

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

**20 JANUARY 2021, 9:30 A.M.
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

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

* Owing to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, all Committee members, staff, and public attendees participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

- Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
- Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner I
- Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department
- Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

- Grace Flisser
- Matthew Bateman
- Robert Mandeville
- Aaron Wunsch
- Timothy Kerner
- Greg Smolley
- Bonnie Zuckerman
- State Representative Darisha K. Parker
- Josh Steckel
- Nina Curlett
- Steven Peitzman
- Dana Fedeli
- Allison Weiss, SoLo Germantown RCO

Margaret Manzer
Devon Beverly, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Hal Schirmer
Matt McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Michael Phillips, Esq., Obermeyer
Jeffrey Ogren, Esq., Bochetto & Lentz
Jonathan Morse
Constance Bille
Kelly O'Day
Jeffrey Hayes
Amanda Moyer, ASL Interpreter
Michael Skolnick
Peter Bailey
Edward Jones
Kevin Block
Peggy Steele
James Barrett
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
Jay Farrell
Sue Patterson
Althea Banks
Irwin Trauss
David Traub, Save Our Sites
Dina Bleckman, Esq. Ballard Spahr
Nancy Pontone
Oscar Beisert
Jim Duffin
Carla Bell
George Thomas, Ph.D.
Celeste Morello

CONTINUANCE REQUESTS

ADDRESS: 1106-14 SPRING GARDEN ST

Name of Resource: Woodward-Wanger Company

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Stella and Nga Wong, Mapleville, LLC

Nominator: Callowhill Neighborhood Association

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate as historic the property at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street. The Historical Commission previously designated the property in March 2018. In 2020, the property owners asked the Historical Commission to rescind the designation of the property and then remand the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation for an entirely new review because they had not been notified of the consideration of the nomination that led to the designation in 2018 and, therefore, did not have an opportunity to participate in the Committee on Historic Designation's and Historical Commission's reviews of it. At its December 2020 meeting, the Historical Commission granted the rescission and reconsideration request, rescinding the designation and directing the Committee on Historic Designation to review the nomination at its January 2021 meeting with adequate notice to the property owners. The property remains under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction during the new review of the nomination.

The property at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street includes a remnant of a building that stands along Spring Garden Street and vacant land at the rear. Several redevelopment projects have been contemplated for the site in the last decade and one was initiated but then abandoned. Numerous zoning permits as well as building and demolition permits for redevelopment were issued from 2013 to 2017. In 2015 or 2016, the rear half of the building was demolished, but work then stopped and the permits expired. The remaining portion of the building is a shell. It is open but boarded at the rear, where the back half was demolished. It has no interior partitions or finishes.

The nomination argues that the surviving section of the former Woodward-Wanger Co. or Lawsonia Building, constructed in 1929 as a warehouse and office building, is significant under Criterion for Designation D as a distinctive example of the Colonial Revival Style. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that the surviving section of the building reflects the environment of commercial and light industrial buildings in the Colonial Revival style. The Colonial Revival features are limited to the Spring Garden or front façade.

The nomination proposes to designate the entirety of the property, but then attempts to limit the scope of the designation by defining a second boundary. Using a dashed line on an aerial photograph to outline the surviving section of the building (page 2), the nomination provides "more specific boundary related to the significant portion of the proposed designation." The second boundary presumably indicates that, if designated, the Historical Commission would treat the surviving building remnant as contributing and the vacant land as non-contributing. During its reviews in 2018, neither the Committee nor the Commission addressed the boundary ambiguity and the entire property was ultimately designated without any identification of significant and insignificant sections.

To ensure that it operates within the bounds of constitutionality, the Historical Commission should only designate properties that have uses in their current forms or may be reasonably adapted for new uses, where a property with a "use" is one that has the capacity to produce a

reasonable rate of return. The property in question does not appear to have a use in its current form, but may be able to be adapted for a new use. Given that it is a remnant, a shell, it will have to undergo a significant redevelopment before it can be used in a way that produces a reasonable rate of return. If the Historical Commission decides to designate the property, it should designate it in such a way that allows for a reasonable adaptation for a new use. Given that the front façade is the character-defining feature of the property, limiting the designation to the front façade with a sufficient return at the roof line to ensure the preservation of the two-story volume when viewed from Spring Garden Street would be an equitable approach.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1106-14 Spring Garden Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D and that the front façade to a depth of five feet is the character-defining feature of the resource and the remainder of the property does not contribute to its historical significance.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: See below.

