

**REPORT OF THE HISTORIC DESIGNATION COMMITTEE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
25 April 2005**

**Room 578 City Hall
Thomas Sugrue, Chair**

Present

Thomas Sugrue, Ph.D., Chair
Warren Huff
Janet Klein
Hyman Myers, AIA
Bruce Laverty

Jonathan E. Farnham, Historic Preservation Planner
Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer

Also Present

Mrs. M.J. Divine, Father Divine's Peace Mission
Edna Mae Claybrook, Father Divine's Peace Mission
May S. Belle, Father Divine's Peace Mission
Addie Spaulding, Father Divine's Peace Mission
Daniel S. Reisman, Esq., Eckert Seamans Cherin Mellot, LLC
Peter Rothberg, Front Street Associates
Eric Milby, Lundy Flitter Beldecos & Berger
John Gallery, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Nancy Drye, Powelton Village Civic Association
Richard W. Thom, AIA
Alvin Holm, AIA
Joy Donnelly, 3820 Hamilton Street
Brett Feldman, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg & Ellers, LLP
John Moore, 258 South Van Pelt Street
Helma Weeks, Historic Preservation Committee, Powelton Village Civic Association
Lawrence Biond, Zoning Committee, Powelton Village Civic Association
Rodney Thoms, 3600-block of Hamilton Street
Greg Hill, Brown Hill Developments, LLC

Thomas Sugrue, chair, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. The Committee consisted of Mr. Sugrue, Ms. Klein, Mr. Laverty, and Mr. Huff.

NOMINATIONS FOR DESIGNATION

699 North Broad Street, Lorraine Apartments

Mr. Farnham presented the nomination to the Committee. He explained that the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia submitted a nomination for 699 North Broad Street, formerly the Lorraine and then the Divine Lorraine. The Lorraine

Apartments building was designed by noted architect Willis Hale and constructed in 1892 and 1893. The exuberant, luxurious hotel epitomized the late nineteenth-century *nouveau riche* culture of North Broad Street. When the *nouveau riche* moved to the suburbs, the Lorraine was converted into a hotel that catered to a largely Jewish clientele. In 1948, followers of Father Divine, an African American religious and civil rights leader, acquired the building and transformed it into the Divine Lorraine, Philadelphia's first racially integrated grand hotel. The Father Divine's Peace Mission sold the site in 1999 and the building is currently vacant.

The Preservation Alliance contends and the Commission staff agrees that the Lorraine Apartments satisfies designation criteria a, b, d, e, h, and j as defined in the City's preservation ordinance, making it worthy of inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Lorraine Apartments:

- Has significant character, interest, and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of the City, and is associated with the life of Father Divine, a person significant in the past (criterion a);
- Is associated with the civil rights movement, an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth, and Nation (criterion b);
- Embodies distinguishing characteristics of the late Victorian high style, and offers important, early examples of a high-rise apartment and innovative construction techniques (criterion d);
- Was designed by Willis G. Hale, an architect whose work has significantly influenced the architectural development of the City (criterion e);
- Represents an established and familiar visual feature in its Lower North Philadelphia neighborhood (criterion h); and
- Exemplifies important aspects of Philadelphia's social, cultural, economic, and historic heritage (criterion j).

Ms. Klein commented on the significance of the interior and lamented that the Commission does not have the jurisdiction to designate interiors. Mr. Tyler explained that that addition of the power to designate interiors would require an amendment to the preservation ordinance.

Mr. Laverty commented that the Divine Lorraine is precisely the type of historic building that the Commission should be designating. He congratulated Father Divine's Peace Mission for its excellent stewardship for fifty years. Mr. Huff stated that he was surprised that it had not been nominated earlier. He added that its rehabilitation would contribute to the reinvigoration of North Broad Street.

