

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

**WEDNESDAY, 22 MAY 2024
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Chair		X	
Suzanna Barucco	X		Acting chair
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.	X		
Bruce Lavery	X		
Debbie Miller	X		
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.	X		

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

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
Mary Costello, Esq., Law Department
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner III
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kristin Hankins, Historic Preservation Planner I
Heather Hendrickson, Historic Preservation Planner II
Ted Maust, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department
Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, Historic Preservation Planner II
Alex Till, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Allison Weiss, SoLo Germantown Civic Association
Amy Lambert, University City Historical Society
Andrea Korb
Ann Marie Dimino
Barbara Arvanitis
Barbara Simon
Bruce Bonner
Bruce Byker James, Chair, Calvary Trustees
Burn Studio
Carl Lysaght
Carolyn Klepser

Christine Healey
Colin Murphy
Cyn Lee
Cynthia Ritter
David Brigham, Historical Society of Pennsylvania
David McEvilla
David Richards
David Traub, Save Our Sites
Dennis Carlisle
Diane Walsh
Drew Moyer
Eileen Harris
Eric DiMuzio
Francine Sandrow
Frederick Poindexter
Geraldine Felix
Hilary Wittich
Hanna Stark, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Hazel Lee
Ian Litwin, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Jake Blumgart
Jamie Angelo
Janis Benstock
Jay Farrell
Jay Ifert
J.B. Kelly
Jeffrey Saunders
Jill Feighan
Jonathan Broh, AIA
Jonathan Hessney
Joshua Zuger
Judy Conte
Justin Jordan
Kathy Dowdell
Katie Low
Katy Hine
Kevin Levy
Krista Gebbia, Chestnut Hill Conservancy
Kristen Mortelliti
Kristen Mosbrucker-Garza
Krystal Bordoni-Cowley
L. Cross
Larry Goldfinger
Len Shatz
Lorna Katz, Society Hill Civic Association
Lynn Landes
Mac McLarin
Maria Aretz
Marisa Shaaban
Martha Glaze Zook
Matt Knol

Matthew McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Meir Rinde
Michael Palmer
Michael Ramos
Michaelle Bond
Mike Schirmer
M. Simola
Nancy Pontone
Nithin Vejendla
Olivia Cervasio
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society
Paul Boni, Esq., Society Hill Civic Association
Paul Lorenz
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Pauline Hicks
Renee Giustino
Rev. Tim Emmett-Rardin, Calvary United Methodist Church
Rich Gallagher
Richard Beck
Richard Kirk
Richards Jarden
Robert Sher
Robert Weinberg
Rogerio Matos
Rosalind McKelvey
Stephanie Pennypacker
Steve McDaniel
Steven Peitzman
Tony Brown
Winfield Thomas

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 4740 BALTIMORE AVE

Name of Resource: Calvary United Methodist Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Calvary United Methodist Church

Nominator: University City Historical Society

Staff Contact: Kim Chantry, kim.chantry@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the church building at 4740 Baltimore Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the church, constructed between 1905 and 1907 as the Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church, satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E, and H. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the church building is a representative example of late nineteenth century ecclesiastical English Gothic style architecture. It features large stained-glass windows with tracery by Tiffany Studios dominating several facades, crenellation, limestone trim and detailing, and Tudor arches. Under Criterion E, the nomination claims that the architects of the church, New York architect William R. Brown with associate architects Gillespie & Carrel, significantly influenced the historical and architectural development of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation. Under Criterion H, the nomination contends that the church is an established and familiar visual feature of the Cedar Park neighborhood of West Philadelphia, with its prominent location at the five-points intersection of Baltimore Avenue and S. 48th Street.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4740 Baltimore Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation D and H, but not Criterion E. The nomination fails to establish that architects William R. Brown and Gillespie & Carrel significantly influenced the historical and architectural development of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:06:55

