

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

Thomas Sugrue, Chairman
Commission Conference Room, City Hall, Room 578
29 January 2003

Present

Thomas Sugrue, Ph.D. Chair
Warren Huff, City Planning Commission
Janet Klein, Chair, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Bruce Laverty, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia

Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer
Randal Baron, Assistant Historic Preservation Officer
Laura M. Spina, Historic Preservation Planner

Also

Jason Mango, Our Lady of Loreto
Annamarie Horan, Our Lady of Loreto
Daniel Alessandrino, Our Lady of Loreto
Ida Mango, Our Lady of Loreto
Margaret Ursic, Our Lady of Loreto
Julia Gagliardi, Our Lady of Loreto
Vincent Durso, Our Lady of Loreto
Michael Marciano, Our Lady of Loreto
Michael Stein, Community College
Tracey Albanese, Our Lady of Loreto
Adam Laver, Klehr, Harrison
Kevin Boyle, Esq. Stradley Ronon
Monseigneur Louis D'Addesio, Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Robert Kazsunik, Our Lady of Loreto
David Kuncas, Our Lady of Loreto
Tony Dragan, Our Lady of Loreto
John Gallery, Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia

Thomas Sugrue, chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

3637 Locust Street, St. Anthony Hall of the Fraternity of Delta Psi

Owner: Delta Alumni Association
Built: 1907, Cope and Stewardson

Ms. Spina gave a presentation with slides to summarize the description and statement of significance of the property. She explained that the building met criteria a, c, d, e and j as described in the ordinance. The building exemplifies Jacobethan architecture, a revival

mix of Elizabethan architecture as seen in the oriels, bays and chimneys and Jacobean architecture as executed in its regularity and details. The important Philadelphia firm of Cope and Stewardson, the architects of the building, are regarded as the major designers of the Collegiate Gothic Style. They designed many other collegiate structures including the Quadrangle at Penn and structures for Bryn Mawr College, Princeton University and Washington University in St Louis. The fraternity itself began in 1849 at Burlington College in Burlington New Jersey, transferred near to the earlier campus of the University of Pennsylvania in Center City. After Penn's campus moved to west Philadelphia, the fraternity constructed this building in 1907.

The staff recommended the building for designation. A question was raised however about the history of the fraternity and the name St Anthony Hall.

Janet Klein raised a question about the occupancy of the building and its status as "private residence" as well as several grammar issues. It was agreed to supplement the nomination with the history of the fraternity. Architect H. Mather Lippincott, whose firm has recently worked on renovations to the building, authored the nomination and appeared at the meeting to offer his endorsement of the designation on behalf of the fraternity.

Warren Huff made a motion to recommend 3637 Locust Street, St. Anthony Hall, for listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Janet Klein seconded the nomination, which passed unanimously.

6214 Grays Avenue, Our Lady of Loreto Roman Catholic Church

Owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Built: 1938, Petrillo & Neely, Architects

Ms. Spina summarized the statement of significance for the church, which meets criteria a, c, d, and j of the ordinance. The structure is a unique and complete example of the Moderne Style. The streamlined building is an extremely rare example of this style used for a church building. Constructed in 1938 in Southwest Philadelphia, the building is named after the patron saint of aviators and features murals and decoration replete with flying machines. The façade is constructed of cast stone and has a tile mural imported from Italy. The church is the work of the Philadelphia firm of Frank Petrillo and Richard Ross Neeley which designed mostly commercial and residential buildings. The church represents the social history of the largely southern Italian working class community which settled in this area of Philadelphia and struggled to build this structure in the hard years of the Depression. Ms. Spina noted that the Commission had received over 140 letters of support for the church's designation

Mr. Sugrue commented that he had only ever heard of a church of this stylistic period on two other occasions in the whole country. He noted that the Commission does not regulate interiors, but asked out of curiosity about the state of the interior.

Mr. Alessandrino explained that the interior had been renovated with many statues removed, but the ceiling mural of the miracle of Our Lady of Loreto involving a flying house, as well as stations of the cross and stained glass windows, featuring flight motifs remain.

Annemarie Horan mentioned that the church has masses one day a week at 9:30 AM until the church is closed in June.

David Kuncas mentioned that many people attend this church and that although he moved from the neighborhood, he returns to this church for services. He explained that open or closed it is an important neighborhood landmark.

Kevin Boyle, of Stradley Ronan and Stevens, and Young, counsel for the Archdiocese said that although this church is important to this community, the same could be said for all churches. He said that the Catholic church is especially burdened with landmark designation because it owns so many grand structures. He explained that the archdiocese has an internal decision making process to determine which churches it can keep open. He opined that the Commission would not want to designate all churches or involve itself in the inner workings of the church decision making process. He asked, on behalf of the Archdiocese, that the church not be designated historic.

Mr. Sugrue explained that designation does not affect the use of the building. Mr. Tyler said that the Committee was not considering the designation of all churches, but rather this specific and unique example.

Monseigneur D'Addesio explained that he had been appointed by Cardinal Bevilacqua to handle the salvage and placement of artistic and sacramental objects removed from decommissioned Catholic churches. He explained that there were many hurt feelings within this congregation when the pastor removed church statues, but he wanted it made known that this was done without the sanction of the church hierarchy. He explained that he had already had the stained glass windows appraised pending their removal from the church. These particular windows were made at Quaker City Stained Glass, a company that made windows for several Catholic churches. He said many artistic pieces get stored in the church storage facility on Allegheny Avenue and eventually placed in other churches throughout the United States. When the windows are removed they intend to leave a protective plexiglass panel on the outside of the windows of this church.

Mr. Boyle thought that the Commission would not wish to involve themselves in the stewardship of the windows because this would interfere with in the church's constitutionally protected rights.

Committee members explained that the Commission considered windows to be within their jurisdiction as pieces of the building that formed part of the exterior of the building. The Committee also explained that this was not the appropriate forum to discuss the closing of the church.

Mr. Dragan said that, despite repeated requests that no one, from the archdiocese would agree to meet with the congregation to discuss the closing and so the Commission meetings were in fact, their only forum. Other congregants reiterated that whether the church closed or not, this was an important neighborhood landmark.

Warren Huff made a motion to recommend the church at 6214 Grays Avenue for Historic Designation. Bruce Lavery seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

114-120 N. 2nd Street

Owner: National Products, Inc., Linda Levin

Adam Laver of Klehr, Harrison, Harvey, Branzberg, and Ellers has applied on behalf of the North 2nd Street Partnership to de-designate the now vacant lots at 114-120 N. 2nd Street. The historic buildings burned in an arson fire in 1998. The staff signed demolition permits for the buildings after the Department of Licenses and Inspections deemed them Imminently Dangerous.

Ms. Spina explained that the owner understands that the lots may be relisted at a later date as part of the proposed Old City Historic District, but that the ordinance includes a rescission procedure for sites that have lost their integrity

Janet Klein made a motion to recommend the rescission of 114-120 N. 2nd Street. Bruce Lavery seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Randal Baron
Assistant Historic Preservation Officer