

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

**WEDNESDAY, 15 MARCH 2023
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 9:36 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair	X		
Suzanna Barucco	X		
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.		X	
Bruce Lavery		X	Arrived 9:54 a.m.
Debbie Miller	X		
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.	X		

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

The following staff members were present:

- Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
- Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner I
- Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner I
- Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner I

The following persons attended the online meeting:

- Kerrian France
- Jay Farrell
- Sherman Aronson
- Suzanne Ponsen
- Shane McNeela
- Susan Wetherill
- Russell Fulton
- J. Sharpless
- Nancy Pontone
- Steven Peitzman
- Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
- David Traub
- Shawn Rexroad, Esq.

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 256 N 32ND ST

Proposed Action: Reclassify

Property Owner: John Carney

Applicant: Historical Commission staff

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to reclassify the property at 256 N. 32nd Street from Contributing to Non-contributing in the Powelton Village Historic District inventory, which was adopted by the Historical Commission on 9 November 2022. The inventory entry for the property misidentifies the existing building as an addition to the attached historic building, which in fact sits on a separate parcel at 3202 Winter Street and has a separate inventory entry. A nineteenth-century building on the parcel at 256 N. 32nd Street, formerly known as 3200 Winter Street, was demolished between 1910 and 1942, and the property was a vacant lot until the existing building was constructed in 1997. Zoning documents document the construction of the existing building in 1997 along with 250 and 252 N. 32nd Street, which are both correctly classified as Non-contributing to the Powelton Village Historic District, the period of significance for which ends in 1931.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the Historical Commission reclassify the property at 256 N. 32nd Street from Contributing to Non-contributing in the Powelton Village Historic District inventory.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:05:42

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the reclassification application to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner. Ms. DiPasquale noted that the Historical Commission's staff had been in touch with the owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Barucco agreed with the staff conclusions and explained that reclassifying the property would simply correct an error, which is bound to happen in an inventory that includes more than 900 properties.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The Powelton Village Historic District period of significance ends in 1931.
- The building at 256 N. 32nd Street was constructed in 1997 and is misidentified in the inventory as an addition to the historic building at 3202 Winter Street.
- The historic building that once sat on the property was demolished between 1910 and 1942.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property at 256 N. 32nd Street was constructed in 1997, outside of the period of significance for the Powelton Village Historic District, and should be reclassified from Contributing to Non-contributing in the district inventory.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission reclassify the property at 256 N. 32nd Street from Contributing to Non-contributing in the Powelton Village Historic District inventory.

ITEM: 256 N 32nd St MOTION: Reclassify from C to NC MOVED BY: Milroy SECONDED BY: Miller					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen					X
Bruce Lavery					X
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	4				2

ADDRESS: 2221 S 5TH ST

Name of Resource: Alain LeRoy Locke House

Review: Designation

Property Owner: Chip Samith & DY Chanthy

Nominator: Kerrian France, Historical Commission intern

Staff Contact: Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, daniel.shachar-krasnoff@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2221 S. 5th Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property is significant under Criterion for Designation A for its association with Alain LeRoy Locke; it was his childhood home from 1892 to 1899. The Locke family were significant members of Philadelphia's Black community. Alain LeRoy Locke was particularly significant as a trailblazer in higher education, philosophy, the "Father of the Harlem Renaissance," and in the LGBTQ+ community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2221 S. 5th Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:09:26

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Shachar-Krasnoff presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Kerrian France represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Milroy complimented Kerrian France, the former Historical Commission intern, for composing a model nomination. She also said Dr. Locke is a hero and that recognition of the house is well-deserved.
- Ms. Miller added that the nomination was concise and well written. She said she learned a great deal from reading the nomination.
- Ms. Barucco said she supports the nomination and was amazed by the accomplishments of Dr. Locke as well as the photographs.
- Ms. Cooperman complimented the thoroughness of the nomination although she noted minor concerns with aspects of the writing.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The house at 2221 S. 5th Street was the home of Alain LeRoy Locke from 1892 to 1899.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The house at 2221 S. 5th Street is associated with Alain LeRoy Locke; it was his childhood home from 1892 to 1899. The Locke family were significant members of Philadelphia's Black community. Alain LeRoy Locke was particularly significant as a trailblazer in higher education, philosophy, the "Father of the Harlem Renaissance," and in the LGBTQ+ community, satisfying Criterion A.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2221 S. 5th Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A.

