction; it simply means that there are additional steps that must be taken in order for it to happen.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Paul Steinke, representing the Preservation Alliance, spoke in support of the nomination. He commented that this is an example of the community coming together to figure out how to preserve a prominent but challenging resource that is undoubtedly going to be a difficult property to adapt to a new use. He commended the property owner for being so willing to work with preservationists while having to mind the bottom line. He commended Mr. Beisert for writing an excellent nomination, and preservation consultants who encouraged the parties to work together to find a solution. Mr. Steinke noted there was some compromise along the way, but the Preservation Alliance believes the revised boundary is an optimal if not ideal solution for the preservation of this property.
- Jim Duffin spoke in support of the nomination. He asked about the process if the property owner needed to have repairs done on the mural of the flag. He opined that the mural is highly visible and is a local cultural icon.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that if the mural were considered non-contributing, it would not prevent the owner from maintaining it, or prevent the Historical Commission from approving an application to maintain it. If the owner chose to

remove it, it would be difficult for the Commission to prevent that if it were classified as non-contributing.

- Mr. Brown responded that they have no plans to change or alter the mural on Building B. He pointed out that it does have structural issues and at some point, when they focus on rehabilitating the building, there will need to be conversations about how to update the building to a productive use. Mr. Brown added that on a personal note, he was in Manhattan on September 11, 2001, and has no plans to suddenly change the mural.

#### **COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- Otto C. Wolf is the architect of the site's earliest buildings.
- The Boiler House has been significantly altered over time.
- The full property has archaeological potential given its proximity to the Philadelphia waterfront and physical relationship to the historical development that occurred there.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property is a key example of purpose-built cold storage warehouses and ice manufacturing plants during the last nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion C.
- The property includes Warehouse A, which is the work of master builder Allen B. Rorke (1846-1899), satisfying Criterion E.
- The property is a distinctive visual feature on the Delaware River waterfront, satisfying Criterion H.
- The property is significant for archaeological potential, due to its physical proximity to Philadelphia waterfront and its historical development, satisfying Criterion I.
- The property is significant for its association with the commercial and industrial growth and heritage of Philadelphia from the time of its founding through the first half of the twentieth century, satisfying Criterion J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 500 N Christopher Columbus Blvd satisfies Criteria for Designation C, E, H, I, and J, and that the designation include the original boundary in the nomination, and that the Boiler House be classified as non-contributing.

|                                              |            |           |                |               |               |
|----------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>ITEM: 500 N Christopher Columbus Blvd</b> |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>MOTION: Designate, C, E, H, I, J</b>      |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>MOVED BY: Milroy</b>                      |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>SECONDED BY: Cohen</b>                    |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>VOTE</b>                                  |            |           |                |               |               |
| <b>Committee Member</b>                      | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Abstain</b> | <b>Recuse</b> | <b>Absent</b> |
| Emily Cooperman, chair                       | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Suzanna Barucco                              | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Jeff Cohen                                   | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Bruce Lavery                                 |            | X         |                |               |               |
| Elizabeth Milroy                             | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Douglas Mooney                               | X          |           |                |               |               |
| Total                                        | 5          | 1         |                |               |               |

**ADDRESS: 3000 W SCHOOL HOUSE LN AKA 3001 W COULTER ST**

Name of Resource: Stone Gothic Cottage on Cherry Lane

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: The Overseers of the Penn Charter School

Nominator: Nancy Pontone, East Falls Historical Society

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate this building, located on the edge of the campus of the William Penn Charter School at 3000 W. School House Lane, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination does not propose the designation of the entirety of the 3000 W. School House Lane parcel, but only the small portion on which the building in question stands. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that the house is significant as a fine example of the Gothic Revival style which was “part of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century picturesque and romantic movements in architecture.” Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that features such as the steeply pitched roof with center gable and steep cross gables, the one-story entry porch, and the use of Wissahickon schist further demonstrate the house’s Gothic Revival style of architecture.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that this building, located on the larger parcel known as 3000 W. School House Lane, satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:39:40**

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Nancy Pontone represented the nomination on behalf of the East Falls Historical Society.
- No one represented the property owner.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Milroy explained that this style of house is referred to as “Ontario Vernacular” in Canada.
- Mr. Cohen commented that the nomination was very well done and he enjoyed reading the insurance survey. He asked whether this building had been an independent structure on its own parcel or whether it had been a secondary structure on a larger parcel.
  - Ms. Pontone responded that her understanding was that the house had been built on a larger parcel but was independent of the estate that was later built. She noted that the house lines up with the location of Cherry Lane, which appears in atlases but is no longer extant.
  - Ms. Milroy and Mr. Cohen agreed that this helped to explain what now appears to be the odd siting of the subject property.
- Mr. Cohen commended Ms. Pontone for her great research, and for focusing on a building type that is often overlooked. He suggested that Ms. Pontone include more symbols on the maps used in the nomination to help orient the reader. Mr. Cohen also suggested that she end the nomination with an argument that would help to tie together her research at the end. Ms. Cooperman agreed that this would be helpful.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society of Philadelphia spoke in support of the nomination.
- Steven Peitzman spoke in support of the nomination.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The subject property was constructed ca. 1848 in the Gothic Revival style.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The house satisfies Criterion for Designation C because it is a fine example of the Gothic Revival style which was part of the mid-nineteenth century picturesque and romantic movements in architecture.
- The building's character-defining features such as the steeply pitched roof, the one-story entry porch, and the use of local stone make the house an excellent example of the Gothic Revival-style of architecture, satisfying Criterion for Designation D.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates the building, located on the edge of the campus of the William Penn Charter School at 3000 W. School House Lane, satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