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance commended Becky McCleary, his intern, for preparing an exemplary nomination. He thanked the Fels Foundation for funding the Alliance's internship program. He also acknowledged George Thomas, who had prepared the National Register nomination for the Divine Lorraine; Ms. McCleary based her local nomination on the federal nomination. Finally, Mr. Gallery expressed his appreciation to the Peace Mission for its conscientious care of the building. He noted for the record that his organization had nominated not only the main front building, but also the rear service building. He added that the service building was integral to the functioning of the main building. Addressing Ms. Klein's earlier comment, he stated that the Alliance was not nominating the interiors for designation. He acknowledged that the

Commission's inability to designate interiors was "unfortunate." He concluded, stating that he hoped the next owner would recognize the value of the interiors.

Mother Divine introduced herself and clarified some facts about the Peace Mission's acquisition and use of the building. She also noted that the building had had shops in the basement. She stated that she and her colleagues were very proud of the appreciation expressed by others for the building and for their stewardship. She concluded that she was very pleased to see the building nominated as a Philadelphia landmark.

Mr. Huff moved that the Committee on Historic Designation recommend the designation of 699 North Broad Street as historic and its listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Klein seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OWNER-INITIATED APPLICATIONS FOR RESCISSIONS OF DESIGNATIONS

3620 Hamilton Street

Mr. Farnham presented the rescission application to the Committee. Joy Donnelly, the owner of 3620 Hamilton Street, has requested the rescission of the designation of her property. The house at 3620 Hamilton Street in the Powelton Village neighborhood is an Italianate twin that was designated in 1963; the other half of the building at 3622 Hamilton Street is not now, nor has it every been, designated as historic.

In a letter requesting rescission, the owner contends that "the original certification was in error." She makes three claims supporting her request. First, she asserts that the designation was predicated on a misleading photograph. In 1963, the owner of 3620 Hamilton submitted two photographs to the Historical Commission. Those photographs depicted the entirety of the building, both 3620 and 3622, and did not differentiate between them.

Mr. Farnham asserted that there is no evidence to support a claim that the designation was based solely on the two photographs in question. He explained that a recent review of the Commission's files by the staff demonstrates that the 1963 designation was but one facet of a much larger preservation effort in Powelton Village. From 1962 to 1964, the Historical Commission and its staff worked closely with a group of residents who sought to have the entire area designated. The staff met with the residents in the neighborhood, they toured the area, and a representative of the residents appeared before the Commission. This designation and about 35 others were part of large, organized effort that involved significant research into the area. Mr. Farnham concluded that, even if the photographs are deemed misleading, the 1963 designation review was appropriately conducted according to the standards and procedures in place at the time.

Mr. Farnham continued to address the three claims proffered in Ms. Donnelly's rescission application. Second, Ms. Donnelly contends that the designation should be rescinded because it is a financial hardship. Mr. Farnham noted that the Commission does not consider designation in and of itself as a hardship. The question of hardship is germane only during the review of permit applications, when the Commission is assessing proposals for work. In those instances, the Commission's ordinance and *Rules & Regulations* provide a set of procedures with which the Commission may

mitigate potential hardships. Rescission is not an appropriate remedy for a claim of hardship.

Third, Ms. Donnelly contends in her rescission request that 3620 Hamilton does not meet the designation criteria. Mr. Farnham stated that he would present evidence that it does meet the designation criteria, but first noted that this property was designated in 1963, under the original preservation ordinance, which did not enumerate specific designation criteria. Even if it did not meet any of the current designation criteria, its designation is legal, he asserted. Section 14-2007 (2)(j) of the current preservation ordinance, which went into effect in 1985, reaffirmed all of the Commission's earlier designations without requiring any verification of fulfillment of the new designation criteria.

Mr. Farnham turned to a discussion of the building's significance. The owner asserts that it is not historically significant. As evidence, she claims that a 1982 Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form on her twin states that it is "not a significant property." Mr. Farnham pointed out that, in fact, that phrase does not appear anywhere on the Survey Form. George Thomas, who prepared the form, makes only one value judgment. He states that the twin "Would contribute to a district."

