

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

**19 JUNE 2019, 9:30 A.M.
1515 ARCH STREET, ROOM 18-029
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

Acting chair Doug Mooney called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. The following Committee members joined him:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair		X	
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.	X		
Bruce Lavery		X	
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.	X		
Douglas Mooney	X		

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner I

The following persons were present:

William Martin, Esq.
Tom Becker, Jefferson University
Celeste Morello
David S. Traub, Save Our Sites
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Gabor Antalics
Andy Wade
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
J.M. Duffin, Keeping Society
Nancy Pontone, Tudor East Falls
Yi Liu, 99 Adc
Simon Liu, 99 Adc
Amanda Stevens
Alex Balloon, Tacony CDC
Ben Leech, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

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, 215-686-7660

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 OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:01:53

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the continuance request to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the nomination or the property owner.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The equitable owner of the property, the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, requested that the nomination be continued to the 18 September 2019 Committee on Historic Designation meeting.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend continuing the review of the nomination of 156 W. School House Lane to the September 2019 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

ITEM: 156 W SCHOOL HOUSE LN					
MOTION: Recommendation to continue nomination review to September 2019 meeting					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 3201-45 MIDVALE AVE

Name of Resource: McMichael Park

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: City of Philadelphia

Nominator: Beth Gross-Eskin, Friends of McMichael Park

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3201-45 Midvale Avenue, McMichael Park, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation B and I.

The Committee on Historic Designation reviewed this nomination at its April 2019 meeting and recommended that the nomination failed to demonstrate that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation B or I. At the May 2019 meeting of the Historical Commission, the nominator requested that the Commission remand the nomination to the Committee to provide her with an opportunity to participate in the review. The nominator had not attended the April Committee meeting. The Commission granted the request, sending the nomination back to the Committee.

Under Criterion B, the nomination argues that the property “Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation,” an encampment of the Continental Army in 1777. The nomination claims that “It is likely that this land once contained the Morgan House, which is said to have been the headquarters of the Marquis de Lafayette for two days in September 1777.” However, the nomination demonstrates neither that the Morgan House stood on the land that is now McMichael Park nor that Lafayette was billeted at the Morgan House. Both are conjectural.

The nomination cites the Scull & Heap map of 1753 to pinpoint the location of the Morgan House, but the map is not nearly accurate enough to be used in that way. The nomination also identifies a building on the 1884 Hopkins Atlas as the Morgan House, but provides no basis for the identification. The nomination also provides an 1876 drawing of the house and an 1880s photograph of the house, but neither can be used to precisely locate the house. Moreover, the building identified in the nomination as the Morgan House on an 1884 map is described on a very detailed 1886 topographical survey by City surveyors laying out streets as “Ruin,” but the house in the photograph dated to the 1880s is clearly not in ruins. They are unlikely the same building. Finally, without access to the 1880s photograph, the information on the reverse of the photograph cannot be interrogated or verified. The staff has reviewed numerous documents including deeds, real estate advertisements, and newspaper articles and has been unable to

identify the location of the Morgan House. Likewise, the nomination provides no evidence that Lafayette was billeted at the Morgan House and, in fact, concedes in Footnote 1 that “No firm evidence has been found which places the Marquis de Lafayette in the Morgan House.” The nomination’s claim that the property satisfies Criterion B because it “Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation” is untenable.

The nomination makes no direct argument for the satisfaction of Criterion I, that the site “Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.” The nomination implies that the site may yield archaeological artifacts related to Lafayette and the encampment in 1777. However, the nomination fails to demonstrate that Lafayette or any Revolution War figures occupied this plot of land or that, even if they had, artifacts would remain at the site.

Finally, the nomination seems to assert that, if McMichael Park is designated, no playground could be constructed at the site. In fact, the designation of this park would not necessarily preclude any potential future construction including the construction of a playground.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property at 3201-45 Midvale Avenue, McMichael Park, satisfies Criteria for Designation B or I.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION, APRIL 2019: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination does not demonstrate that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation B or I.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:03:00

PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Farnham presented a request to withdraw the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the nomination or the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Farnham explained that the Committee had reviewed the nomination for McMichael Park at its April 2019 meeting and recommended that the nomination did not demonstrate that the site satisfied one or more Criteria for Designation. At the Historical Commission meeting, he continued, the nominator requested that the Commission remand the nomination back to this Committee for a second review, because she had not had the opportunity to participate in the discussion. He added that the Commission granted her request and remanded the nomination back to the Committee. Subsequently, he stated, the nominator requested that the Commission allow her to withdraw the nomination. Mr. Farnham noted that for the last year or so, the Commission has not accepted unilateral requests from nominators to withdraw nominations; the Historical Commission has instead considered each request on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the system is not being manipulated. He added that given the Committee’s previous recommendation, it would be likely that the request to withdraw would be supported.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jim Duffin agreed that there was not enough evidence presented in the document for the Committee to support designation, but added that there is merit to the claim that

the Morgan building stood on the property. He stated that he researched the building and located a 1799 newspaper advertisement that references the old homestead being located exactly at that portion of the property. He noted that he would reach out to the nominator and would provide the evidence for the claim. The property, he continued, could be a potential archaeological site.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The site may have historical significance but the nomination does not demonstrate that the site satisfies any of the Criteria for Designation.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- In light of the fact that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the site satisfies any Criteria for Designation, it should be withdrawn.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission accept the nominator's request to withdraw the nomination for 3201-45 Midvale Avenue.