ADDRESS: 1615 WALNUT ST

Name of Resource: The Clarke & Sarah Merchant House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Honey Nuts LLC

Nominator: Center City Residents' Association

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1615 Walnut Street, located in Center City, as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Historically known as the Clarke and Sarah Merchant House, it was constructed in 1832 with substantial alterations completed in 1892 and 1911.

Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the building is associated with the life of Clarke Merchant, whose career as a manufacturer and merchant of metal and tin-plate architectural and building materials made a significant impact on the built environment of Philadelphia and beyond. The nomination further contends that the building qualifies under Criterion E, owing to the alterations and addition completed in 1892 by prominent Philadelphia architect Addison Hutton. Finally, the nomination asserts that the building is significant under Criterion J because it is a rare surviving urban mansion on a principal street that was once home to expensive residences but is now lined with purpose-built commercial structures.

The period of significance begins in 1892, when the Merchant family purchased the property and engaged architect Addison Hutton, and ends in 1931, when the building was sold out of the Merchant family.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1615 Walnut Street, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: See below.

ADDRESS: 1206 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: Philadelphia Federal Credit Union

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 1206 Chestnut LLC

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1206 Chestnut Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that building, constructed in 1922 and re-clad in 1963, satisfies Criteria for Designation A and D. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the property represents the development of Center City, Philadelphia from residential to commercial in the late-nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the front façade of the building, installed in 1963, embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern style.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1206 Chestnut Street satisfies Criterion for Designation D, and that the arguments made for Criterion A better reflect Criterion J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:06:20

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Cooperman presented the continuance requests for 1106-14 Spring Garden Street, 1208 Walnut Street, and 1615 Walnut Street to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Matt McClure represented the property owner of 1106-14 Spring Garden Street. He stated that he needs a one-month continuance to complete a report. He stated that he will be ready to proceed at the next meeting.
- Attorney Jeffrey Ogren represented the property owner of 1208 Walnut Street. He stated that he was retained one day earlier. He explained that there is a language barrier between himself and his client and that they need more time to retain an English-Chinese interpreter.
- Attorney Dina Bleckman represented the property owner of 1615 Walnut Street. Ms. Bleckman explained that the interested parties are pursuing a façade easement rather than a designation. She noted that all parties are in agreement and respectfully request a continuance for more time to negotiate the easement document.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The properties would remain under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction during the continuance period.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Ms. Cooperman moved to continue the reviews of the nominations for 1106-14 Spring Garden Street and 1615 Walnut Street to the March 2021 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation and to continue the review of the nomination for 1206 Chestnut Street to the April 2021 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: Continuance requests MOTION: Continue and remand to later Committee on Historic Designation meetings MOVED BY: Cooperman SECONDED BY: Cohen					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney	X				
Total	6				

NOMINATION REVIEWS

ADDRESS: 5139 WAYNE AVE

Name of Resource: Joseph T. Pearson House
Proposed Action: Designation
Property Owner: Wayne Avenue Brothers LP
Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia
Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

On the instruction of the City of Philadelphia's Law Department, the Historical Commission's review of the nomination for 5139 Wayne Avenue under the first notice letters sent on 24 November 2020 has been abandoned, owing to a typographical error in the address used in one of the notice letters. The review of the nomination for 5139 Wayne Avenue was restarted with new notice letters to the property owner sent on 20 January 2021. The nomination is scheduled to be reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation on 3 March 2021 and the Historical Commission on 9 April 2021.