| <b>ITEM: 3000 W School House Ln</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>MOTION: Designate, C &amp; D</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOVED BY: Cohen</b>              |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>SECONDED BY: Barucco</b>         |     |    |         |        |        |
| VOTE                                |     |    |         |        |        |
| Committee Member                    | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair              | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Suzanna Barucco                     | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Jeff Cohen                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Bruce Lavery                        | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Elizabeth Milroy                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Douglas Mooney                      | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                               | 6   |    |         |        |        |

**ADDRESS: 1432-48 S 29TH ST**

Name of Resource: St. Gabriel's Roman Catholic Church and Rectory

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Nominator: Celeste Morello

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt; [megan.schmitt@phila.gov](mailto:megan.schmitt@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the church building and rectory at 1432-48 S. 29<sup>th</sup> Street and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The school building on the western half of the parcel is not included in this nomination. The nomination contends that the buildings satisfy Criteria for Designation D and E. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the church building represents the Romanesque style of architecture and

exemplifies the forms and features similar to those found in French pilgrimage churches of Romanesque design. Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that St. Gabriel's church and rectory are designs of significant Philadelphia architect Edwin F. Durang.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the church building and rectory at 1432-48 S. 29<sup>th</sup> Street satisfy Criteria for Designation D and E.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 03:49:55

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Celeste Morello represented the nomination.
- Attorney Henry Clinton represented the parish.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Cooperman asked if there has been communication with the property owner.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that he had spoken previously to attorney Michael Phillips who represented the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and Mr. Phillips had confirmed that his client was aware of the nomination.
- Mr. Clinton stated that he was representing St. Gabriel's parish and that he was joined by Father Carl Braschoss, the current pastor of the parish. Mr. Clinton remarked that he was intimately familiar with the church because he had attended school there as a child and his mother was still a member of the parish. Mr. Clinton informed the members of the committee that they opposed the nomination for several technical reasons that he would explain. He added that the financial hardship the parish would face if the church was designated would be presented to the Historical Commission at its meeting.
- Mr. Clinton argued that by applying Criterion for Designation D to St. Gabriel's church and rectory buildings, the nominator was arguing that they embodied "distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen." Mr. Clinton said that there were several other churches in South Philadelphia that had also been designed in the Romanesque Revival style of architecture, including St. Anthony of Padua on Grays Ferry Avenue which was even mentioned in the nomination. Mr. Clinton offered St. Clement's Church as another example of a Romanesque Revival style church. He stated that although members of the parish love their church and find it beautiful, they do not think that the building's architecture embodies the Romanesque Revival style of architecture as described in Criterion D.
- Mr. Clinton explained that another reason they object to the nomination is because the research does not sufficiently clarify whether it was renowned architect Edwin F. Durang who designed the church or his son. Mr. Clinton observed that there was evidence in the nomination to support that it was Edwin F. Durang's son who designed the church.
- Mr. Clinton remarked that the final reason for opposing the nomination is due to the financial hardship the designation would create for St. Gabriel's, and though the appropriate time to discuss this is the Historical Commission meeting, he mentioned it for the benefit of the Committee members and the general public. Mr. Clinton explained that St. Gabriel's is one of fourteen mission schools of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and it is suffering financially due to a significant drop in enrollment due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr. Clinton pointed out the parish's former convent building on the presentation slide and explained that within the last year it was sold

- to a developer who intended to convert it into apartments. Mr. Clinton argued that the designation of the church and rectory buildings could impede the parish's ability to divest themselves of additional assets should they decide it necessary in the future.
- Mr. Clinton requested that the Committee on Historic Designation separate the nomination of the rectory from the church because he did not believe that the rectory building, on its own, warranted designation.
  - Father Carl Braschoss, the pastor of St. Gabriel's, reiterated that maintaining flexibility with their assets should the parish need to sell them would be a blessing. He stated that the parish's ability to carry out their mission required flexibility and minimum restrictions over their properties, which is why they opposed designation.
  - Ms. Morello provided a brief overview of the nomination. She asserted that Mr. Clinton made some inaccurate claims that she would respond to. She commented that the line of eight radiating chapels at the side of the church was unique to St. Gabriel's and not something she had seen elsewhere in Philadelphia. Ms. Morello referred to the nomination's statement of significance where she stated that the church was designed by "an elderly Edwin F. Durang, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's preeminent architect for (then) over thirty years." She pointed out that in the statement of significance, she acknowledged that some of the design could be attributed to Durang's son and successor, F. Ferdinand Durang. Ms. Morello said that the important detail was that in the nomination she wrote that some of the design, not the entire building, which is what Mr. Clinton suggested when he spoke to the members of the committee. Ms. Morello went on to explain that F. Ferdinand Durang made alterations to the church in 1909, five years after it was dedicated.
    - Mr. Clinton responded to Ms. Morello by referring to page twenty-one of the nomination, where it states that F. Ferdinand placed an advertisement in the parish bulletin noting his authorship of the design.
    - Mr. Laverty noted that the careers of Edwin and F. Ferdinand Durang overlapped for many years which was not unusual at the time. He added that it is often difficult to pinpoint the precise authorship of a design; however, the point is that it is a valid design regardless of which Durang created it.
  - Mr. Farnham explained that the designation of the property would not preclude the subdivision of the rectory from the other portion of the property, nor the sale of the parcel to a private party. He stated that the Historical Commission does not have jurisdiction over subdivisions or use, but rather only building permit applications for work to the exterior.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, spoke in support of the nomination.