ITEM: 3201-45 MIDVALE AVE					
MOTION: Recommendation to withdraw nomination					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Laverty					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 1533-39 N 7TH ST

Name of Resource: Trinity Reformed Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 99 Real Estate LLC

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1533-39 N 7th Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Trinity Reformed Church satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and J. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the church exemplifies the “inexpensive, but expressive” form of Gothic ecclesiastical architecture. Under Criterion E, the nomination contends that the church was designed by influential Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan, who included an illustration of the building in his 1868 publication of *The Architectural Review and American Builders' Journal*. The nomination further argues that the modest but expressive design reflects the cultural, economic, and social heritage of Philadelphia's working-to-middle-class residents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1533-39 N 7th Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:06:10

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Yi Liu and Simon Liu represented the property owner.
- Jim Duffin represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Liu introduced herself as the daughter of Simon Liu, who is the property owner. She added that she will translate for her father. She explained that her father opposes designation, because the construction of an adjacent building has undermined the foundation of their building. She noted that there are cracks in the foundation.
- Mr. Cohen asked whether the owner felt the cracks affected the building's historic value.
 - Ms. Liu answered that the cracks need to be sealed, and added that she did not know what would be required of her if the building is designated as historic.
 - Mr. Cohen responded that this part of the process is to determine whether the building is historically significant and that it does not address questions arising from damage due to a neighboring property.
- Ms. Liu reiterated that her father does not want the property to be designated, because of the cost of repairing the structure due to the damage caused by the adjacent new construction. She added that she does not know whether designation would mean more money would be necessary to restore the building.
 - Mr. Farnham clarified that if the Historical Commission were to designate the building as historic, it would not require the owner to undertake any work to the building and would only have the authority to review building permit applications in the future for work to the building proposed by the owner. The Historical Commission, he elaborated, cannot require an owner to undertake construction at a building and only has the authority to review a construction projects proposed by the owner. He added that it is his hope that a designation of the building as historic would have a limited impact on the property owner.
- Ms. Liu again stated that her father does not want the property to be designated as historic.
- Mr. Farnham clarified that the Committee on Historic Designation is a technical advisory committee and is considering the nomination to determine whether the building has historical significance. The Historical Commission itself, he continued, will meet in July to make the decision about whether or not the property will be designated as historic and then subject to the Historical Commission's review. The goal today, he added, is to decide whether the building is historically significant. He welcomed the property owner's opinions on that matter.
- Ms. Liu asked whether the nomination can be withdrawn.
 - Mr. Farnham answered that the Historical Commission would be informed of the owner's opposition to designation with the record of this meeting and if the owner chooses to participate in the Historical Commission's meeting. The

withdrawal discussed earlier, he clarified, was from the individual who nominated the property. He elaborated that the Historical Commission can consider a withdrawal from the person who nominated a property, and an owner can ask the Commission not to designate. He explained that because Ms. Liu is not the nominator, she cannot request that the nomination be withdrawn, although her opposition will certainly be taken into account.

- Mr. Cohen stated that he is glad the building was nominated and that it is worthy of being listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. He added that the building tells the story of the evolution of the neighborhood. He commented that it is striking the way the nave is pinched by the octagonal buttresses, which suggests either a narrow nave and wide side aisles or a love of verticality. He noted that the pitch breaks in the central section, which makes the design appear as a rocket ship. He wondered whether the floor plan reflects the distribution of the buttresses across the front façade, or if it was an aesthetic impulse to make the building appear more vertical. He observed that the distribution of spaces differs between Sloan's church designs. He questioned whether the building was constructed in the time of Samuel Sloan and Addison Hutton's partnership, so that this would be the authorship of Sloan and Hutton. Mr. Cohen then suggested a few edits and noted that the portrait labeled Sloan in the nomination is, in fact, a portrait of Hutton. He concluded that the nomination is well-researched and that the building is worthy of designation.
- Ms. Milroy stated that it would be interesting to see a photograph of the interior to answer some of the questions Mr. Cohen raised about the relationship of the nave to the side aisles.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Celeste Morello stated that about two years ago the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission approved the designation of an almost identical church at 516 Wharton Street. She added that it was built by a small sect that separated itself from the main German Lutheran synod in the mid- to late-1800s. She suggested that the congregation at this church followed a similar path, since the building is almost a replica of the Wharton Street building. Mr. Cohen noted that the church Ms. Morello is referencing is included in the nomination. Ms. Morello continued that the masonry, buttresses, and entryway are nearly identical. She remarked that after two years of designation, positive changes have occurred at the Wharton Street church. The nominated church, she added, is on N. 7th Street in a quickly developing area and the church needs to remain to remind the neighborhood of its heritage.
- Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia supported the nomination, stating that the building is well-suited for adaptive reuse in a rapidly developing part of the city. He added that it is worth pointing out that another virtual twin to this building was lost in 2013 at the intersection of 40th and Sansom Streets. He commented that it was another brownstone church designed by Samuel Sloan and constructed in the 1870s. He showed the Committee an image of the building on his iPad. He noted that the building was unfortunately not designated and was lost.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The structural concerns raised by the property owner do not impact the building's historical significance.

- The building demonstrates a curious aesthetic in which the octagonal buttresses at the front façade pinch the nave.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The building exemplifies the architect's "inexpensive but expressive" Gothic style of architecture, satisfying Criterion D.
- Noted Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan designed this church and several other nearly identical churches located throughout the city, satisfying Criterion E.
- The modest design reflects the evolution of the neighborhood, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that 1533-39 N. 7th Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and J, and that the property should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

ITEM: 1533-39 N 7TH ST					
MOTION: Recommendation to designate, Criteria D, E, and J					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 1045-49 SARAH ST

Name of Resource: Otis Elevator Company Boiler and Engine House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Antal Group Inc.

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1045-29 Sarah Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former boiler and engine house of the Otis Elevator Company, built in 1904, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, G, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that the property is significant in the development of Fishtown/Kensington as part of the Morse Elevator Works and the Otis Elevator Company. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the building is representative of industrial power plant design of the early twentieth century. Under Criterion G, the nomination argues that the building is part of the earliest, extent, coherent industrial complexes in Fishtown, but does not propose to designate the complex as a district. Many of the other properties associated with the former Morse and Otis Elevator Companies were individually designated in 2015 and 2016.

The Committee on Historic Designation reviewed this nomination on March 12th and recommended that the property satisfies Criteria D and J. The owner, who did not attend the Committee's review, requested that the Historical Commission remand the nomination to the

Committee to provide him with an opportunity to participate in the review. The Commission granted the request, sending the nomination back to the Committee.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1045-49 Sarah Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and J, but not Criterion G.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION, MARCH 2019: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:22:48

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Owner Gabor Antalics represented the property and requested that the nomination be continued to the 18 September 2019 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation to allow his attorney to be present.
- James Duffin represented the nominator and 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 at 1045-49 Sarah Street would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction for the tabling period.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- Accepting the owner's request to continue the review of the nomination would have no adverse effect on the property.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination for 1045-49 Sarah Street be continued and remanded to the September 2019 Committee on Historic Designation meeting.