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Amy Lambert of the University City Historical Society represented the nomination.
- Rev. Tim Emmett-Rardin, Richard Kirk, and Bruce Byker James represented the property owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Lambert spoke on behalf of the nominator. She noted that the same congregation, Calvary Church, has occupied the building since its construction and stated that the University City Historical Society is thrilled to finally nominate the building.
- Mr. Emmett-Rardin spoke on behalf of the congregation. He stated that he has been the pastor at Calvary Church for the past three years and has been a member for 30 years. He stated that the congregation and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church are unanimous in their opposition to a designation. He explained that Calvary holds the church property in trust through the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church, which applies to all United Methodist Church properties and ensures that a property will continue to be used for purposes of benefit to the entire denomination. He referenced the letter of opposition

to designation written by the South District Board of Church Location and Building for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church. He explained that the review of the nomination had been continued to allow time to speak with the nominators and try to negotiate a compromise that would not include historic designation, but that the nominators refused to withdraw the nomination. He stated that the congregation's opposition centers on economic impact and freedom, and also religious freedom tied to the First Amendment. He stated that designation would impose restrictions on their capacity to fully realize the value of the church building. He explained that the ministry includes providing affordable and accessible space to the community as a community center, and that this is a big part of the ministry and mission. He stated that the mission of the church prioritizes people over buildings. He expressed concern over cost of increases for repairs, owing to historic designation, stating that any amount of increase means a decrease of funds directed towards the church mission and ministry. He stated that the church should be free to access the full value of features of the building, including stained glass windows, if it so chooses, in order to support the mission and ministry. He stated that the congregation is small but has worked actively over three decades to preserve the building and provide community center services. He concluded that historic designation would make it less likely that the church would be successful in realizing that plan.

- Mr. Kirk read from a prepared statement, which was then provided for distribution to the Historical Commissioners in advance of the review by the Historical Commission. He stated that he was speaking only for himself, but explained that he has been a Trustee of Calvary United Methodist Church since 1994, and is the retiring Board President for the Calvary Center for Culture and Community, which he founded and incorporated in 2000 for the sole purpose of preserving and repurposing the Calvary building. It was nearly in ruin and up for sale at that time, with its stained glass being sold separately. He stated that he has also been a member of the University City Historical Society for 35 years. He expressed his support for historic preservation in the community. He stated that the Calvary Center was successful in filling the Calvary building with religious congregations, educational facilities, social justice groups, the performing arts, and community groups, which had a tremendous halo effect in development in the surrounding area and succeeded beyond all expectations for over two decades. He explained that, over the last five years, the Calvary Center was hit with a series of calamities including two failures of the heating system, and the pandemic, which forced the building to close and income from user groups to cease, leaving it in a financial crisis. He stated that all of this necessitated starting over with plans to create a new governance for the center and the building. It left the Calvary Center in financial crisis and without user groups for the building. Mr. Kirk stated that the University City Historical Society was initially a big supporter of the Calvary Center and rented offices in the building, but over the years it lowered its support and eventually eliminated its support, removing its offices from the building. He stated that the University City Historical Society should be well aware of the financial situation at Calvary and its inability to therefore comply with historic designation regulations, both in terms of finances and staffing. He stated that the University City Historical Society knew that Calvary was opposed to the nomination for these reasons, yet they refused to withdraw their nomination.
 - o Ms. Barucco interjected and asked Mr. Kirk to submit his written remarks to the Historical Commission.
- Mr. James, Chair of the Board of Trustees for Calvary United Methodist Church,