ADDRESS: 156 W SCHOOL HOUSE LN

Name of Resource: Boxwood
Proposed Action: Designation
Property Owner: Teen Challenge Training Center Inc.
Nominator: Penn Knox Neighborhood Association
Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, Meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 156 W. School House Lane and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. Under Criteria C and D, the nomination argues that Boxwood reflects the Colonial Revival style of architecture as applied to upper-class suburban residences in late nineteenth-century Philadelphia. The nomination further argues that the "cottage-stable" at the rear of the property represents Gothic Revival cottage motifs popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Under Criterion D, the nomination asserts that Boxwood was designed by Mantle Fielding, a

prolific and significant architect who influenced the built environment in Northwest Philadelphia at the turn of the twentieth century.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 156 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and E. However, the staff asserts that the so-called “cottage-stable” at the rear of the property does not reflect the Gothic Revival style and, therefore, does not satisfy Criteria C and D as presented in the nomination. While the building has a cross gable, a typical feature of the Gothic Revival, it does not have any other features characteristic of the style. The building may have served as a barn, potentially for an earlier residence predating Boxwood, and was later updated with a cross gable. The staff recommends that the so-called “cottage-stable” contributes to the site’s historical significance but does not exhibit sufficient character-defining features to be considered reflective of or exemplary of the Gothic Revival style.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:26:25

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorneys Matt McClure and Devon Beverly, Peter Bailey, the Head of School at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, architect Greg Smolley, and consultant George Thomas represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. McClure objected to the procedure and asked that the nominator speak first prior to Mr. McClure and his team. He stated that the burden of proof rests with the nominator, who must prove that the site is historically significant, not with the property owner, who has no obligation to prove that the site is not significant.
 - Ms. Cooperman responded that she is not an attorney but that the Committee would like the benefit of gathering information so that it can pose any questions it may have. She stated that she is not aware that Mr. Besiert has a presentation but is aware that Mr. McClure and his team have several presentations planned. She agreed to let Mr. Beisert speak first, adding that the Committee reserves the right to ask him questions later should any arise.
 - Mr. McClure argued that if Mr. Beisert makes any statements after Mr. McClure and his team present that he would need to be given a full opportunity to respond.
 - Ms. Cooperman stated that she will follow the Historical Commission’s procedures in which the nominator, property owner, and members of the public are offered an opportunity to speak, then the Committee will discuss the matter before making a motion.
- Mr. McClure explained the history of the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, its demographics, and its mission and purpose. He argued that the needs of the school are relevant to whether the Historical Commission should or should not designate the property and contended that should the Commission designate the property, it would be in direct conflict with the language of the preservation ordinance. He explained that a building that works for another purpose may not work for deaf education, though he noted that the school does not have a particular proposal for the property at this time. He stated that the location of the nominated property forms a critical physical connection between the upper and lower school buildings. That physical

- connection, he continued, is directly tied to a pedagogical need for the School for the Deaf, which operates in the public interest. He then argued that the building is in poor condition, not having been cared for in decades. He noted that the nomination, submitted several years ago, asserts that the building is in good condition. He called that description false and then contended that the Committee's earlier statement that condition is not related to its purview is directly contrary to the nomination form, the ordinance, and Section 5.5.a of the Rules and Regulations. He argued that any staff finding that the nomination was correct in regard to condition was made in error and that the nomination should not have been accepted on that basis alone. However, notice of the nomination was mailed two years prior, when the building's exterior was in better condition. Mr. McClure questioned the importance of the building's former owner, noting that the building was one of many nineteenth-century mansions built in Northwest Philadelphia for wealthy residents. He then stated that the family is in stark contrast to the needs of the hearing impaired kids educated by the school. He contended that the building is not a distinctive Colonial Revival structure and does not warrant individual designation. He claimed that the nomination fails to prove that architect Mantle Fielding holds significance to the city, state, or nation. He concluded that the building does not merit individual designation based on the arguments presented in the nomination. Mr. McClure suggested that the nomination was submitted to stop a large residential development under prior ownership and was not intended to preserve the Haines family legacy or the work of a particular architect. He argued that the nominators wanted to exert control over the parcel, adding that control is no longer necessary since the building has new ownership. He noted that the School for the Deaf has a 200-year history working to advance the public interest and has been excellent an steward of its Germantown campus. He stated that the school does not have a plan for the property at this time, but added that designation has a direct impact on the school's ability to continue the public's interest for mostly minority hearing-impaired students. He asked that the Committee trust the school.
- Mr. Bailey, the head of school, spoke through a sign language interpreter. He stated that the barriers he experienced this morning in gaining access to the meeting were similar to what his deaf students experience. He proffered some history on the school, explaining that the school has existed for 200 years and serves approximately 230 students, including outreach and community programs. He explained the demographics of the school, noting that many are minorities and many are below the poverty level, and the school's mission is to increase early language access. He described the school's future plans to construct an auditorium and cafeteria, adding that the school saw the property at 156 W. School House Lane as an opportunity. He noted that the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association uses the School for the Deaf's facilities for its monthly meetings. When redeveloped, the nominated property, he continued, will open many doors for the school's deaf and hard of hearing students to have full visual access. He commented that the two facilities, an early childhood center across from the main building, are not well connected, and, with this site, the school will create a connection between the two facilities. He contended that both younger and older kids can socialize, and performances and assemblies could be held at the property. He asked that the Committee view this property as a wonderful opportunity for the school to expand. He then remarked that the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association approached the school and asked that it purchase the property, because it had previously been purchased by a developer. Mr. Bailey stated that he would like to work with the community and align both of their goals.