ITEM: 1045-49 Sarah St nomination					
MOTION: Continue and remand to September 2019 CHD meeting					
MOVED BY: Milroy					
SECONDED BY: Cohen					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 2704-06 W GIRARD AVE

Name of Resource: John Decker & Son

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Mario and Natale Presta

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2704-06 W Girard Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former John Decker & Son Architectural Sheet Metal Works, constructed in phases between 1875 and 1900, building satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, H, and J. The nomination argues that the property, which combined a modest Italianate rowhouse typical of the 1870s with an ornate High Victorian addition typical of the 1890s, reflects the dynamic evolution of architectural tastes in the late nineteenth century, satisfying Criterion C. The nomination contends that the property's monumental sheet metal cornice and parapet ensemble represents a surviving example of an engineering specimen that advertised the company's stock-in-trade, satisfying Criterion D, and is a unique physical characteristic that represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, satisfying Criterion H. Finally, the nomination argues that the property embodies the Brewerytown neighborhood's cultural, economic, and historical heritage, satisfying Criterion J.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2704-06 W Girard Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, H, and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:26:33

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Patrick Grossi, Ben Leech, and Paul Steinke represented the nominator, the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cohen agreed that the building is a local landmark and is virtually an advertisement for the business's products.
- Mr. Cohen questioned whether contemporary architect Will Decker was a relative of this Decker family.
- Mr. Cohen noted that the nomination is well researched and provides excellent documentation of changes to the building.
- Mr. Cohen opined that portion of the building to the east is more Queen Anne than High Victorian.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The property combined an 1870s rowhouse with an ornate addition typical of the 1890s.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property reflects the dynamic evolution of architectural tastes in the late nineteenth century, satisfying Criterion C.
- The property's monumental sheet metal cornice and parapet ensemble represents a surviving example of an engineering specimen that advertised the company's stock-in-trade, satisfying Criterion D.
- The sheet metal cornice and parapet is a unique physical characteristic that represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, satisfying Criterion H.
- The property embodies the Brewerytown neighborhood's cultural, economic, and historical heritage, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, H, and J and should be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

ITEM: 2704-06 W Girard Ave nomination					
MOTION: Designate, Criteria C, D, H, & J					
MOVED BY: Milroy					
SECONDED BY: Cohen					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 3460 W SCHOOL HOUSE LN

Name of Resource: Alexander Henry House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Thomas Jefferson University

Nominator: Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3460 W. School House Lane and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property is part of Jefferson University. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation A and D. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the building was the residence of several prominent Philadelphians from the time of its construction ca. 1853-58 until 1984. Alexander Henry, who purchased the house in 1867, was perhaps the most significant resident of the house, serving as the Mayor of Philadelphia from 1858-1865. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the building is a distinctive example of the Gothic Revival style, likely influenced by the designs of Andrew Jackson Downing's 1851 publication *The Architecture of Country Houses*.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff questions whether this property satisfies Criterion A, "is associated with the life of a person significant in the past." While various former owners of this

property cited in the nomination were prosperous and accomplished, their prominence does not generally seem to rise to the level of significance required to satisfy the criterion. Mayor Henry is indisputably significant, but his tenure as mayor does not overlap with his ownership of this house. The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3460 W. School House Lane fails to satisfy Criterion for Designation A. The staff notes that there is a contradiction between the period of significance, which extends to 1984, and the classification of the later additions, dating from 1952-1966, as non-contributing, even though the owners associated with the construction of the additions are cited as significant. If Criterion A is accepted, either the period of significance should be adjusted or the classifications should be revised.

The staff observes that a master plan for the campus, including this property, was approved by ordinance in December 2016; the master plan, which sets in place by law a path for the development of the campus, has implications for the property in question. The staff recommends that any designation of this property should account for the development of the property in compliance with the approved master plan, which was set in place by ordinance before this property was nominated.

The staff notes that there is no information provided in the nomination that would provide a basis for considering Landscape Feature 4 (Masonry wall and cooking apparatus) as a historically significant feature and recommends that it not be considered contributing to the significance.

The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3460 W. School House Lane satisfies Criterion for Designation D. To conform with this Criterion, the period of significance should be set at 1853 to 1858.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:38:15

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- J. Thomas Becker of Jefferson, the property owner, and attorney William F. Martin represented the property owner
- Jim Duffin represented the nomination on behalf of Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Duffin said that he did not understand why there was a contradiction between the classification of certain additions of the building as non-contributing with the period of significance that extended to a point after the construction of the wings. He suggested that perhaps Mr. Beisert had classified these additions as non-contributing because they did not fit into the general character of the building's earlier architectural style. Mr. Duffin remarked that he thought it made sense to make sure that there was consistency between the period of significance and the later additions. He added that the nominators believed that the period of significance did extend to the Eleanor Houston Smith period because she, as well as the previous owner, Francis Biddle, had been significant individuals.
- Mr. Martin stated that Jefferson was not entirely opposed to the designation of 3460 W. School House Lane. He referenced a document that he had submitted that explained to what extent Jefferson supported the nomination, and to what it opposed.

Mr. Martin said that he thought that the Historical Commission's staff had suggested a workable solution, which reflected the different significances in history of the portions of the building as it was developed over time, which would help to avoid an excess of burden to the university.