- spoke in opposition to the designation. He explained that the Board is tasked with taking care of the building, and all maintenance, renovation, and repair projects go through the Board. He reiterated the opposition to the designation.
- Ms. Milroy questioned how historic designation would be contrary to the mission of the church and community center.
 - Ms. Barucco stated that the Committee on Historic Designation may be sympathetic but it is not tasked with addressing economic challenges.
 - o Mr. Lavery recommended that the property owners raise their economic concerns during the Historical Commission's review.
 - Ms. Milroy agreed with the staff that the nomination fails to establish that architects William R. Brown and Gillespie & Carrel significantly influenced the historical and architectural development of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation, satisfying Criterion E.
 - o All Committee members agreed that Criterion E is not applicable.
 - Mr. Cohen stated that the Calvary Center is a model in resourcefulness and creativity in accommodating community uses to sustain the building. He stated that, if all churches opposed historic designation, the cultural and built environment would be diminished. He quibbled with the terminology of English Gothic as the architectural style. He stated that the nomination told the story well.
 - Ms. Miller stated that designation is about the community as well, and the community extends beyond the doors of the building, and a demolition of the building would have an impact on the community.
 - Mr. Lavery remarked on the stewardship of the property and its single congregation since its inception.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Oscar Beisert commented in support of the nomination.
- Kathy Dowdell commented in support of the nomination.
- Paul Steinke, representing the Preservation Alliance, commented in support of the nomination.
- Mary Jane Kirby, co-chair of the South District Board of Church Location and Building of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, The United Methodist Church, commented in opposition to the nomination.
- David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, commented in support of the nomination.
- Cyn Lee commented about the history of the organ and the WPEB radio station, which operated out of the building.
- Geraldine Felix, Calvary United Methodist Church member, past finance chair, and member of the Calvary Center Board and Board of Trustees for the church, commented in opposition to the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The church was constructed between 1905 and 1907 as the Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church.
- Its purview is limited to addressing the Criteria for Designation and whether or not a nomination successfully argues for the satisfaction of one or more Criteria. Factors related to economics and financing can be presented to the Historical Commission, which is tasked with determining if it is good public policy to designate a property.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination fails to establish that architects William R. Brown and Gillespie & Carrel significantly influenced the historical and architectural development of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation. The property does not satisfy Criterion E.
- The church building is a representative example of the late nineteenth-century ecclesiastical English Gothic style architecture, satisfying Criterion D.
- The church is an established and familiar visual feature of the Cedar Park neighborhood of West Philadelphia, with its prominent location at the five-points intersection of Baltimore Avenue and S. 48th Street, satisfying Criterion H.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4740 Baltimore Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation D and H, but not Criterion E.

ITEM: 4740 BALTIMORE AVE					
MOTION: Designate; Criteria D and H					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Milroy					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, Chair					X
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				1

ADDRESS: 3343 W SCHOOL HOUSE LN

Name of Resource: Samuel Tobias Wagner House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Thomas Jefferson University

Nominator: East Falls Historical Society

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3343 W. School House Lane as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the stone and shingle house designed by Horace Trumbauer for Samuel Tobias Wagner in 1896 is significant under Criteria for Designation D, E, and J. Under Criterion D, the nomination asserts that the property embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Queen Anne and Shingle styles and was designed by prominent Gilded Age architect Horace Trumbauer. The nomination further asserts that the property is significant under Criterion J as an example of the country estates that once lined West School House Lane.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3343 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria D and E, but not Criterion J. The nomination admits that the house and ownership are aberrant for the street; simply being constructed along it does not necessarily mean it is significant in the development of the community.