ITEM: 2221 S. 5th Street MOTION: Designate, Criterion A MOVED BY: Miller SECONDED BY: Barucco					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen					X
Bruce Lavery					X
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	4				2

ADDRESS: 370 W JOHNSON ST

Name of Resource: Wood Norton Residences

Review: Designate

Property Owner: Johnson Street Holdings LLC

Nominator: West Mt Airy Neighbors (WMAN)

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate a portion of the property at 370 W. Johnson Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. A three-story Tudor Revival apartment building, known as the Wood Norton Residences, occupies the area proposed for designation. The nomination contends that the Wood Norton Residences satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that the Wood Norton Residences reflects the environment in an era characterized by the Tudor Revival style as applied to low-rise apartment buildings. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the building exemplifies the railroad-led economic and historic transformation of Northwest Philadelphia in the early decades of the twentieth century as the area became a bustling residential suburb within the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the property at 370 W. Johnson Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:16:30

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Elizabeth Milroy asked for clarification on the date of construction of the building.
- Mr. Aronson answered that the building permit was secured in 1911 but the construction was completed in 1912.
- Ms. Milroy then wondered why the period of significance was listed as beginning in 1900, before the building existed.
- Mr. Aronson answered that the boom in this type of construction began in the early twentieth century.
- Ms. Cooperman clarified that the period of significance should reflect the building's existence and then, along with Ms. Milroy, requested that the period of significance be revised to 1911 to 1912.
- Ms. Milroy noted that there was mixed reception of apartment buildings of this scale and era in the "City of Homes" and wondered if this building elicited such a response. Further she wondered whether that reception might have depended on who exactly was living in this building at the time.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that there were a significant number of apartment buildings of this scale in the neighborhood, some now demolished, observing that there was a vibrant market for these apartment buildings in this neighborhood and beyond.
- Mr. Aronson noted that he had tallied over 30 buildings of this scale in the area.
- Ms. Cooperman further noted that garden apartments were a national phenomenon.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites commented in endorsement of the nomination and observed that together with the designation of the Cresheim Valley Apartments, the designation of this building would represent a collection of Tudor Revival structures in this neighborhood on the Register.
- Steven Peitzman spoke in support of the nomination and expressed regret that the matching building to this one was demolished. He commented that there are a significant number of four-story apartment buildings in the neighborhood and that he hopes to one day create a nomination for a thematic historic district of them.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- Building C/D at 370 W. Johnson Street is a significant example of the type of apartment building constructed during the early twentieth century along commuter rail lines, of which there are many in the Germantown and Mount Airy area.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion C because it reflects the environment in an era characterized by the Tudor Revival style.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criterion J because the building exemplifies the railroad-led economic and historic transformation of Northwest Philadelphia in the early decades of the twentieth century as the area became a bustling residential suburb within the city.
- The period of significance should be amended to 1911 to 1912 to reflect the date of the building's construction.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 370 W. Johnson Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J, and that the period of significance should be amended to begin in 1911-12.

ITEM: 370 W. Johnson Street					
MOTION: Designate, Criteria C & J; Period of significance beginning in 1911-12					
MOVED BY: Milroy					
SECONDED BY: Lavery					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen					X
Bruce Lavery	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				1