- Mr. Martin reminded the Committee on Historic Designation members that the current East Falls campus of Jefferson had been rezoned as a Special Purpose Institutional Zoning District while it was still owned and operated by Philadelphia University in 2016. He explained that a master plan had been created in connection with this rezoning, which approved all of the buildings that were already existing on the campus, and also pre-approved certain proposed new buildings. Mr. Martin stated that because these new buildings were on the master plan, it essentially vested the property owner's right to develop them.
- Mr. Martin told the Committee members that a portion of the property proposed to be designated would be impacted by an already approved portion of the master plan. As a result, he opined that there would be significant legal issues if a designation were to occur which impacted the approval rights vested in the action of the City Council's approval of the master plan. Mr. Martin suggested that, should the designation occur as recommended by the staff, he believed this issue would be avoided.
- Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Martin if he was saying that the City Council's approval of the master plan precluded any action taken by the Committee on Historic Designation, to which Mr. Martin responded that he was not. Mr. Martin clarified that, were the Historical Commission to designate the entire premises, he believed it could be subject to legal challenge as impacting otherwise vested property rights.
- Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Martin if he thought that, with the master plan, his client had been granted an approval that could make any determination about historic buildings subject to future litigation. Mr. Martin replied that he did not think that any determination would be subject to future litigation; however, a determination that impacted the otherwise approved development plan might be subject to litigation. Mr. Cohen asked if the approved development plan became part of law, to which Mr. Martin responded that it did, because it was an approved City Council resolution with the approved master plan attached to the ordinance and signed by the Mayor.
- Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Farnham if this was his understanding of the approval of the master plan. Mr. Farnham referred to the map of the master plan, pointed out the subject property, and then indicated the location of three new buildings approved to be constructed under the master plan at the rear of the lot of the historic structure. Mr. Farnham explained that the master plan did not address the subject house itself other than to acknowledge it. He stated that the master plan included three buildings proposed for the rear of the subject property, which is currently vacant land. He remarked that the Historical Commission had never before confronted this kind of a situation, making it difficult to predict the implications. He noted, however, that it might be difficult for the Historical Commission to prevent the proposed new construction from being implemented. Mr. Farnham reiterated that the property owner was proposing a reduced boundary which would exclude the property at the rear, as well as at the side, which would allow the implementation of the master plan to proceed without the Historical Commission's review.
- Mr. Cohen responded that he had concerns, the first of which was the precedent of finding that a City Council-approved master plan could preclude preservation efforts. He noted, however, that they could try to avoid setting such a precedent by coming to an agreement about the nomination. Mr. Cohen then directed Mr. Martin to page 33 of the nomination, to the image of the subject house from an 1868 insurance

survey. Mr. Cohen explained that this was a plan of the house one year after Mayor Alexander Henry moved in. Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Martin to clarify whether, in their proposed compromise designation, this rear section of the house was an area they had the right to remove. Mr. Martin confirmed that it was correct that this was what they were proposing.

- Mr. Cohen and Mr. Martin discussed the construction date of the back of the house, agreeing that it was not original. However, Mr. Cohen said that all they knew was that it was built by 1868. Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Martin to clarify whether the rear, semi-octagonal section of the subject house was on the property where the three new buildings were proposed for construction, to which Mr. Martin answered negatively. Mr. Martin stated that the new buildings were proposed for the rear of the lot, which is currently vacant land. Mr. Cohen responded that meant the master plan did not really require that this section of the building needed to be demolished in order to comply with the ordinance, and Mr. Martin agreed, that it was not a requirement. Mr. Martin suggested that the Committee should amend the nomination to allow for the removal of this part of the building, owing to its condition and configuration.
- Mr. Becker provided some background on the subject building since then-Philadelphia College of Textiles and Sciences acquired it. He explained that shortly after the property had been acquired, the school, known at the time as Philadelphia University, began to assess uses for it and discovered that the oldest portions of the structure were totally termite-ridden, and the newer sections were leaking profusely from the roof. Mr. Becker estimated that the university had invested approximately \$1 million into the building in the years since it was acquired, and he noted that there was no indication in the master plan to demolish the structure. He stated that, while the university had not nominated the property itself, it was not opposed to a partial designation.
- Mr. Becker explained that, although the semi-octagonal rear section may have been added early on, it was poorly designed and created several opportunities for water infiltration. He stated that the university's position is that they should be able to demolish this rear section since it was not part of the original structure. Mr. Becker reminded the Committee on Historic Designation that the university taught about historic architecture, and also had four additional buildings on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. He explained that the university is not opposed to designation. However, it is the steward of its historic properties and does not feel that the rear section of the subject house is original.
- Mr. Martin added that many areas of the building dated from the mid-twentieth century, and he would argue they had little to no historic significance. He said that the university would welcome the designation of the public-facing portion seen from School House Lane, which they believed would be an appropriate portion of the building to protect in the long term.
- Mr. Cohen remarked that one of the most significant residents who occupied the subject property was Francis Biddle, who was a judge at the Nuremberg trials, an event of remarkable international importance. Mr. Cohen said that, if Mr. Biddle's significance was considered under Criterion A, it would put the period of significance into the 1950s. Mr. Cohen also said that, at the same time, he agreed with Mr. Becker and Mr. Martin that the subject property's additions that dated from the 1950s are not historically valuable.
- Mr. Cohen commented that, although out of the ordinary, the rear addition that was constructed by 1868, and is very large, creating the biggest space on the first floor.

He added that he considered this rear section to have historical value and did not see how it impinged on the master plan footprint; therefore, he would argue for its retention.

- Mr. Martin responded that, because of the peculiar design and poor condition of the 1868 rear addition, its long-term retention and maintenance is cost-prohibitive.
- Mr. Cohen asked whether the main problem was the construction of the walls and the termite damage, or if it was the roofs, to which Mr. Becker replied that the water infiltration through the roofs into the original building was significant.
- Mr. Martin reiterated that the staff recommendation regarding the period of significance was consistent with his client's preferences. He also stated that they had provided measurements for how to delineate their preferred boundaries.
- Ms. Milroy said she agreed that there were examples of residences that were constructed at a period of time separate from the time a person of significance was a resident in the house. She noted that Alexander Henry, Francis Biddle and the Smiths were certainly deserving of recognition.
- Ms. Milroy said that she would have appreciated additional information from the university as to what specifically it was proposing to do with the master plan. She noted that she was not supportive of the idea of only saving the façade of a building.
- Ms. Milroy commented that her understanding was that when the university acquired the building, the termites had already infested it, and so in the past 30 years, the university had been dealing with the problem. Mr. Becker responded that shortly after the university acquired the property, they needed to put it into use, and hired Richard Thom, an architect. He explained that the assessment that was conducted demonstrated that there was a very large termite mound directly behind the subject building, and the insects had infiltrated all of the house's great rooms, all the way into the hardwood flooring. Mr. Becker said that the university decided at that point only to use the first floor of the building, while the termites were treated and the structure was shored up. Mr. Becker stated that from there, a variety of office and program uses occupied the building, all while the university continue with structural work. He noted that the third floor of the building is still unusable.
- Mr. Becker indicated on the plan the area of the subject building that the university would support be designated. He said that should the Committee on Historic Designation find the 1868 addition significant, the university would take it into consideration. However, they are of the opinion that this addition detracts from what could be a nice presentation at the back of the original building. Mr. Becker explained that the university was envisioning that the subject house could be an entry vestibule to the three new residences being proposed behind it as part of the master plan. He said that there was no intention of breaking the cadence of School House Lane, which is something the university appreciated. Mr. Becker noted that the university had met with the community for over six years to discuss their institutional master plan, and in that time there had been many compromises. He said that the university wanted this nomination process to be a positive one for their students, as well as for the Historical Commission.
- Ms. Milroy acknowledged that Mr. Cohen's observation of the 1868 faceted addition on the insurance map in the nomination complicated the matter at hand. She added that she would like more information about the other additions that had been constructed later, especially if the period of significance was extended to include them. Ms. Milroy asked whether the period of significance should be extended only to the time of Francis Biddle's occupancy or whether it should be extended to the

Smith family. She said she wanted to know why the additions were added, and who designed them, information she could not find in the nomination.