- Mr. Smolley stated that he is a licensed architect and internationally accredited learning environments planner. He presented plans to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing students, explaining the learning environment and design. He then spoke about the poor condition of the building, including insect infiltration and moisture penetration, and argued that wood structural elements are likely rotted. He showed a close-up image of an interior stair and stated that the nomination's claim that the building retains historic features is far-fetched. He identified several needs for the school, including gathering and performance spaces and a cafeteria, explaining that each is critically important to deaf and hard of hearing students. He reiterated that it would be important to locate the cafeteria between the early learning center and the main school so that younger students have role models in the older students. He argued that the current building does not offer the opportunities that the school requires for its students moving forward.
- Mr. Thomas, the school's preservation consultant, offered a presentation and stated that he wanted to discuss the actual history of the house. He described the history as "checkered," noting that it began as a suburban house, then it became a group home, and was most recently acquired by the School for the Deaf to become part of its campus. He contended that the new ownership protects the property and serves the community. He stated that the nomination claims the property meets three Criteria for Designation: Criteria C, D, and E. Simply having a style, he argued, is not enough to satisfy Criterion C and merit individual listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. He called the nominated building "weird" and a poor example of Colonial Revival architecture. Mr. Thomas showed an image from the Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide, noting that he feels a proprietary relationship to it after rescuing it from the trash of the Free Library many years ago, and stated that the information pertaining to the house at 156 W. School House Lane is noted as being an alteration and addition rather than new construction. The house that is nominated was not built anew by Mantle Fielding as the nomination claims; Fielding simply renovated an older house. City atlases and interior evidence further support this idea, he added. Mr. Thomas argued that the alteration and addition to an existing structure undercuts the idea that the property is significant and referred to it as an "inexpensive rehab" of the previous building. He then discussed the evolution of the Colonial Revival, noting that the style evolved from Victorian traditions to a mature incorporation of specific elements like those found in the Georgian and Federal eras. He compared the gambrel roof of 156 W. School House Lane to that of the colonial-era building at Graeme Park in Horsham and noted that the shape differs greatly, as does the shape of the dormers. He contended that Mantle Fielding was not careful in designing the Colonial Revival details and that he instead designed a Victorian building with some Colonial Revival "stuff" on it, which Mr. Thomas called a "mish-mash." The stonework, he continued, also fails to reflect that of a true colonial building, which would have long and short rows of stone. He referenced the Joseph Pratt house in Delaware County as an example of a true colonial building that evolved from a settlement house to a larger structure and that represents detailing and construction not found at 156 W. School House Lane. He argued that young architects at the time were sketching old buildings in New England and elsewhere and incorporating details from those buildings into good representations of Colonial Revival architecture. The best examples of Colonial Revival architecture, he elaborated, are those such as Brognard Okie's representation that includes a copy of a settlement house, reinforced corners with long and short stonework, and detailing borrowed directly from the colonial vocabulary. Mr. Thomas claimed the building at 156 W. School House Lane was a poor example of the Colonial Revival style owing