#### **COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- St. Gabriel's church was constructed in 1902-1904, and the rectory was constructed in 1897-1898.
- Both buildings were designed by the renowned firm of Philadelphia architect Edwin F. Durang.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The church and rectory buildings are fine examples of the Romanesque Revival style of architecture, satisfying Criterion for Designation D.



- St. Gabriel's church and rectory are designs of significant Philadelphia architect Edwin F. Durang, 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 1432-48 S. 29<sup>th</sup> Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D and E.

| <b>ITEM: St. Gabriel's, 1432-48 S. 29th St</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>MOTION: Designate, Criteria D and E</b>     |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>MOVED BY: Millroy</b>                       |     |    |         |        |        |
| <b>SECONDED BY: Laverty</b>                    |     |    |         |        |        |
| VOTE                                           |     |    |         |        |        |
| Committee Member                               | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair                         | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Suzanna Barucco                                | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Jeff Cohen                                     |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Bruce Laverty                                  | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Elizabeth Milroy                               | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Douglas Mooney                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                          | 5   |    |         |        | 1      |

**ADDRESS: 1101 JACKSON ST**

Name of Resource: Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Nominator: Celeste Morello

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

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1101 Jackson Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church, completed in 1905, satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and H. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the church building embodies distinguishing characteristics of High Gothic architecture. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the church and rectory are the work of Frank R. Watson, one of the most important of the several architects specializing in church design in Philadelphia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Under Criterion H, the nomination contends that the monumental church building represents an established and familiar visual feature in the predominantly red brick rowhouse neighborhood.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1101 Jackson Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and H.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 04:12:40

**PRESENTERS:**

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

**DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Cooperman asked if there has been communication with the property owner.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that he communicated with the attorney representing the Archdiocese, and also sent the notice letter directly to the individual at the Archdiocese who is in charge of facilities management. There has been no direct communication with anyone associated with the parish itself.
- Ms. Morello summarized the significance of the church.
- Ms. Cooperman recommended that interested individuals from the parish attend the Historical Commission meeting.
- Ms. Milroy asked about the owner of the property in regards to notice being provided, and asked if the onus would be on the Archdiocese to alert a particular parish of a proposed designation.
  - Mr. Farnham responded that the property owner is the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and his understanding from speaking with the attorney who typically represents the Archdiocese is that when the Archdiocese receives a notice letter from the Historical Commission, it typically informs the parish and consults with the parish to develop a position on the nomination. Mr. Farnham added that he confirmed with the attorney that he was aware of the nomination on this agenda, but does not have confirmation that the attorney was working with the parish.
- Ms. Milroy commented that the case is made in the nomination that the church is a historically significant building.
  - Ms. Barucco agreed, and commented on the impressive masonry craftsmanship.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Christian Matozzo, a registered parishioner of Epiphany of Our Lord parish, spoke in opposition to the designation. He commented that there has been no notice at mass so he is unsure if the pastor is aware of the proposed historic designation, and questioned if the matter should be continued to allow for participation in the process by the pastor and parishioners.
- David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, spoke in support of the nomination.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church was completed in 1905.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The church building embodies distinguishing characteristics of High Gothic architecture, satisfying Criterion D.
- The church and rectory are the work of Frank R. Watson, one of the most important of the several architects specializing in church design in Philadelphia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, satisfying Criterion E.
- The monumental church building represents an established and familiar visual feature in the predominantly red brick rowhouse neighborhood, satisfying Criterion H.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1101 Jackson Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and H.

| <b>ITEM: 1101 Jackson Street</b><br><b>MOTION: Designate, D, E, H</b><br><b>MOVED BY: Barucco</b><br><b>SECONDED BY: Lavery</b> |     |    |         |        |        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE                                                                                                                            |     |    |         |        |        |
| Committee Member                                                                                                                | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair                                                                                                          | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Suzanna Barucco                                                                                                                 | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Jeff Cohen                                                                                                                      |     |    |         |        | X      |
| Bruce Lavery                                                                                                                    | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Elizabeth Milroy                                                                                                                | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Douglas Mooney                                                                                                                  | X   |    |         |        |        |
| Total                                                                                                                           | 5   |    |         |        | 1      |

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 1:58 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.