- Mr. Duffin responded that his understanding was that the Smith family constructed the additions because they were collectors and needed storage for their collections.
- Mr. Cohen acknowledged that the period of significance would differ, depending on whether the significance of past residents was taken into consideration or if the significance was limited only to the building's architecture. He said that he was not sure how to negotiate significant people versus significant architecture. However, he supported designating the building as was presented in the nomination, including the 1868 addition, as it represented a part of the residence of both Mayor Alexander Henry and Francis Biddle. Mr. Cohen acknowledged that, if the nomination was found to satisfy Criterion A, there would need to be a specific recommendation as to whether the additions from the 1950s and 1960s are considered historically significant, adding that he did not view these later additions as architecturally significant. Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Farnham if he had any guidance for how they should move forward.
- Mr. Farnham responded that the Committee on Historic Designation could find that the additions from the 1950s and 1960s do not contribute to the significance of the property yet still include the Smith family in the significance; he noted, however, that he did not agree with this approach. He opined that the later additions detracted from the older building architecturally.
- Mr. Cohen remarked that the nomination did not include sufficient photographs of the later additions to judge them fairly. Ms. Milroy responded that she is curious to know a bit more about them.
- Mr. Cohen suggested that the Committee on Historic Designation apply Criterion A all the way through to the Smith family, and then apply the period of significance to end after the construction of the faceted addition by 1868.
- Mr. Mooney asked for clarification that Mr. Cohen was suggesting that the Committee on Historic Designation members vote to recommend both Criterion A and Criterion D, despite the staff's recommendation that the nomination failed to satisfy Criterion A. Mr. Cohen confirmed that this was his recommendation, with the period of significance ending after the 1868 addition. Ms. Milroy remarked that the point was to decouple the residents from the period of significance of the architecture.
- Mr. Mooney asked whether the members wanted to recommend that the boundaries be revised. Mr. Cohen replied that he did not think that what they were proposing invaded the development area of the approved master plan. Mr. Mooney clarified that Mr. Cohen's proposal was to keep the recommended boundary the original width of the property, up to the northwestern boundary of the master plan, as opposed to the owner's request to only extend the boundary to the back of the original house. Mr. Cohen confirmed that this was his proposal.
- Mr. Martin said that he had one additional clarification about the master plan, which was that there were pre-approved areas for athletic activities. Mr. Becker noted the places on the master plan map closest to the subject property that would cause concern should any proposed boundary impact these areas.
- Mr. Cohen opined that the property at 3460 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria A and D with a period of significance between 1853 and 1880. He suggested limiting the boundary that is called out in the nomination to exclude those areas called out in the master plan for site improvements and new construction.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Steve Peitzman of the East Falls Historical Society reported that his organization had endorsed the nomination the evening before at its board meeting. Mr. Peitzman commented that his personal opinion was that an ex-mayor and Francis Biddle would be considered significant figures. He remarked that the discussion regarding the 1868 addition was irrelevant to the Committee on Historic Designation's work because they were tasked with evaluating the technical merits of the nomination and, although the issues being discussed would need to be addressed in the future, they were not relevant to this Committee's work. Mr. Peitzman concluded by noting that the subject property was one of the few remaining estate houses along School House Lane.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The additions dating from the 1950s and 1960s are not architecturally significant.
- The faceted addition that was constructed by 1868 is architecturally significant, even if in poor condition.
- In addition to the house's architectural significance, Mayor Alexander Henry and Francis Beverley Biddle merited acknowledgment as important Philadelphians who resided at the property.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates the importance of both several past residents as well as the architecture of the building, thereby satisfying Criteria A and D.
- The period of significance could decouple the architectural significance from the house's association with prominent Philadelphians, therefore limiting the application of the period of significance to the contributing portions of the house.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission designate the property at 3460 W. School House Lane and add it to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and D, with a period of significance from 1853 to 1880, and a boundary that excludes the areas called out in the master plan for site improvements and new construction.

ITEM: 3460 W SCHOOL HOUSE LANE					
MOTION: Designation, Criteria A and D, with conditions					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Laverty					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 5250 UNRUH AVE

Name of Resource: The Tacony Worsted Mills

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 5250 Unruh Avenue Association

Nominator: Alex Balloon, Director, Tacony Community Development Corp.

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5250 Unruh Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the Tacony Worsted Mills is an early and intact example of an industrial complex designed by Walter Harvey Geissinger, a prolific architect who designed several commercial and industrial buildings throughout Philadelphia. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the Tacony Worsted Mills was considered locally and nationally to be one of the finest and largest worsted yarn mills of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5250 Unruh Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation E and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 01:14:02

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Andrew Wade represented the ownership.
- Alex Balloon, Tacony Community Development Corporation, represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Wade asked whether the nomination was only for the building or if it also included the land. Mr. Mooney confirmed that the land was included in the nomination. Mr. Wade explained that he has been in litigation with the City of Philadelphia for the last eight years because the city has been trying to take the portion of his land that fronts onto the Delaware River for use as a walking/biking trail.
- Mr. Wade expressed concern, not only about being prevented from accessing the water, but also about the city removing the chain link fence he had installed between his building and the Delaware River to keep trespassers out of the warehouse for safety reasons. He said that, should the designation be approved, he was worried about issues arising when he tried to put his fence back up.
- Mr. Wade explained that in the almost 20 years that he has owned the building, he estimated approximately 30 to 40 arrests on his property for crimes such as vandalism, trespassing, and burglary. He said that his building connected to the adjacent building and he asked why that one was not being nominated since they had both been part of the same complex. Mr. Wade had the same question for the building to the north of his. Mr. Balloon interjected that it had to do with the period of significance.
- Mr. Wade asked if there were any tax credits available for properties listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Farnham replied that currently there were no tax credit programs available to properties listed on the Philadelphia Register, but he said that the Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation had

recently announced their recommendations for incentives which would likely be considered in the fall. Mr. Farnham explained that listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places often meant that a building would be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, which would allow a property to apply for the tax credit program associated with the National Register.