ADDRESS: 3401 SOLLY AVE

Name of Resource: Stonyhurst

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity

Nominator: Celeste Morello

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate Stonyhurst, a building on a larger parcel at 3401 Solly Avenue, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that Stonyhurst satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, G, and H. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the property is significant for its association with George A. Castor, a businessman and U.S. Congressman, who served parts of two terms from 1904 to 1906. Castor constructed Stonyhurst, an 18-bedroom mansion, for his residence. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the building and its landscape represent the Picturesque style. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the building is the work of significant Philadelphia architect George T. Pearson. The nomination further contends that the property satisfies Criteria G and H for its landscaped grounds. The nomination does not define a Period of Significance. The building has been significantly altered, with many character-defining windows, dormers, and other features removed or altered.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The nomination demonstrates that Stonyhurst, located at 3401 Solly Avenue, satisfies Criterion for Designation E, as a work of influential architect George T. Pearson, with a Period of Significance of 1887 to 1891, reflecting Pearson's involvement. Insufficient evidence is provided to determine whether Castor was "a person significant in the past." Castor was a businessman and then Congressman for a short time. He was appointed to fill a vacant seat for the remainder of one session in Congress and then died during a second session. The nomination fails to demonstrate that Castor satisfies Criterion A. The building is an example of the Queen Anne style, not the so-called Picturesque style of architecture, as claimed in the nomination; the nomination fails to demonstrate that Stonyhurst satisfies Criterion C. Insufficient information is provided about the current or historic landscape to discern its style of landscape design, but what is provided does not indicate that the landscape could be described as Picturesque; the nomination fails to demonstrate that Stonyhurst satisfies Criterion G. No information is provided supporting the claim that Stonyhurst is an established and familiar visual feature in the community. The staff visited the site and found the view from the public right-of-way to be unremarkable. The nomination fails to demonstrate that Stonyhurst satisfies Criterion H.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:38:35

RECUSAL:

- Mr. Lavery recused from the review of the nomination.

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the nomination. Mr. Farnham called upon Celeste Morello, the nominator, and asked her to raise her hand if she was in attendance at the meeting. She did not respond.
- Attorney Shawn Rexroad represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farnham stated that Mr. Rexroad, the property owner's attorney, submitted a letter regarding the nomination, which was received by the Historical Commission during the morning prior to the meeting. He noted that it was distributed to the Committee members upon receipt.
 - o Ms. Cooperman acknowledged receipt of the letter prior to the meeting but noted that she had not had time to review it.
- Mr. Rexroad introduced himself and stated that he agrees with much of the staff recommendation. He stated that George A. Castor does not qualify as a person significant in the past. He ran a company that produced men's clothing and he was a congressman for a very short time. He added that Mr. Castor was an absentee congressman who missed more than 75% of his votes while in office for a short time. He observed that the entire basis for the nomination is that the building and grounds represent the "Picturesque" style, but the staff has stated that that is clearly incorrect. Moving to Criterion E. Mr. Rexroad acknowledged that he is not an architectural historian but is capable of discerning that the nomination merely states that architect George T. Pearson was influential but does not prove it. Mr. Rexroad stated that there is no basis for the claim that the property satisfies Criterion G, that it is related to a park or square. Regarding Criterion H, Mr. Rexroad stated that the nomination claims that it was an important visual feature in the nineteenth century, but, to satisfy the Criterion, the ordinance requires that it currently represent an established and familiar visual feature. No such claim is made or proven. The evidence that it is an established and familiar visual feature is a photograph from 1900, 123 years ago. That view does not exist today. Mr. Rexroad concluded that the nomination is clearly deficient and, pursuant to Section 5.10.b of the Historical Commission's Rules and Regulations, must be returned to the nominator with a request for revision and resubmission.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Steven Peitzman commented that the architect George T. Pearson is prominent, and the building has an architectural style. Mr. Peitzman stated that it is refreshing to see a property owner's representative request that the Historical Commission return a nomination to a nominator for revision and resubmission. He stated that it is a "generous suggestion."
- David Traub of Save Our Sites agreed with Mr. Peitzman's suggestion and advocated for the Historical Commission to return the nomination to the nominator "to give greater focus to the nomination." He contended that returning the deficient nomination would be a fair approach.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farnham stated that he and fellow staff member Allyson Mehley visited the site recently. He reported that he rewrote the staff recommendation after visiting the site. The original staff recommendation was written over one year ago and needed updating.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that there are quite a few ways in which one could describe the style of the building in this case. Picturesque is in part appropriate because of the irregular massing of the building, which is a characteristic of much of the architecture of the nineteenth century, particularly in the country, from roughly the middle of the nineteenth century on with some notable changes in terms of taste as one moves towards the end of the nineteenth century. Picturesque is not inaccurate because this