Mr. Farnham explained that recent research by the Commission staff reveals that the double-house at 3620-3622 Hamilton Street may have great historical significance and may fulfill Designation Criteria C, D, and E. He asserted that confirmation of the research will show that the highly unusual, front-gabled, two-and-one-half story, Italianate twin or double house:

- C) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by its distinctive architectural style;
- D) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style;
- E) Is the work of an architect whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, and cultural development of the City, Commonwealth and Nation.

Documents recently uncovered at the City's Department of Records show that carpenter Wesley Sloan erected the double house immediately after the Civil War in 1866 and 1867. It is very likely that Samuel Sloan, Wesley Sloan's famous half-brother, prepared the plans for the house. Wesley and Samuel Sloan trained together as carpenter's apprentices in the early nineteenth century. Both then migrated from central Pennsylvania to Philadelphia, where they worked as carpenters until 1851, when Samuel took the title "architect." While Samuel blossomed into one of the nation's most important mid-nineteenth-century architects, Wesley continued working as a carpenter, often collaborating with Sloan family members. Samuel Sloan designed many landmark buildings, developed internationally important prototypes for hospital, mental hospital, and school buildings, published *The Architectural Review*, the nation's first architectural periodical, and authored many best-selling books on architecture.

The double house at 3620-3622 Hamilton Street exhibits several features characteristic of the Italianate style popularized by Samuel Sloan. Those features include the prominent front porch, the four-over-six floor-to-ceiling windows with paneled shutters at

the first floor, the four-over-four windows with louvered shutters at the second floor, the arched two-over-two windows in the gable, and the bracketed cornice. The porches, which have lost some of their original Italianate features, were simplified, probably in the early twentieth century.

Sloan is best known for his grand mansions and groundbreaking institutional buildings. He also designed numerous speculative houses in the Italianate style for West Philadelphia and was a vocal advocate for high quality working-class housing. In his books and magazine, he encouraged double or twin houses, what he called workmen's cottages, for the working class. In the first volume of *The Model Architect*, a best-selling book, he argued for the twin type, stating that "With the same expense a much more comfortable and handsome building may be erected on this plan, than if each were designed separately; for there is certainly less work and less material required, and hence a difference in cost." He offered numerous plans for inexpensive twin houses in his books and journal, *The Architectural Review and American Builders' Journal*, many of which bear striking similarities to this building. For example, in 1869, not long after the Hamilton Street house was completed, Sloan published an article on an inexpensive double house with side entrances set on a lot "of fifty feet front by one hundred feet deep" and "placed back, say fifteen or twenty feet, from the sidewalk, so as to afford a chance for ... flower beds, shrubbery, etc." The Hamilton Street lot is precisely 50 by 100 feet and the building is set back from the street, just as Sloan suggested. It is very likely that this modest, unusual building erected by Wesley Sloan is one of Samuel Sloan's only surviving working-class houses.

Mr. Farnham concluded that the staff recommends that the Commission deny the rescission application, maintain the designation, and direct the staff to conduct additional research before preparing a nomination for both halves of the double house.

Mr. Sugrue asked Mr. Farnham about the history the twin as a building type. Mr. Farnham replied that he was not aware of any study of the history of the twin type, but added that there are many twins in Philadelphia with the earliest dating to about 1850. He also noted that the twin was a mid-Atlantic-region phenomenon.

Eric Milby, the attorney for the applicant, introduced his party, which included owner Joy Donnelly and architect Alvin Holm. He stated that he would not address Mr. Farnham's claims of a connection to Samuel Sloan. Mr. Holm contended that, in 1963, the owners of 3820 Hamilton requested the designation of their property after hearing a rousing lecture to the Powelton Village neighbors by Mrs. Mauer of the Commission staff. He asserted that that was not an adequate justification for the designation. Ms. Donnelly added that no research on the property was conducted at the time of designation; she claimed that other owners in the area had undertaken research at the times their properties were designated in the early 1960s. Mr. Milby, the attorney, submitted a brief to the Committee and staff.