- Mr. Wade told the members of the Committee on Historic Designation that he understood the significance of their work, but he asked that they consider the burden that it placed on the owners, especially because the City offered no incentives for existing businesses.
- Mr. Wade explained that once the litigation with the City was settled, his plan was to create a swale so that he could take advantage of the rain tax as a way to offset his increasing sewer bill. He said that the nomination of his property was not welcome news.
- Mr. Wade told the Committee members that at his warehouse universal waste was consolidated, what he described as a light industrial use. He commented that he wanted to correct the nomination's description of his building as being used for storage and cell towers.
- Mr. Wade expressed concern that while the nomination was in progress, he would not be able to pull any permits. Mr. Mooney interjected that the pending nomination did not preclude him from obtaining the necessary approvals to do work on his property. Mr. Farnham clarified that while the nomination was in process, the Historical Commission would treat his property as though it was designated, meaning that it would review any building permit applications submitted to the Department of Licenses & Inspections. Mr. Farnham said that the applications could be approved as long as the proposed work was appropriate according to historic preservation standards. He added that he believed that the Historical Commission could likely approve work proposed to the open land, such as fencing, or the rain retention and storm water management projects Mr. Wade had mentioned, administratively. Mr. Farnham remarked that industrial sites such as the subject property were understood to be active businesses which were not necessarily intended to be aesthetically pleasing, and the Historical Commission reviewed such sites with this in mind. Mr. Farnham said that designation was more to protect the building in the long term, rather than micromanage the daily activities of Mr. Wade's business.
- Mr. Wade commented that he had an appreciation for the building, and that it worked for his purposes so he had no intention of demolishing it. He remarked that he had some concerns about how designation could possibly impact his ability to exercise flexibility with the needs of the companies that had cellular antennas installed on the smoke stack since that was a source of revenue for him.
- Mr. Cohen told Mr. Wade that, though these issues were important to understand the overall context, they were outside of the Committee's task of evaluating the technical merits of the nomination.
- Mr. Wade commented that the only historic fabric that was left was the bare structure itself, as all of the original windows and doors had either been removed or replaced. He then requested that the nomination be tabled so that he and his attorney could have an opportunity to meet with the staff of the Historical Commission to discuss the matter.
- Ms. Milroy asked for clarification regarding the boundary description in the nomination, which called the subject site landlocked. However, the visual depiction of the boundary extended it out into the Delaware River. Ms. Schmitt responded that the staff had reached out to the nominator once it was determined that there were

- two parcels being considered, the landlocked parcel with the structure on it owned by Mr. Wade, and the vacant riverfront parcel owned by the City of Philadelphia. She explained that the staff recommended that the boundary be revised to include only the parcel with the structure on it, since the nomination was not structured to argue significance specifically for the riverfront parcel, and the nominator had no objection.
- Mr. Wade responded that he had an easement to access his property from the east side, along the river. He explained that the property to the north of his also had an easement to access their property from his side from the south.
 - Ms. Milroy remarked to Mr. Wade that buildings change over time, and the Committee's mandate was to look at his building as a historical structure within the context of Philadelphia's history.
 - Mr. Balloon requested an opportunity to respond to some of the comments that had been made. He explained that the nomination was limited to the subject property as a result of the period of significance. He stated that the five-story building to the north of the subject property was not included because it was constructed later than the subject property. Mr. Balloon urged the Committee to keep their review to the technical merits of the arguments made in the nomination, and not to consider the extraneous issues that had been raised such as the pending litigation, which would be more appropriately addressed by the Historical Commission.
 - Mr. Farnham suggested that there were two potential ways the Committee could recommend a continuance. He said that the Committee could recommend a continuance without making a recommendation about the merits of the nomination, which would mean that the nomination would return to the Committee on Historic Designation for a later review. He said that Mr. Wade might advocate for this way should he and his attorney wish to dispute the merits of the nomination or the boundaries as proposed. Mr. Farnham remarked that, if Mr. Wade and his attorney wanted more time to understand the implications of designation or work with the staff to discuss potential future building permit applications, then the Committee could go ahead and make a recommendation on the technical merits of the nomination and add a recommendation that the Historical Commission continue the matter to allow the property owner more time.
 - Mr. Wade said that he needed time to review the nomination more thoroughly and would not be able to do so before the next Historical Commission meeting. He requested a continuance based upon the Criteria for Designation that were being argued in the nomination, so that he and his attorney could first return to the Committee on Historic Designation prior to the Historical Commission's review.
 - Ms. Milroy told Mr. Wade that the concerns he expressed were outside of the Committee's purview of the technical merits of the nomination, and therefore a continuance might be more appropriately approved by the Historical Commission. She noted that this would still give Mr. Wade the additional time that he was requesting but it could be a more efficient manner in which to proceed. Mr. Wade responded that he would not be ready in time for the July Historical Commission meeting, to which Ms. Milroy replied that he could attend the July meeting and request that the item be continued until the September meeting. Mr. Wade asked why there was a rush since he had already explained that he was not looking to demolish the building. He pointed out that the nomination had erroneously characterized the use of his warehouse as storage, and so he wanted an opportunity to review the document to see if there were additional mistakes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jim Duffin commented that the Wayne Junction Historic District had been nominated with the idea of applying a different set of standards to certain features such as windows because of the fact that the buildings had historically been used for manufacturing purposes. He wondered if the subject property might be a good example for how to regulate similar sites with active businesses in them in the future.
- Celeste Morello remarked that the subject property was a great example of why some industrial architecture should be preserved. She said that she hoped the owner could do more research into the property regarding why it was such an asset to Philadelphia's history. Ms. Morello informed Mr. Wade that he could request a continuance if he wanted more time, to which Mr. Wade responded that he thought that was what he had already requested. Mr. Wade repeated his request for more time to allow him and his attorney to meet with the staff of the Historical Commission to better understand the designation process.
- Mr. Peitzman commented that the appropriate platform in which to consider the many valid issues that had been raised was really the Historical Commission, not the Committee on Historic Designation. Mr. Peitzman added that perhaps a continuance could be avoided if Mr. Wade and his attorney had an opportunity to conduct additional research prior to the Historical Commission meeting.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- It typically supports continuance requests proffered by property owners.
- The Historical Commission may vote to allow for a longer continuance if requested by the property owner.
- The property would remain protected by the Historical Commission during the continuance request.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend continuing the review of the nomination of 5250 Unruh Avenue to the 18 September 2019 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation.