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Steven Peitzman represented the nomination.
- No one represented the property owner. Ms. DiPasquale noted that a representative of the property owner had been in touch with the Historical Commission's staff and stated that the owner did not intend to oppose the designation or to participate in the reviews.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Peitzman reiterated the arguments made in the nomination, commenting on the various periods of development along Schoolhouse Lane.
- Ms. Barucco supported the designation and noted that it is an interesting corner of the city, and that the other history of Schoolhouse Lane is its twentieth-century history with the Modernist buildings constructed between Henry Avenue down to the Schuylkill River. She noted that the property may exemplify Criterion J but there is not much context provided in the nomination to make that case.
- Ms. Milroy opined that it is a wonderful house and lots of hard work went into preparing the nomination. She suggested that the nomination, particularly Criterion J, could have been strengthened with maps to illustrate the development of the area.
- Ms. Milroy commented that it is fascinating that Tobias Wagner gave Horace Trumbauer the commission at the same time he was designing Lynnwood Hall. She noted that in his position as chief engineer, Wagner would have been similar to Samuel Smedley and would have known where to invest in the city. She noted that this was the beginning of the suburbanization of areas like East Falls, and that a line up of large houses along a major thoroughfare is a Philadelphia tradition.
- Mr. Lavery thanked the nominators and agreed that it is a great house that merits inclusion on the Philadelphia Register. He noted that Trumbauer's career did not start with Widener and Elkins, but with developers Wendell and Smith, and that it shows that Trumbauer did not throw away smaller commissions even when bigger ones came in.
 - o Ms. Milroy commented that stylistically, the design appears to be in conversation with the Wendell and Smith neighborhood of Overbrook Farms.
 - o Mr. Lavery agreed, noting Wayne and St. Davids as well, which were being built simultaneously. He noted that Trumbauer was one of a stable of architects that developers Wendell and Smith used in their communities.
 - o Mr. Cohen agreed that it is the design of a young Trumbauer and shows the seeds of what he would do later. He also noted that it is visually sensitive. He opined that it is a great building, and he is glad it has been nominated.
 - o Mr. Lavery stated that it is the type of house that would have been in *Scientific American* in the 1890s. It is really an adapted foursquare. He noted that Wagner would have been familiar with the neighborhood and added that he would not want to have the most beautiful and expensive house on the block but would want to be across from it.
 - o Mr. Cohen noted that the building was "late to the picnic" on Schoolhouse Lane and speaks a different language than its predecessors or successors. Earlier houses, he noted, were grander, more imposing, and closer to the street.
- Mr. Cohen noted that the prominent fireplace would likely have been located in a cozy den and indicative of the style of the building.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The house was designed by Horace Trumbauer for Samuel Tobias Wagner in 1896 and is similar to other residential designs of Trumbauer in Overbrook Farms, St. Davids, and Wayne.
- The house is unusual along Schoolhouse Lane in terms of earlier and later development.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination demonstrates that the property embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Queen Anne and Shingle styles, satisfying Criterion D.
- The nomination demonstrates that the property is the work of Horace Trumbauer, an architect whose work significantly influenced the development of the City, satisfying Criterion E.
- The nomination does not make a cogent argument for the satisfaction of Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3343 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation D and E.

ITEM: 3343 W SCHOOL HOUSE LN MOTION: Designate; Criteria D and E MOVED BY: Cohen SECONDED BY: Lavery					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, Chair					X
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				

WASHINGTON SQUARE WEST HISTORIC DISTRICT

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Multiple

Nominator: Washington Square West Civic Association and Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate a large historic district comprised of 1,441 resources spanning approximately 26 city blocks in the Washington Square West neighborhood of Center City Philadelphia. The nomination ascribes various types of significance to the district,

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION, 22 MAY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

including social, architectural, cultural, and archaeological significance, arguing that the district satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J. The nomination contends that the proposed Washington Square West historic district illustrates the development of Philadelphia's residential and commercial core over more than two centuries, from the establishment of the Mikveh Israel Cemetery in 1740 until the solidification of the neighborhood as an LGBTQ+ community in the 1980s.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Washington Square West Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 01:09:25

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Hanna Stark of the Preservation Alliance and Drew Moyer of the Washington Square West Civic Association represented the nomination.
- Numerous property owners participated in the discussion.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Stark noted that neighborhoods to the east and west of Washington Square West (Wash West) have been recognized as historic districts since the late 1990s and it is time to recognize the role that Wash West played in the development of the city as well.
- Mr. Moyer commented that, on behalf of the civic association and as a long-term resident of the neighborhood, he spent multiple years and significant resources to reach this point in the nomination process. He explained that when he ran for election for the civic association board, he made clear his intent to support a historic district nomination, as did other board members, and that the majority of voices within the civic association have been in support of the effort over the last several years. He suggested that perhaps the lack of landmark demolitions in the last few years have quieted peoples' emotions. He noted that he has personal experience working with the Historical Commission on renovations to his own historically designated home. He explained that he found no difficulty working with the Historical Commission and was impressed with the latitude provided. He opined that the neighborhood must address hot questions, like is it still a Gayborhood and should there be a new 76ers arena. He explained that, as far as the civic association is concerned, there is no greater contributing factor to the neighborhood than its history and the properties within it. He encouraged the Committee to support the designation of the Washington Square West Historic District.
- Numerous property owners participated in the discussion.
 - o Jonathan Hessney, the owner of 9 Alder Court, opposed the nomination, arguing that it lacks specificity and is "comically vague and broad." He opposed all of the Criteria for Designation cited in the nomination, opining that they are so broad they are almost meaningless and it is unclear how they are applied to each individual building and that many of the Criteria cited could be applied citywide. He opined that, since over half of the properties in the district are already designated, the remaining properties are only a handful of vacant lots and non-historic buildings.
 - o Greg Harde, the owner of 1119 Lombard Street, opposed the nomination, arguing that the district does not meet the requirements set out in the

Philadelphia Code and is too broad. He noted that no one supports the demolition of historic buildings but that, after listening to the deliberation on the individual nominations reviewed earlier, he questions the justification for a blanket designation of the district.