Ms. Donnelly presented her case. She stated that she intended to restore the building. She claimed that the twin's condition is "seriously compromised." She explained that the former owners demolished a rear summer kitchen and built a kitchen addition in the 1970s. She reported that one of the Tuscan porch columns has been replaced by a square column fabricated from 1"x6" boards. She distributed photographs to the

Committee and staff. Ms. Donnelly explained that she purchased the twin from the estate of the couple who had requested its designation in 1963. She recounted her life in Powelton Village. She explained that she purchased this property as an investment. She noted that she owns several other properties in Powelton Village including her residence. She reported that she has done considerable work on her dwelling. Committee members asked if it is designated. She answered that it is not. She then explained that the chimney at 3620 Hamilton had collapsed recently. She claimed that she cannot afford to rebuild the chimney or restore the property generally if it remains on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Sugrue replied that the Commission has prescribed hardship procedures for situations like this one.

Mr. Milby, the attorney, questioned Ms. Donnelly. He asked her to list the alterations to the building that detracted from its historical significance. She stated that the kitchen area at the rear added in the 1970s; that the front door had been replaced; that part of the porch floor had been replaced with plywood; and that the porch column had been replaced. Mr. Farnham reported to the Committee that Ms. Donnelly had also added a second-floor deck above the entrance porch without the Commission's approval or a permit. Mr. Sugrue explained to his fellow Committee members not familiar with the case that the Commission had continued Ms. Donnelly's November 2004 application to legalize the deck until it acts on her rescission request. Mr. Milby resumed his questioning. He asked Ms. Donnelly what she intended to do with the building. She stated that she would like to make it livable. She added that she might have to move out of her home and into this building if it becomes too expensive to rehabilitate.

Mr. Sugrue commented that it is important to determine the current condition, but that the application team should focus its attention on the question of rescission. He asserted that numerous rehabilitation proposals for properties in much worse condition than this one have been reviewed by the Commission during his tenure. Mr. Tyler added that the review of a proposal to rehabilitate this building would be typical of those reviewed by the Commission every month.

Mr. Milby introduced Alvin Holm, his expert witness, and presented his credentials as an expert in architecture and architectural history. The Committee acknowledged familiarity with Mr. Holm. Mr. Milby asked if the twin is significant. Mr. Holm replied that it is an anomaly. Mr. Milby distributed copies of George Thomas's Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form on this property. Mr. Holm stated that the form included several inaccuracies. For example, the building is Italianate in style, not Greek Revival. Mr. Farnham explained that the form was not prepared by the Commission, that it played no role in the property's designation, and that it was essentially irrelevant. He acknowledged that it contained errors, but asserted that the contents of the form were entirely unrelated to either the designation of the property or its subsequent treatment by the Commission. Moreover, the text of the form qualifies significantly the Greek Revival characterization, stating that it marks the transition from Greek Revival to Italianate.

Mr. Milby asked Mr. Holm why the house is not remarkable. Mr. Holm stated that only the windows and the brackets at the cornice are Italianate in style. He explained that the brackets on the front of the house are slightly different from those on the side. He posited that the front brackets may be replacements. Mr. Holm then claimed that the double house at 3620 and 3622 Hamilton was, in fact, a pair of rear ells for a main block

that had never been built. The Committee members expressed extreme skepticism. Mr. Sugrue questioned the claim and asked Mr. Holm to justify it. Mr. Holm stated that the front façade of this building almost aligned with nearby ells. Others pointed out that it stands far forward of the neighboring ells. Mr. Sugrue asked if he could point to another example of an ell completed without a main block. Mr. Holm replied that the rear section of the Edgar Allan Poe House had been constructed as a separate building before the front section was erected.

Mr. Sugrue suggested to Ms. Donnelly that federal tax credits might offset some of the expenses of the rehabilitation of this investment property. Mr. Tyler reported that George Thomas, who prepared the Pennsylvania State Historic Resource Survey Form, also prepared the National Register nomination for Powelton Village. He pointed out that Mr. Thomas had classified the building as Italianate in the district inventory, qualifying his earlier classification as late, transitional Greek Revival.