ITEM: 5250 UNRUH AVE					
MOTION: Continue review to the September Committee on Historic Designation meeting					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 405 AND 407 S 42ND ST

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Philly Properties GP LLC

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate a twin house in the Spruce Hill section of West Philadelphia. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues the subject twins “showcase the significant aesthetic development in the evolution of residential architecture in Philadelphia during the last third of the nineteenth century.” The nomination also contends that numbers 405 & 407 S. 42nd Street possess “a distinctive polychromatic façade that sets off the otherwise ubiquitous building type in the Spruce Hill neighborhood of West Philadelphia.” The nomination suggests that the subject property is an exemplary specimen of a twin that is distinguished with a façade of Serpentine stone with marble stone trimmings, comprising a prominent and intact polychromatic design.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 405 & 407 S. 42nd Street satisfy Criteria for Designation C and D.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 01:51:13

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Jim Duffin represented the nomination on behalf of the Keeping Society of Philadelphia.
- No one represented the ownership.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cohen stated that he was glad to see the nomination before them. He noted that there were a few minor edits that he would have suggested, but that in general the nomination satisfied the two Criteria for Designation that was being argued.
- Mr. Cohen told Mr. Duffin that the building agreement that had been located while researching the property was a great insight into how these developments were actually executed between the parties involved. Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Duffin if the agreement ultimately identified the architect, to which Mr. Duffin replied that it did not.
- Mr. Cohen suggested that the dates of the insurance surveys be more precisely noted in the nomination. He also stated that he appreciated the mention of the other buildings that were built with the same Serpentine stone, and that overall it was a very well argued nomination for a building that merited designation.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- 405 & 407 S. 42nd Street are fine examples of the evolution of residential architecture in Philadelphia during the last third of the nineteenth century.

- The distinctive polychromatic façade of the subject properties distinguishes them from the otherwise ubiquitous building type seen throughout in the Spruce Hill neighborhood.
- The discovery of the building agreement provided further evidence of the process by which the subject property was developed.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination made a strong argument for the architectural significance of 405 & 407 S. 42nd Street, in particular through the use of Serpentine stone, satisfying Criteria C and D.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation recommends that the nomination demonstrates that 405 & 407 S. 42nd Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

ITEM: 405 & 407 S 42ND ST					
MOTION: Designate, Criteria C and D					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 1415 LOCUST STREET

Name of Resource: American Protestant Hall

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 1415 Locust LLC

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, Allyson.mehley@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1415 Locust Street, historically known as American Protestant Hall, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that 1415 Locust Street, completed in 1858, is a rare example of a pre-Civil War commercial-style loft building located west of Broad Street in Center City. The nomination further asserts, under Criterion C, that the 5-story stone and brick building was designed in an Italian Renaissance Revival Style notably influenced by leading architects of the era. Under Criterion J, the nomination highlights the building's architectural presence and complex cultural heritage as a significant point of interest in the architectural and historic landscape of Center City.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1415 Locust Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 01:54:40

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Patrick Grossi, Ben Leech, and Paul Steinke represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cohen thanked Mr. Grossi and Mr. Leech for nominating the building. He stated that he never suspected that 1415 Locust Street was anything but a commercial building and that aspects of its history were shocking to him. Mr. Cohen noted that it is amazing that the building survives and commended the nominator for the thorough research.
- Mr. Cohen inquired about the organization's early leadership and wondered if there was secrecy surrounding its leadership.
 - Mr. Leech responded that there was some aspect to that. He stated that he suspected that the second incarnation that built the building, even though it shared a name with the first American Protestant Association, was probably less related than he assumed when he began the research. Mr. Leech added there was very little information about the organization available.
- Mr. Cohen stated that part of his inquiry into leadership was to speculate about who the architect might be and if there were connections between the organization and any architect or architects. He pointed out that one of the things the building does, on its front façade, is a remarkable superimposition of an arcuated façade, and then over it, a trapiated façade. He continued another architect should also be considered as the designer, along with the others examples cited in the nomination, which is John M. Gries. Mr. Cohen noted that Gries designed a bank at 425-29 Chestnut Street, and although other architects were working in this style in 1858, Gries was still a leading architect in Philadelphia. Gries died in 1862.
- Mr. Cohen speculated on what the interior may have included.
 - Mr. Leech responded that the height of the second floor suggests that it may have included a gathering space. He also added that he had reviewed early advertisements for the ground retail space.
 - Ms. Milroy added that, when it opened, it would had space for a large gathering or meeting, since the nomination notes that the building connected men from 60 local and regional chapters.
- Mr. Steinke stated that 1415 Locust Street may be the oldest surviving commercial building west of Broadway in Center City. Secondly, as a five-story building it was the tallest building, save for church steeples, in this area for quite a number of years. He pointed out that this building was occuppies by a remarkable array of tenants over the years and what a remarkable building it must have seemed to people in mid nineteenth century Philadelphia.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, spoke in favor of the designation.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The nomination was well researched and revealed a complex history of tenancy at 1415 Locust Street.
- Although the nomination speculates on the origins of its design, the architect remains unknown.
- The building may be the oldest surviving commercial building west of Broad Street.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The building at 1415 Locust Street is a remarkable and important example of a pre-Civil War commercial-style loft building, possibly the oldest, located west of Broad Street in Center City, satisfying Criterion A.
- The building is a five-story stone and brick building, designed in an Italian Renaissance Revival Style and reflecting the influence of leading architects in the 1850s, satisfying Criterion C.
- The building's architectural presence and complex cultural heritage are significant points of interest in the architectural and historic landscape of Center City, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that 1415 Locust Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and J, and that the property should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

ITEM: 1415 Locust Street MOTION: Designate, Criteria A, C, and J MOVED BY: Cohen SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 4025-69 WESTMINSTER AVE