- o Lynn Landes, the owner of 217 S Jessup Street, opposed the nomination but supported a demolition moratorium.
- o Attorney Matt McClure, representing the Parkway Corporation, opposed the designation of 219 S. 13th Street and 1235 Locust Street under Criterion I and requested that the properties be classified as Non-contributing. He agreed with criticisms of the nomination, specifically the breadth of the nomination covering 245 years of history and opined that the period of time is at war with the actual language in the ordinance. He noted that the proposed district has a tremendous number of historic buildings already designated and that could be designated, but disagreed with the “kitchen sink approach,” and argued that there should be one unifying theme in a district. He opined that there is nothing in the inventory that matches the arguments for Criterion I, and that the discussion of Criterion I in the Statement of Significance focuses on sites of former rowhouses. One of the properties he represents was formerly the site of the College of Physicians and Free Library, which is not covered by the discussion of Criterion I in the nomination.
- o David Brigham, the Librarian and CEO of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, offered the organization’s support for the nomination and the extraordinary diverse stories it is able to tell. He explained that the Historical Society’s library is in one of the Significant buildings in the district, having been designed by architect Addison Hutton and opened in 1910, and that the library contains many documents related to the people and communities that have lived, worked, and promoted cultural life in the neighborhood, with holdings including William Still’s diary, papers for Mikveh Israel cemetery, and documentation related to LGBTQ+ history. He noted that the Historical Society recently went through a major restoration project, and felt supported by the Historical Commission, who made the job easier, not harder.
- o Hillary Wittich, owner of 231 and 233 S. Jessup St, supported the nomination. She explained that her home is already designated, and that she has lived there for over 30 years and is very familiar with what it means to live in a historically designated home. She noted that it can take extra time and money to go through the Historical Commission process but that it is money well spent to protect what is so special about living in Wash West. She noted that designation also allows for participation by neighbors and other interested parties in large projects that may impact them that they would not otherwise have if the property was not designated. She opined that there are many charming small streets in the Wash West neighborhood and that neighbors should have a right to protect what makes their blocks so special.
- o Jamie Angelo, the community manager of the Arts Condominium building at 1324 Locust Street, expressed concern about added costs for the 372 residential and five commercial units in the building.
- o Francine Sandrow, the owner of 825-27 Lombard Street, opposed the nomination and inclusion of her property as a Contributing resource. She opined that the Washington Square West Civic Association and Preservation Alliance do not represent the views and opinions of the majority of homeowners, and that she only found out about the potential nomination from the Historical Commission notice letter. She stated that she wants her property at 825-27 Lombard Street

