

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

**THOMAS SUGRUE, PH.D., CHAIR
MONDAY, 12 MARCH 2007, 9:00 A.M.
ROOM 578, CITY HALL**

PRESENT

Thomas Sugrue, Ph.D., Chair
Janet Klein
Bruce Laverty
Hyman Myers, FAIA

Jonathan Farnham, Acting Historic Preservation Director
Erin Coté, Historic Preservation Planner

ALSO PRESENT

John Gallery, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Elizabeth Blazeovich, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Charlotte Braun, Circle Mission Church
Anthony Forte, Esq., Saul Ewing, LLP
William Kerr, Esq., Blank Rome, LLP
Kevin Robinson, Saint Joseph's University
Nelma Fiddler, Esq., Saint Joseph's University
Joan Chrestay, Saint Joseph's University

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Sugrue called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Ms. Klein and Messrs. Laverty and Myers joined him on the Committee.

1328 RACE STREET, FIRE STATION

Owner: City of Philadelphia, Department of Public Property
Applicant: Anthony, Forte, Esq., Saul Ewing LLP for PA Convention Center Authority
History: 1925, John Molitor, architect
Proposal: Rescind historic designation

OVERVIEW: This application proposes the rescission of the designation of the firehouse at 1328 Race Street. The firehouse stands in the path of the expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The application requests that the actual rescission occur after the firehouse has been demolished. As of 7 March 2007, when this overview was written, the firehouse remained standing. On 10 November 2006, the Commission approved the demolition of the firehouse with conditions as necessary in the public interest to clear the site for the expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Those conditions are:

Prior to Issuance of any Demolition Permit, Applicant shall provide the Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff with the following:

1. HISTORIC DOCUMENTATION: A set of measured drawings depicting existing as-built conditions, including Floor Plans (4 Sheets) and Exterior Elevations (4 Sheets), as well as 35mm and digital color photographs depicting the interior and exterior existing

conditions. Also, a letter from the Athenaeum of Philadelphia (or other similar historical society), agreeing to accept the referenced drawings and photographs as part of a local architectural archive.

2. FINANCING: Evidence that the full \$700 million budget for the Pennsylvania Convention Center expansion project has been authorized as part of Pennsylvania capital budget legislation passed by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, and signed by the Governor.

3. ORDER OF DEMOLITION: A letter from the Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia (the entity handling all demolitions in connection with the Pennsylvania Convention Center expansion project), stating that the Fire Station (1328-32 Race St.) property shall be the last property to be demolished.

4. SALVAGE OF HISTORIC ARTIFACTS: A report including (1) a List of Artifacts to be Salvaged (attached) and a digital photo of each individual artifact to be salvaged; (2) Plans and/or specifications indicating how the salvaged items are to be removed from the building and temporarily stored during construction in a safe and professional manner; and (3) a List indicating where each of the salvaged artifacts will be relocated (i.e., public display space within the Pennsylvania Convention Center, a local historical society or museum, or a Convention Center storage facility).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends the rescission of the designation of 1328 Race Street, provided the above-enumerated conditions are satisfied and the demolition permit has been issued by the Department of Licenses & Inspections, pursuant to the Commission's demolition approval of 10 November 2006 and Section 5.5.c.1 of the Rules & Regulations: "The bases for the rescinding of an entry on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places are 1) the resource has ceased to meet the criteria for listing on the Register because the qualities that caused its original entry have been lost or destroyed...."

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the request for rescission to the Committee. Attorney Anthony Forte represented the property owner.

Mr. Forte reported that the Redevelopment Authority owns the property and it is now condemned. He added that the fire station has not yet been vacated but will be soon. Both Ms. Klein and Mr. Lavery were interested to know if the recordation of the building had been completed. Mr. Forte informed them that the recordation has been completed; it meets the conditional requirements set up by the Commission; and it has been submitted to the Commission. Mr. Lavery added that the Athenaeum of Philadelphia would gladly accept copies of the referenced drawings and photographs to add to its architectural archive. He asked that Mr. Forte send a formal letter requesting accession to the Athenaeum.

Mr. Forte disclosed that an appropriate repository for the architectural salvage from the building has yet to be identified. He pledged to inform the Commission as soon as one has been selected. Mr. Forte acknowledged that the Fireman's Hall had inquired. He also reported that the Convention Center Authority is considering displaying the items in the expanded convention center. Mr. Sugrue stated that the Commission has required that the Authority provide an accounting of the dispositions of the salvaged materials. Mr. Forte stated that he would consult with the staff concerning the salvaged materials and would ensure that the materials are appropriately relocated. Ms. Klein stated that the protection of the salvaged artifacts is a primary concern.