Name of Resource: PRR YMCA; Unity Mission Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Unity Mission Church Home and Training School

Nominator: Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 4025-69 Westminster Avenue, historically known as Pennsylvania Railroad Young Men's Christian Association (PRR YMCA), and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. This nomination argues that 4025-69 Westminster Avenue satisfies Criterion J, exemplifying the cultural, social, and historical heritage of the community through its role in the development and evolution of the Belmont neighborhood. From the building's construction in 1894 through the interwar period, the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) branch of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) occupied the building. From the 1940s to just before the turn of the millennium, Father Divine—

longtime Philadelphian and founder of the International Peace Mission Movement—utilized the building as the “Unity Mission Church,” a community center and place of worship. In its history, the building at 41st and Westminster Avenue has played an important and ongoing role in the surrounding community, continuing today as the Belmont Academy Charter School.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4025-69 Westminster Avenue satisfies Criterion for Designation J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 02:02:12

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cohen stated that he is glad that this building has been nominated, adding that the nomination is well-researched and well-presented. He called the building a “remarkable work” with almost hyper-articulated parts that remind him of Memorial Hall at Harvard University. He commented that he would be curious to see this design in the context of T.P. Lonsdale’s other work.
- Ms. Milroy questioned why, since there is an association with Father Divine, the property was not nominated under Criterion A for its association with a significant individual.
 - Ms. Keller responded that there had been information provided in a previous version of the nomination, but the staff felt the information was presented with a focus on the community rather than on Father Divine.
 - Mr. Cohen stated that including either Lonsdale or Father Divine would require more research and that the current nomination stands on Criterion J alone.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Steven Peitzman stated that a few years ago he was driving around the area looking for the twentieth-century Women’s Hospital building for some historical medical research. He added that he got lost and happened upon this building and wondered what it was, noting it was a very impressive site. He then commented that he is a railroad buff and was interested to learn the building embodies some of the history of the Pennsylvania Railroad and suggested the building would be meritorious of designation.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The nomination is well-researched and provides a clear argument for Criterion J. An argument could be formulated around T.P. Lonsdale and Father Divine, provided more research is done.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The building, constructed to house the Pennsylvania Railroad branch of the YMCA and later purchased by the Unity Mission Church, has had a long and active role in the development and evolution of the Belmont neighborhood, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that 4025-69 Westminster Avenue satisfies Criterion for Designation J, and that the property should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

ITEM: 4025-69 WESTMINSTER AVE MOTION: Designate, Criterion J MOVED BY: Milroy SECONDED BY: Cohen					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 638 CHRISTIAN ST

Name of Resource: Banca Calabrese

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Christian Street Acquisition, LLC

Nominator: Celeste Morello

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 638 Christian Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Banca Calabrese, constructed in 1904, satisfies Criterion for Designation J, as exemplifying the cultural, economic, and historical heritage of the community. The nomination argues that the building was constructed in the heart of Philadelphia's "Little Italy" to serve the Italian immigrant community. It was one of several regulated and unregulated "banks" built within a several block radius. These "banks" offered a wide range of services, including wiring money abroad, selling steamship tickets, selling insurance, buying and selling real estate, and selling jewelry and watches. Banca Calabrese was operated by Frank Bilotta, a builder and contractor, who appears in a 1908 listing as specializing in building and contracting services for the Italian immigrant community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 638 Christian Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 02:07:30

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- The Committee commented that the nomination is enriched by the quantity of historic photographs included in it.
 - Ms. Morello responded that many of the historic photographs were from *La Colonia di Filadelfia*.
- Ms. Morello noted that the building was designed by the firm of Milligan & Webber, a firm not of Italian ancestry.
 - The Committee responded that there were several architects working in the neighborhood who were not of Italian ancestry, and who were interpreting what they thought looked Italian, but were likely using local craftsmen who were adding a degree of authenticity.
- Ms. Morello commented that this building did not function as a bank in the way that banks function today, but rather it served as an office and a place for exchange of money and services.
- Ms. Morello opined that the new construction adjacent to the subject building was designed to be respectful to the historic resource.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The former Banca Calabrese was constructed in 1904 and served as one of several regulated and unregulated “banks” in Philadelphia’s “Little Italy” community.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The building exemplifies the cultural, economic, and historical heritage of the community, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 638 Christian Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J, and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

ITEM: 638 Christian St MOTION: Designate, Criterion J MOVED BY: Cohen SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADDRESS: 1017 AND 1019 SPRUCE ST

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owners: (1017): Megan Blickley; Natasha Mizra and Kamran Tareen; 1017 C Spruce LLC; Denise and Philip J. Driscoll; John Karamatsoukas. (1019): Steven Berk

Nominator: Staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the properties at 1017 and 1019 Spruce Street and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the buildings embody distinguishing characteristics of late Victorian architecture, and include elements of Queen Anne and Anglo-Dutch detailing of the late nineteenth century, satisfying Criteria C and D. The nomination further argues that the buildings were designed in 1888 by architect George C. Mason, Jr. of the noted Philadelphia and Newport, Rhode Island firm George C. Mason & Son, satisfying Criterion E.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 1017 and 1019 Spruce Street satisfy Criteria for Designation C, D, and E.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 02:19:00

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the properties.

DISCUSSION:

- The Committee commented that the buildings are a unique style for Philadelphia and are incredibly eclectic in their architectural style. The Committee thanked Ms. Chantry for finding the 1888 drawings in an obscure architectural journal.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The buildings were constructed in 1888, and remain remarkably intact when compared to the architect's drawings included in the nomination.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The buildings embody distinguishing characteristics of late Victorian architecture, and include elements of Queen Anne and Anglo-Dutch detailing of the late nineteenth century, satisfying Criteria C and D.
- The buildings were designed by architect George C. Mason, Jr. of noted Philadelphia and Newport, Rhode Island firm George C. Mason & Son, satisfying Criterion E.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 1017 and 1019 Spruce Street satisfy Criteria for Designation C, D, and E, and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

ITEM: 1017 and 1019 Spruce St					
MOTION: Recommendation to designate, Criteria C, D, and E					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair					x
Jeff Cohen	x				
Bruce Lavery					x
Elizabeth Milroy	x				
Douglas Mooney	x				
Total	3				2

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 11:58 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Committee on Historic Designation are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the audio 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.