- excluded from the district, as the rest of street is not historic and not included in the district boundary. She argued that the cost and additional burden violates her Fifth Amendment rights and that she would not have bought a historic property.
- o Joshua Zugerman, the owner of 409 Quince Street, opposed the nomination, and noted that the buildings on his block of Quince Street were built in 1963. He opined that the nomination is deficient, and the district does not satisfy any of the Criteria.
 - o Carl Lysaght, the owner of 1026 Pine Street #7, opposed any designation and noted that his property is not visible from the public right-of-way. He stated: "This is a joke. You guys are clowns." He was then muted for violating the Historical Commission's Guidelines for Conduct.
 - Mr. Farnham explained that threatening and inappropriate language is not tolerated.
 - o Paul Lorenz, the owner of 250 S. 13th Street, Unit 3C, opposed the nomination. He noted that he supports preservation of specific properties through individual designation but is opposed to district designation, opining that it will impose significant restrictions on development.
 - o Susan B., who did not provide her last name, noted that her 14-unit building was constructed in the 1990s, perhaps after a historic building was demolished and that designation would prevent improvements to the non-historic building. She suggested that the designation of individual buildings is better.
 - o Janis Benstock, the owner of 409 and 411 S. 10th Street and a real estate broker, supported the nomination, opining that there needs to be as much protection over buildings in the neighborhood as possible. She noted that she has owned and renovated historic properties, and it can cost more money but that she figured it out, and over the long haul, it increases property values. She opined that when people buy new construction, they are buying it in spite of the exterior, not because of it, and that in her experience, most people appreciate the old and charming; it is why people live in Philadelphia. She argued that if Philadelphia becomes more suburban and nondescript, it will take away one of the main draws to Philadelphia.
 - o Jeffrey Saunders, the owner of a condominium at 250 S. 13th Street, supported the nomination. He noted that designation is about preventing demolition but also about creeping destruction of the running down of a community. He commented that he lives in a 14-story condo building and looks forward to designation lowering renovation costs. He explained that they undertook a repointing job 12-15 years ago that was not done properly and now must be redone, and that if they had been able to take advantage of the Historical Commission staff's expertise and pointed the building correctly the first time, they could have saved half a million dollars. He noted that the staff are a no-cost resource for property owners and can provide
 - o Renee Giustino, the owner of 421 S. 10th Street, supported the nomination.
 - o Colin Murphy, the owner of 1317-21 Rodman Street, Unit #2a, opposed the district designation. He noted that he is opposed to demolition but opined that the onus to designate should be on property owners themselves. He commented that he has lived in the neighborhood for three years and was not aware of the potential nomination.
 - Mr. Cohen commented that there are many qualities in the neighborhood that people treasure, and that weighing preservation against unsympathetic development motivates a lot of people. He commented that it might be difficult, although maybe advisable, to get thematic unity in a place so diverse. He noted that the history of the

neighborhood and its development contrasts dramatically block to block, and that piecemeal thematic district nominations could theoretically address certain themes in the district, such as apartment buildings or small streets, but that he would discourage doing so. He noted that the small-scale texture of Wash West is unusual in America, and something to treasure about Philadelphia.

- Ms. Milroy commented that it is important to note that in Wash West, many different types of buildings came together over a long history, but they work together to create a great feast for living. She explained that the task of the Committee is to weigh the nomination and the points that are made in it and opined that the nomination makes a case for designation. She noted that the Old City and Society Hill historic districts also cover 250 to 300 years of history, and that the built environment in Wash West is very different than that of the areas to the east and west. She explained that the best mechanism for caring for these spaces is district designation.
- Ms. Barucco explained that historic preservation used to concentrate on the Colonial period, but that preservation philosophy and outlook has changed. She noted that it is not just one early period but a continuum that makes places significant. She explained that in one place or community that has changed over time, there may be layered stories and architectural changes that contribute to the larger story. To think otherwise is to take a narrow and siloed approach to preservation that the field has been trying to get away from. She noted that preservation today attempts to take a broad look at history, not a narrow one, and thought the nomination did an excellent job of detailing that layered history.
- Ms. Miller noted that Wash West, unlike Society Hill or Old City, was not subject to the same level of mid-twentieth century renewal projects and level of displacement of social, religious and cultural groups. She noted that, even with modern structures in it, there is no neighborhood in the city with the same breadth and depth of history in one place in the same way as Wash West.
- Ms. Miller supported the inclusion of Criterion I in the nomination, noting that an excavation at 13th and Locust Streets in the 1930s uncovered an entire cypress forest with oil below it. She noted that even aside from built history, geological timelines are also at play underground. She explained that she can look at aerial photographs and see round patches on surface parking lots and tell where privy pits are, and noted that at 1235 Locust Street, the former site of the medical college, there will undoubtedly human and other remains. (The former College of Physicians was not located on the property at 1235 Locust Street, but at an adjacent property to the west, 219 S. 13th Street.) In looking at the Hexamer Locher atlas of 1858, she noted that there were 16 buildings on what is now one parking lot, a series of buildings fronting main streets and more in the back where lower income people lived. She explained that many of the things that happened on the lower-income interior blocks, are not represented in written record, but can be in the archaeological record. She encouraged the nominators to do more research, noting that while the Athenaeum's website Philageohistory is referenced, there is also cemetery database available and that within proposed district, there are seven historic cemeteries, some of which are still there and some that are not, including Seger Park. She noted that the human remains from the former cemetery that is now Seger Park were not exhumed. She noted that the district has a great diversity of potential archaeological resources.
- Ms. Milroy commented that the district nomination and designation is a wonderful way for property owners to learn about where they live. She noted that the staff of the Historical Commission is an advocate for property owners, not an adversary, and

do not work in a vacuum.