Mr. Forte asked the Committee to consider recommending that the rescission of the historical designation becomes effective when the parcel for the Convention Center project site are consolidated and the demolition permits are issued, not when the building is demolished as was originally proposed. He remarked that the permitting logistics for the enormous project are very complicated. Mr. Sugrue responded that the Committee's role is to determine whether the criteria for rescission stipulated in Section 5.5.c.1 of the Rules & Regulations have been met. In his opinion, they are only met once the building is demolished.

Mr. Forte asked if Commission's jurisdiction would expand to the entire site once the parcels for the Convention Center project are consolidated. He voiced his concern that the Commission's jurisdiction could delay the permitting process. Mr. Sugrue replied that these questions should be addressed to the Commission, not the Committee on Historic Designation. Mr. Sugrue stated that the Committee cannot ignore the Rules & Regulations regarding rescission, even if this particular case presents a compelling reason to do so. He opined that, technically, the building will not qualify for rescission until it is demolished. Ms. Klein agreed. Mr. Sugrue suggested that the Committee fabricate a recommendation predicated on its expertise that does not exceed its jurisdiction.

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance stated that he would take no position on the rescission. However, he did suggest that the Commission could view its jurisdiction in this case as it did recently with the Divine Lorraine; during that recent review, the Commission decided that its jurisdiction would not flow beyond the designated parcel to the related new construction even if the parcels were consolidated.

ACTION: Mr. Lavery moved to recommend that the fire station building at 1328 Race Street is historically significant, but the land on which it stands is not; therefore, 1328 Race Street may be rescinded from the Register pursuant to Section 5.5.c.1.1 when "the qualities that caused its original entry have been lost or destroyed." Ms. Klein seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

507 S. BROAD STREET

Owner at the time of notification: Circle Mission Church

Nominator: Mark Flood, Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia

History: 1882, George T. Pearson, architect

Proposal: Designate as historic and list on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

OVERVIEW: The J. Dundas Lippincott House at 507 South Broad Street is historically and architecturally significant and therefore qualifies to be listed individually on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It satisfies Designation Criteria (a), (d), and (e) as defined in Philadelphia's Historical Preservation Ordinance, Section 14-2007 of the Philadelphia Code. Satisfying Criterion (a), the building has significant interest or value as part of the city's development and is associated with important individuals; J.D. Lippincott, Charles H. Cramp, and Father and Mother Divine; satisfying Criterion (d), the Lippincott House is a high style patterned masonry Queen Anne town house, and one of the last to grace its block on S. Broad Street; and satisfying Criterion (e), the building is the design of architect George T. Pearson, a significant local architect, prolific in the Philadelphia area at the time of the construction of the Lippincott House.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The property at 507 S. Broad Street satisfies Designation Criteria a, d, and e; it should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Coté presented the nomination to the Committee.

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance commended Mark Flood for writing the nomination and submitting it on behalf of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia.

Charlotte Braun, a representative of the Circle Mission Church, stated that she was pleased that the Commission sought to protect the building. Mr. Gallery stated the building had been beautifully maintained and commended the Divines. He said that the building is architecturally and socially significant. He clarified that the mural on the north wall of 507 S. Broad is not included in the nomination and should not be designated. It is on the neighboring property. Mr. Sugrue agreed that the mural was temporary and should not be included in the designation of the building.

Ms. Klein asked why the nomination form had been changed; the old form contained information that she found helpful, such as occupancy, use, current condition and current owner. Mr. Farnham replied that the old form, which was developed in the 1970s, was obsolete. However, he offered to include spaces for the requested information on the new form.

Ms. Klein asked if 509 S. Broad Street was still standing. She wanted it noted in the nomination that it has been demolished. She also added that the Cramp shipyard had been in existence for over 100 years, and active during World War II; the history was misstated in the nomination.