Mr. Laverty inquired about the condition of the other twin. Ms. Donnelly stated that it was of similar condition on the exterior; she was unaware of the interior condition.

Mr. Sugrue reminded the audience of the Commission's rescission rules. He enumerated the three bases for rescission: the resource has ceased to meet the criteria for listing because its qualities have been lost or destroyed; additional information shows that the resource does not meet the criteria; or an error in professional judgment was made when determine if the resource meets the criteria.

The applicants stated that the original photographs submitted by the owner at the time of designation were deceptive. Mr. Farnham showed the photographs to the Committee. The members of the Committee agreed that the photographs did not differentiate between the two properties, but did not agree that the photographs were deliberately deceptive or would have biased the designation deliberations.

Discussion turned back to Mr. Holm's claim that the building was merely the rear ells of an unfinished twin. Mr. Sugrue again doubted the validity of the claim. He also noted that the Register includes numerous altered buildings. Finally, he suggested that Mr. Holm's claim, if true, would make this building even more distinctive and more noteworthy. Concluding, Mr. Sugrue asserted that he believed the designation to be sound.

Mr. Milby, the applicant's attorney, contended that the Committee should not make a final decision, but should table the matter to allow for more research and verification. He stated that the entire case was based on speculation. He maintained that the building was not like the surrounding Powelton Village buildings, but was unique.

Mr. Tyler read from the Powelton Village National Register inventory to demonstrate that, like this building, the preponderance of the buildings on the 3600-block of Hamilton were constructed during the three decades after the Civil War.

Helma Weeks of the Historic Preservation Committee and Lawrence Biond of the Zoning Committee, both of the Powelton Village Civic Association, requested that the Committee recommend maintaining the designation. Ms. Weeks stated that a rescission would set a very bad precedent. She presented a letter from a neighbor on the block that

contended that Ms. Donnelly's construction of the illegal deck argued strongly for the retention of the designation and continuation of the Committee's oversight.

Nancy Drye, who, with her husband architect Robert Thomas, owns the building to the west of the twin, asserted that the twin is a "treasure." She stated that she has seen the interior of 3622 Hamilton and that it is in fine condition. She reported that she knew the Morse's, the couple who requested the designation in 1963, and that they were extremely proud of the house. She explained that it had slipped into disrepair after their grandson acquired the house. She also stated that she and her husband Robert Thomas had told the real estate agent and the home inspector that the property was listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places while Ms. Donnelly was considering the purchase of the building. It was noted that the Building Inspection Report dated 29 April 2003, which was prepared for Ms. Donnelly before she purchased the property, clearly states that "this house is on the Philadelphia Registrar (sic) of Historic Places." Ms. Donnelly purchased the twin on 2 June 2003. Ms. Drye refuted Mr. Holm's claim that this was a rear ell of an uncompleted house; she labeled his claim "remarkable speculation." She concluded, asserting that this house should remain on the Register.

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance reminded the Committee that Ms. Donnelly's arguments for rescission are, essentially, hardship arguments. He claimed that the Designation Committee was not the appropriate venue for the review of a hardship claim. He suggested that Ms. Donnelly follow the standard procedures. He added that Mr. Holm's assertion that the building is a rear ell of an incomplete building may make it more, not less, significant. He requested that the Committee recommend that the designation be affirmed. Ms. Donnelly interrupted Mr. Gallery to dispute Ms. Drye's claims and to assert that she had already made a deposit toward the purchase of the property when she learned of its designation. She requested that the Committee table her application.

Mr. Tyler summarized the review. He contended that no case had been made for rescission. Referring to Section 5.5.c.1, he stated that the historic resource has not been lost or destroyed; no significant new information has been presented; and no error in professional judgment was made. He dismissed Mr. Holm's "back building" theory, declaring that it "makes no sense."