- Mr. Lavery commented that he was struck by mention of what is still a sore point about the loss of the buildings on Jewelers Row. He noted that when demolition of those was announced, people were shocked that they were not already designated. He noted that Jewelers Row is also an excellent example of the evolution of a single streetscape over 220 years, from high-end residential to commercial and light industrial buildings, to potential high-rise apartment living. He explained that one of the benefits of historic district designation is that it allows residents and the public to take a pause and look more closely at proposed demolitions or major changes in an area rather than to be blindsided and later lament the loss. He noted that things people might not think are important now may seem a lot more important in five or 10 years.
- Ms. Miller opined that it is hard to argue the area is not historic when over 50% of the properties are already designated.
- Ms. Milroy explained that the recognition of smaller and modest houses is also important along with preservation of higher-style buildings. Preservation today is about learning about the whole picture of the built environment, which is not always available in the written record.
 - o Mr. Lavery agreed, commenting that designation is the current mechanism the City has to protect historic buildings from demolition. He argued that preservation is not contrary to housing density, noting that in the 1970s, Portico Row was home to around 500 people, with 200 units in a block of four-story rowhouses.
- Mr. Cohen commented that there may be some inconsistencies in the classifications of the 1400+ properties, noting in particular that some Frank Weiss and GBCQ-designed townhouses in sympathy in material and scale are considered contributing and some are non-contributing.
 - o Ms. Stark and Mr. Steinke explained that there was consideration given in terms of the scale, quality, materials and compatibility.
 - o Mr. Steinke also explained that open LGBTQ significance in the district was generally later in the period of significance.
- Ms. Barucco noted that preservation philosophy and Historical Commission's policies and practices have changed over the past 20 years and the approach has become more flexible, particularly with the availability of compatible modern replacement and repair materials.
 - o Mr. Lavery commented that he is encouraged by the good experiences owners have had working with the Historical Commission's staff. He explained that, with the increase in staffing over the past few years, the Historical Commission has reviewed more district nominations. He acknowledged that to the public it may seem newer and an overreach, but there were many large districts created in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Rittenhouse-Fitler, Society Hill, and Old City.
 - o Ms. Barucco noted that the Wash West district nomination has been percolating since 2008.
 - o Ms. Miller explained that it takes more than a year to put together a large district nomination. She noted that, while bureaucracy can be difficult, there are people behind the bureaucracy that love what they do and love the city. She noted that she is impressed by the wonderfully diverse architectural styles and histories in the Wash West neighborhood.
 - o Ms. Milroy reiterated that the Historical Commission's staff is available to help property owners and answer any questions they might have about the nomination process or the implications of designation.