is an irregular building with a rough surface, and those are characteristics of the Picturesque aesthetic as it was understood in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It also does have some characteristics of the Chateausque style. It does have some elements that could be ascribed to the chateau of the Loire Valley, certainly also in terms of its massing. The architect Pearson is using his own creativity to combine historic and not so historic elements. The building also possesses elements of the Queen Anne style that refer to the work of Richard Norman Shaw. It is a combination of all of those styles. None of those styles is inaccurate. It is eclectic. Ms. Cooperman concluded that, in her opinion, Criterion C is satisfied; the eclectic building includes elements of several distinctive architectural styles, even if those styles are not completely and exhaustively discussed in the nomination. Ms. Cooperman stated that the Historical Commission has already recognized George T. Pearson as an influential architect. Since this is a Pearson building, it must satisfy Criterion E. Finally, she stated that she agrees with the staff's recommendation that there is no clear evidence in the nomination for the satisfaction of Criteria A, G, and H.

- Ms. Milroy stated that she agreed with Ms. Cooperman. The Historical Commission has set a precedent with existing designations that recognize Pearson as a significant architect in Philadelphia. She agreed that the stylistic issue is “difficult to navigate.” She stated that the nomination does present adequate evidence to support Criteria C and E. She stated that it appears that George A. Castor was a “wonderful animal of the of the Lincoln Steffens Republican machine.” She observed that the *Philadelphia Times* lengthy article from 20 January 1899 cited in the nomination is highly unusual and shows the exceptional nature of the house. She noted that the house was meant to be view from the Pennypack Creek Bridge on Frankford Avenue, not from Solly Street.
 - o Ms. Miller suggested that the house could be seen from the Pennypack Creek Bridge when it was first erected. She also noted that a railroad track runs alongside the property.
 - o Ms. Cooperman stated that it may have been a prominent visual feature in the past, but it is not one now.
- Ms. Milroy asked when Pennypack Park was established and whether this house was intended to relate to it.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that she did not know when the park was established, and it is not addressed in the nomination.
- Mr. Rexroad read Criterion C: reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style. He stated that the Committee's discussion makes it clear that this building is not reflective of a distinctive architectural style. As the Committee noted, it has characteristics of several architectural style but no of a distinctive architectural style. The City Council was clear when it adopted the historic preservation ordinance that, to qualify for designation, a building had to reflect a distinctive architectural style, not merely include aspects of various styles. The building must be an excellent example of a style to qualify. This building does not qualify. Regarding architect George T. Pearson, the nomination does not offer a cogent argument that he was an influential architect. Moreover, not every Pearson-designed building qualifies for designation. The nomination does not prove that this building is a work that evidences Pearson's influence. The nomination must be returned to the nominator for revisions. It is not correct or complete.
- Ms. Cooperman respond to Mr. Rexroad, stating that an eclectic building can still exhibit a distinctive architectural style.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- George A. Castor was a businessman and then Congressman for a short time. He was appointed to fill a vacant seat for the remainder of one session in Congress and then died during a second session.
- Architect George T. Pearson designed Stonyhurst, located at 3401 Solly Avenue, for George A. Castor. The house was erected between 1887 and 1891.
- Stonyhurst has been significantly altered, with many character-defining windows, dormers, and other features removed or altered.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- Insufficient evidence is provided to determine whether Castor was “a person significant in the past.” The nomination fails to demonstrate that Castor satisfies Criterion A.
- The nomination demonstrates that Stonyhurst, located at 3401 Solly Avenue, satisfies Criterion E, as a work of influential architect George T. Pearson.
- Stonyhurst reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style, even if that style cannot be labeled solely as Picturesque, Queen Anne, or Chateausque; Stonyhurst satisfies Criterion C.
- Insufficient information is provided about the current or historic landscape to discern its style of landscape design, but what is provided does not indicate that the landscape could be described as Picturesque; the nomination fails to demonstrate that Stonyhurst satisfies Criterion G.
- No information is provided in the nomination to support the claim that Stonyhurst is currently an established and familiar visual feature in the community. The nomination fails to demonstrate that Stonyhurst satisfies Criterion H.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3401 Solly Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C and E.

ITEM: 3401 Solly Ave MOTION: Designate under Criteria C and E MOVED BY: Barucco SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen					X
Bruce Laverty				X	
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	4			1	1

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

ITEM: Adjournment MOTION: Adjourn MOVED BY: Barucco SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen					X
Bruce Laverty	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				1

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:

- 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;
- Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- 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;
- Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;
- 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;
- Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
- Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.