ACTION: Ms. Klein moved to recommend that the property at 507 S. Broad Street (without the mural on the north party wall) satisfies Designation Criteria a, d, and e and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5900 AND 5920 CITY AVENUE

Owner at the time of notification: Greaton Properties Inc. and Saint Joseph's University

Nominator: Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff

History: 1891, George T. Pearson, architect

Proposal: Designate as historic and list on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

OVERVIEW: The Tudor Revival suburban estate at 5920 City Avenue is historically and architecturally significant and therefore qualifies to be listed individually on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It satisfies Designation Criteria c, d, e, and j as defined in Philadelphia's Historical Preservation Ordinance, Section 14-2007 of The Philadelphia Code. Satisfying Criteria c and d, the house reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style and embodies distinguishing characteristics of that style, the Jacobethan (Jacobean and Elizabethan) vein of the Tudor Revival style. Satisfying Criterion e, the building is the design of an architect, George T. Pearson, whose work significantly influenced the development of the City of Philadelphia. Satisfying Criterion j, the residence, which was the home of a prominent and affluent family, exemplifies the cultural and social heritage of the community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The properties at 5900 and 5920 City avenue satisfy Designation Criteria c, d, e, and j; it should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Coté presented the nomination to the Committee. Attorney William Kerr and Kevin Robinson of Saint Joseph's University represented the property owner.

Mr. Myers asked if this property was included in both the pending Philadelphia Register and the National Register Overbrook Historic Districts. Ms. Coté responded that it was. Mr. Myers approved of the nomination and stated that the property is important. He noted that several historic buildings have been demolished along City Avenue recently. This building is important for the neighborhood.

Ms. Klein suggested that the nomination form should list the alterations to the property that are mentioned in the Statement of Significance. Mr. Myers asked about the 1915 alterations. Ms. Coté responded that the building permits were not that specific; they simply mentioned that alterations were undertaken according to designs prepared by Stewardson & Page. Mr. Myers noted that Stewardson & Page were prominent and well respected architects in Philadelphia. Mr. Sugrue pointed out that a greenhouse was added to the house in the 1980s.

Mr. Kerr stated that the building is currently vacant and he informed the Committee that St. Joseph's University purchased it at sheriff sale in 1999. He added that the University owns the adjoining property. He continued that the University has struggled to find an appropriate use for this property. It is currently zoned residential; the University would need a zoning variance to use it any other way. Mr. Robinson stated that the University would need community support for the zoning variance and at this point there is no consensus from the community. He informed the Committee that they have attempted to contact State Representative Louise Bishop but have not yet discussed the matter with her.

Mr. Kerr asked the Committee to table the nomination to allow the University to explore viable uses for the building, determine the cost to restore it, and to meet with the community. Mr. Sugrue stated that the use of the building is beyond the Commission's purview. He also noted that the Commission, but not the Committee, has the authority to table matters. He suggested that Messrs. Kerr and Robinson address the technical issues related to the designation criteria.

Mr. Kerr stated that the building is attractive. He submitted floor plans of the building showing load bearing walls through out the building. He told the Committee that students rented and occupied the building before Saint Joseph's University purchased it. With photographs, Mr. Kerr attempted to demonstrate that the building is in bad condition. He stated that, at this point, the University does not know what to do with the building and is in the process of exploring its options. He informed the Committee that preliminary research has indicated that it would cost between \$3 million to \$4 million to restore the building. If designated, the University would submit a hardship application for demolition.

MOTION: Mr. Myers moved to recommend that the properties at 5900 and 5920 City Avenue, including the wall along City Avenue, satisfy Designation Criteria c, d, e, and j and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion.

Mr. Myers stated that the property should be designated because it is very significant to Overbrook Farms; it defines an important boundary. It is also significant to City Avenue. Mr.

Farnham, suggested that Mr. Myers was making an argument that the property meets criterion h for designation [Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City]. Mr. Myers agreed. He said this section of City Avenue is significant and includes the residence of the head of the Catholic Church in Philadelphia, which is probably the only other single residence on City Avenue in the area.

AMENDMENT OF MOTION: Mr. Myers moved to recommend that the properties at 5900 and 5920 City Avenue, including the wall along City Avenue, satisfy Designation Criteria c, d, e, h, and j and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion.

Joan Crestay of Saint Joseph's University explained that the Public Relations position at the University had been vacant for the last six months, but was recently filled; this is the reason for the delay in the University's research and dialogue with the community. Mr. Sugrue stated that the delay was understandable. He suggested that the University talk with the community. He noted that the Committee visited the Overbrook area two years ago and knows that there is a large interest in preservation issues in the community.

ACTION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted unanimously to recommend that the properties at 5900 and 5920 City Avenue, including the wall along City Avenue, satisfy Designation Criteria c, d, e, h, and j and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Myers moved to adjourn. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.