- Mr. Farnham addressed some inappropriate behavior earlier in the meeting and noted that the person who used abusive language was muted by the staff as required by the Historical Commission's Guidelines for Conduct. He also noted that the same person continued to raise his hand repeatedly, despite already having an opportunity to speak.
- Mr. Farnham reiterated that the Q&A function of the Zoom meeting is reserved for technical issues, not to comment on the merits of nominations or to ask general questions about the Historical Commission and its processes. He explained that comments made in the Q&A will not be saved and will not be part of the official record of the meeting. Mr. Farnham noted that many procedural questions were asked in the Q&A, but the staff is unable to answer such questions during the meeting. He explained that people with questions can email them to the Historical Commission's main email address and the staff will provide answers.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination and read into the record his written letter of support.
- Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society supported the nomination. He noted that there is a 1910 pamphlet with great views of Camac Street that says "take a look down historic Camac Street." He opined that Wash West or the Gayborhood, architecturally and culturally, is the Greenwich Village of Philadelphia, with the difference being that Greenwich Village was designated in New York City at the beginning of preservation efforts there. He noted that designation does not preserve properties or districts in amber, citing development in Old City, but provides an opportunity to manage future change.
- Kathy Dowdell supported the nomination, opining that it is an interesting and excellent nomination and that the district is an architectural wonder. She noted that she did not realize what a microcosm of the city this district is, and that as important as the architecture is the social and cultural history. She explained that people focused on preservation of the built environment have struggled for a long time to tell cultural stories, but that this nomination includes the whole picture. She opined that the justification for the inclusion of Criterion I for undeveloped lots having the potential to yield archaeological information on the lives of people who would not have left a written record is compelling, as is the recognition of LGBTQ sites.
- Nithin Vejendla, a renter outside of Center City, opined that designation will have consequences and that the nomination feels like an attempt to halt development, displace residents, and prevent new housing.
- Katie Dillon Low, a Wash West resident and board member of the civic association, supports preservation but encouraged a preservation-lite approach to the district designation. She noted that there has been a coordinated effort by some organizations in the city to encourage development at the expense of preservation and that only about a quarter of the opposition emails received were from owners. She noted that Philadelphians want to keep historic buildings and that the City of Philadelphia needs to make designation more appealing to owners.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The period of significance proposed for the district encompasses approximately 245 years of history, similar to that of the Society Hill and Old City Historic Districts.
- The development and architecture of Washington Square West is a microcosm of the

city as a whole, but is unusual and unique in that there are so many overlapping histories and scales of buildings in one place.

- Preservation thinking has evolved over the past few decades from a field narrowly focused on Colonial-era preservation and recreation to one that takes an expansive view of history, culture, and architecture, celebrating the lives and design of modest middle and lower-income residents alongside those of higher-style wealthier inhabitants.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The nomination describes overlapping layers of significance, including architectural, social, cultural, and archaeological.
- The nomination demonstrates that the district satisfies Criterion A for its significant value in the heritage of the city as the gathering place for Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ community in the period when this community emerged into the general public's eye in the twentieth century and in the less visible periods that preceded it.
- The nomination demonstrates that the district satisfies Criterion A for its significant value for the role it has played in the growth of the city's Black community east of Broad Street in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- The nomination demonstrates that the district satisfies Criterion A for its significant value as representative of an important period in the development of the city: in its close juxtaposition of buildings of different historic uses and buildings and streetscapes of different scales, it reflects the period of the city's development in which Philadelphians of different means and race travelled on foot between residence, work, and community, religious, healthcare, and social organizations and institutions.
- The nomination demonstrates that the district satisfies Criterion C for its many surviving buildings in distinctive architectural styles of earlier eras, including Federal, Second Empire, Greek Revival, and late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Revival styles.
- The nomination demonstrates that the district meets Criterion E for the many buildings that are both representative and important examples of designs by professional architects whose work has significantly influenced the cultural development of the city and beyond.
- The nomination demonstrates that the district satisfies Criterion F as the neighborhood that saw the beginning of the construction of speculative rows of houses in Philadelphia at the end of the eighteenth century, setting the pattern for Philadelphia's development as a rowhouse city.
- The district includes multiple lots that have not seen redevelopment that has entailed extensive subsurface disturbance since the removal of buildings constructed before the twentieth century, and may be likely to yield information important in pre-history or history, satisfying Criterion I.
- The district satisfies Criterion J as the location of important aspects of the lives of European immigrants to the city in the period of its substantial growth and development of the district between the early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the Washington Square West Historic District satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, F, I, and J.

ITEM: WASHINGTON SQUARE WEST HISTORIC DISTRICT MOTION: Designate; Criteria A, C, E, F, I, and J MOVED BY: Lavery SECONDED BY: Miller					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, Chair					X
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Debbie Miller	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Total	5				1

ADJOURNMENT

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:54:35

ACTION: The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and its advisory Committees are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the video recording for this meeting. The start time for each agenda item in the recording is noted.
- Application materials and staff overviews are available on the Historical Commission's website, www.phila.gov/historical.

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:

- (a) 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;
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (e) 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;
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant innovation;
- (g) 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;
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION, 22 MAY 2024

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PRESERVATION@PHILA.GOV

PHILADELPHIA'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STEWARD OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

- established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.