Mr. Myers, who had arrived late during the discussion to join the Committee, asked how the owner, attorney, and consultant would use the additional time if the matter was tabled. Ms. Donnelly replied that she would research Sloan. Mr. Myers replied that this building is significant with or without the Sloan connection. Mr. Holm asked if the age of the building alone made it significant. Mr. Tyler answered in the negative. Mr. Holm asked for a clarification of the criteria for designation. Mr. Tyler read the legislative findings from the pre-1985 ordinance. Mr. Holm again asked what makes this building special. Mr. Sugrue answered that it was designated legally under the old ordinance and reaffirmed by the new ordinance. He stated that the applicants had failed to meet the requirements for rescission. Mr. Tyler read the section in the new ordinance reaffirming the earlier designations. He concluded that the City Council had deemed this building worthy of the Register.

Rodney Thoms of the 3600-block of Hamilton Street addressed the Committee and asked that the designation be maintained. He commended the work of the Commission and asserted that a rescission would set a dangerous precedent at a moment when Powelton Village is enduring great developmental pressures.

Mr. Huff moved that the Committee recommend the denial of the rescission application and the maintenance of the designation. Ms. Klein seconded the motion.

Mr. Huff added that the Commission wants owners to have full and complete use of their properties and that the Architectural and Financial Hardship Committees would work with Ms. Donnelly to find appropriate solutions to her problems. Mr. Milby again requested that the application be tabled. Mr. Tyler suggested that he make his request to the Commission.

Mr. Huff's motion to recommend the denial of the rescission application and the maintenance of the designation passed with a vote of four in favor. Mr. Myers abstained.

Mr. Myers explained that he had abstained because he had arrived after the discussion began. He added that he supported his colleagues' vote to recommend denial of the application.

24-28 South Front Street, a.k.a. 25-29 South Letitia Street

Mr. Farnham explained that the owner of the vacant lot at 24-28 South Front Street has requested that the individual designations of the properties be rescinded. The properties would remain designated as part of the Old City Historic District; they would continue to be classified as "non-contributing" to the district. The group of early nineteenth-century loft buildings that once stood on the site was designated as historic on 4 November 1976. After designation, they suffered a devastating fire and were declared Dangerous and Imminently Dangerous by the Department of Licenses & Inspections. The owner applied to the Commission for approval of their demolition. In response to that application, on 12 July 1989 the Commission established an ad hoc committee with the authority to work out a settlement with the owner on the disposition of the buildings. On 29 March 1990, the City entered into an agreement with the owner to demolish the buildings, provided photographs were taken and all drawings and historical documents were turned over to the Commission. As part of that agreement, the judge ordered that the owner "salvage and store properly as much original historic fabric as is practicable." The Commission's staff approved a demolition permit on 29 March 1990. The photographs and other documentation required by the agreement were submitted to the Commission, but no historic fabric from the demolition has survived. The Old City Civic Association alleged at the time of the demolition that the owners failed to take the necessary steps to salvage and store the historic material, but the City eventually resolved the matter, agreeing that the terms of the settlement had been met. Mr. Farnham noted that the staff recommends the rescissions of the individual designations.

Daniel Reisman, the attorney representing a potential buyer for the properties, cited Section 5.5.c.1 of the Commission's *Rules & Regulations* and asserted that the individual designations should be rescinded because "the resource has ceased to meet

the criteria for listing on the Register because the qualities that caused its original entry have been lost or destroyed.”

John Gallery of the Preservation Alliance addressed the Committee. He adamantly rejected the staff’s recommendation while referring to the Commission’s refusal to rescind the designation of 114-120 North 2nd Street after a fire. He asserted that the site on South Front Street is very important and the Commission should maintain full jurisdiction. He noted a string of inappropriate buildings proposed for or under construction on South Front Street and insisted that the Commission rigorously review all proposals for the area. He pointed to the “poorly designed” building proposed for 101 Walnut Street, which will appear on the Commission’s May 2005 agenda. He requested that the Committee recommend denial of the rescission.

Mr. Sugrue asked Mr. Tyler to summarize the implications of the Commission’s potential actions on this application. Mr. Tyler stated that the Commission would continue to have full jurisdiction over the site if the rescission application is rejected; if rejected, it could approve, deny, or table any subsequent applications for new construction. If the individual designations are rescinded by the Commission, it would give up its full jurisdiction for 45-day-review-and-comment jurisdiction over any subsequent applications. Mr. Tyler added that he recommended the rescission of the individual designations because all historic resources at the site have been lost. He maintained that the Historical Commission is not an urban design board. Review of urban design, he contended, is the purview of the Planning and Art Commissions and, perhaps, the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Historical Commission is charged with protecting historic resources. Some Committee members countered that any new construction on this site would, in fact, have significant implications for surrounding historic resources. Mr. Reisman directed Committee members to the *Rules & Regulations*, which allow for rescission when the resources have been lost.

Mr. Sugrue asked if the properties had been designated because of the buildings that once stood on the site or because the site itself has significance above and beyond the buildings. Mr. Tyler answered that they were designated because of the buildings. Mr. Myers inquired about the potential for archeological material on the site. Mr. Tyler explained that the buildings demolished in 1990 were either second or third generation buildings. He posited that, because the buildings filled the entire lot, nothing other than one or two truncated privy pits would have survived from the pre-1830 activities on the site. Mr. Myers noted that the foundations of the Greek Revival buildings would be found under the parking lot. Richard Thom, a consultant for the current owner, offered his experiences with the Bookbinder’s site at 2nd and Walnut Streets. He stated that he was surprised that he found very little archeological material during the construction of the Bookbinder’s complex. He suggested that the site had been scavenged in the 1830s, when the extant historic buildings were erected. Mr. Myers asked if the Commission could require an archeological study of the site as part of the new construction. Mr. Tyler stated that it could, but that such a study would be very expensive. Greg Hill of Brown Hill Development and Jeffrey M. Brown Associates remarked that he planned to develop the site. Mr. Reisman reminded the Committee that these sites had not been designated because of their archeological potential.

Ms. Klein moved that the Committee recommend the rescission of the individual designations of 24-28 South Front Street, a.k.a. 25-27 South Letitia Street, to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, but the retention of the “non-contributing” designations as part of the Old City Historic District. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

STAFF-INITIATED APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTER-MAINTENANCE RESCISSIONS OF DESIGNATIONS

920-922, 926, 930 Chestnut Street

Mr. Farnham presented the register-maintenance rescission application to the Committee. He explained that the buildings had been designated historic by the Historical Commission on 13 December 1989. He reported that the property owner had submitted a demolition application based on financial hardship to the Commission and that the Commission had issued a finding of hardship and approved the demolition on 11 September 1991. The Commission staff approved a demolition permit application the same day.

Committee members expressed great regret over the loss of the important buildings. They noted that a surface parking lot covered the entire block and that no redevelopment had been undertaken in the 14 years since the demolition. Mr. Sugrue remarked that future Commission demolition approvals should be conditioned to link the demolition directly to the new construction. Committee members agreed that demolitions should not be allowed until firm plans for the financing and construction of replacement buildings were proffered and verified. Committee members recounted numerous fantastic schemes that had collapsed after the historic buildings had been demolished, leaving gaping holes in the cityscape. The Committee urged the Commission to remember this unfortunate loss when considering future demolition applications.

Mr. Myers moved to recommend the rescissions of 920-922, 926, and 930 Chestnut Street from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Huff seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1114 and 1116 Locust Street

Mr. Farnham presented the register-maintenance rescission application to the Committee. He explained that the buildings had been designated historic by the Historical Commission on 24 November 1959. He reported that the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia sought the Commission’s approval of the demolitions of these buildings in 1976 “to market a cleared parcel of land for new construction for local business use.” The Commission approved the demolition on 2 December 1976. The Commission’s staff approved a demolition permit application on 3 February 1978. The buildings were demolished shortly thereafter, but the sites were never redeveloped. Nearly three decades later, they remain vacant.

Mr. Myers posited that the buildings were the first and only ever erected on the site and that significant archeological material may reside on the site. He asked if the designation should be maintained to protect the archeological potential. Mr. Tyler again noted that

archeological studies are very expensive and that the Commission no longer has the resources to fund them. Mr. Sugrue suggested that all future nominations should state explicitly whether the site has the potential for harboring archeological material. Ms. Klein and Mr. Myers agreed and asked that the question of archeology be formally addressed with every nomination. Mr. Sugrue suggested that the Commission explore the development of an archeology plan for the city, perhaps in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania. Ms. Klein suggested that the Commission create a GIS system to track potential archeological sites; she posited that one could be created with the aid of the City Planning Commission. Mr. Myers proposed that the Committee hold a meeting to address the important policy questions raised by today's agenda. Ms. Klein suggested that the Committee hold a workshop to investigate and discuss potential policies. She proposed that gathering be defined as an educational workshop, not a public meeting. Her fellow Committee members agreed. Mr. Sugrue informed the Committee that he would not be able to attend the upcoming Commission meeting. He asked Mr. Huff to report to the Commission on the Committee's intention to explore some of the complex issues raised by the meeting's agenda.

Ms. Klein moved to recommend the rescissions of 1114 and 1116 Locust Street from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1113-1125 Pine Street

Mr. Farnham presented the register-maintenance rescission application to the Committee. He explained that the school building had been designated historic by the Historical Commission on 24 September 1963. He reported that it was declared Imminently Dangerous by the Department of Licenses & Inspections on 6 October 1987. The Commission's staff approved a demolition permit application on 26 October 1987 and again on 9 December 1987. The extant condominium building was constructed soon thereafter.

Mr. Huff moved to recommend the rescission of 1113-1125 Pine Street from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Myers seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

800-802 Walnut Street

Mr. Farnham presented the register-maintenance rescission application to the Committee. He explained that the building had been designated historic by the Historical Commission on 30 April 1957 and demolished by the Redevelopment Authority in 1972. The extant parking garage was constructed in the late 1980s. The Commission staff stamped the garage building permit application "No Jurisdiction" on 26 February 1986.

Mr. Huff moved to recommend the rescission of 800-802 Walnut Street from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. Myers seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

251 South 9th Street

Mr. Farnham presented the register-maintenance rescission application to the Committee. He explained that the building had been designated historic by the Historical Commission on 31 January 1961. He reported that it was declared Imminently Dangerous by the Department of Licenses & Inspections on 17 January 1995. The Commission's staff approved a demolition permit application on 10 February 1995.

Mr. Myers moved to recommend the rescission of 251 South 9th Street from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Klein seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Sugrue requested that the staff make arrangements for a workshop to explore designation and rescission issues during June 2005.

Mr. Sugrue inquired into the status of pending district nominations. Mr. Farnham explained that the staff has received, but not evaluated, nominations for districts in Spruce Hill, Overbrook Farms, and East Falls. He noted that a preliminary proposal has been submitted for a district in Parkside. He added that property owners in Awbury Arboretum are preparing a district nomination. Mr. Sugrue asked Messrs. Tyler and Farnham to apprise the Committee on their plans for processing the district nominations. Mr. Tyler stated that he had concerns about the staff's capacity to administer the reviews generated by the prospective addition of approximately 3,500 properties to the Register with the potential designations of Spruce Hill, Overbrook Farms, and East Falls. Mr. Farnham commented that, owing to the myriad complex questions raised by the pending nominations, the staff is awaiting explicit direction from the Commission. Mr. Sugrue offered to raise the issue with the Commission.

Ms. Klein moved that the Committee adjourn. Mr. Myers seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan E. Farnham