to its large suburban porch, Victorian windows and bays, jack arches, gables, gambrel roof, and Victorian sunroom. He concluded that it is a Victorian building with a few vaguely Colonial Revival details pasted on it. He argued that Fielding was not an influential architect, though Mr. Thomas did provide an example of the adaptive reuse design for the Wyck barn, which served as Fielding's house. Here, Mr. Thomas commented that Fielding was forced to work in the true Colonial Revival vocabulary, because he was working with a true colonial building. Mr. Thomas then contended that Fielding's obituary described him primarily as an authority on Early American engravings, though it noted that Fielding was an architect by profession. Mr. Thomas described the building's poor condition, reiterating that it is inaccurately identified as being in good condition on the nomination form. The rear stable, he continued, had been altered, though the nomination does not state all the changes that have occurred to the building. He claimed that the nomination attributes significance to the rear structure only to stave off a developer and that the inclusion of the building in the nomination tells that story. The house, he continued, is now in a highly urbanized zone with multi-story apartment buildings surrounding the site. The front view is defined by parking lots and driveways for the adjacent school, he added. He suggested that the setting disqualifies the house from being part of a residential community and its context diminishes its potential for adaptation, being part of an institutional district. He reiterated that the architecture is not distinctive or exemplary of the Colonial Revival style and is instead backward looking, and that the architect was not a significant architect but one who designed with Victorian-era details rather than with more precise turn-of-the-century revival details. He concluded that given the errors of fact, conclusions, opinions, and lack of documentation supporting the criteria, the nomination should be rejected.

- Mr. McClure argued that whether a building should be designated and whether it can be designated are two very different issues. He noted that the preservation ordinance states that a property may be designated if it meets any Criteria for Designation, adding that he does not believe the building satisfies the criteria and warrants individual designation. Even if it may, he continued, the Committee has the power to make a recommendation as to whether it should be designated. He reiterated that the site is of critical importance to the public interest and the larger mission of the school. He stated that the school will work with the public throughout the process and that any new building will be compatible with the site. He argued that the nomination ties the hands of the School for the Deaf, and claimed that the nomination was submitted to frustrate a prior developer. He implored the Committee to trust the school, adding that he believes that trust has been earned over the decades of stewardship.
- Mr. Beisert stated that he greatly respects the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf and its mission, though he countered that the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association did not nominate the property specifically to block a development project or to impede upon the school's mission. The nomination, he claimed, was filed to protect a property that the community has been working to designate, along with others, for many years. The Penn Knox Neighborhood Association, he continued, nominated the property as part of the Penn Knox Historic District several decades ago. He contended that this is not a sudden and random attempt to attribute significance to the property. He thanked Mr. Thomas for finding the reference in the Real Estate and Builders' Guide that documents the alteration and addition around the time that the Haines family purchased the property. Mr. Beisert suggested that, if the building were earlier, then it may be more significant, since it is located on one of the most historic streets in Germantown. He contended that the building visible today was

designed in the Colonial Revival style by an important architect, Mantle Fielding. He argued that Mr. Thomas's comparison of the Wyck barn further supports the significance of the building at 156 W. School House Lane, adding that the evolution of the Colonial Revival style at a later period does not negate the importance of Mantle Fielding or the Victorian-era Colonial Revival building.

- Mr. McClure countered that the nomination was submitted in response to a development project, evidenced by emails from the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association acknowledging the fact. Mr. McClure argued that Mr. Beisert prepared a presentation to which he now has to respond. He claimed that in accordance with the Rules & Regulations, Mr. Beisert should have filed his testimony in advance of the meeting. Mr. Beisert's argument today, Mr. McClure continued, was based on what he and his team prepared and submitted previously. He suggested that the way the meeting is being conducted is in violation of his client's due process rights. He concluded that he stands by Mr. Thomas's report, adding that the building does not merit designation and that the Committee may recommend against designation.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia stated that he has great respect and admiration for the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf's mission. He invited a conversation in which the school can expand its facilities and offerings while still preserving the historic building. He then stated that the Preservation Alliance supports the nomination, noting that Boxwood may not be a pure example of the Colonial Revival style, but that alterations over time contribute to a building's narrative.
- Near neighbor Irwin Trauss commented that he served on the neighborhood association at the time when the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf moved into the old Germantown Academy property. He stated that he was instrumental in convincing the school to make the move. He then discussed the relationship between the school and neighborhood, as well as the changes that have occurred to the immediate area that includes the demolition of historic structures. He advocated for preserving the neighborhood's remaining historic buildings, including the building at 156 W. School House Lane.
- Dana Fedeli stated that while she understands and respects the owner's needs, she believes there are ways to use the existing structure rather than to demolish it. She added that she is tired of hearing the same pedantic arguments made by the owner's representatives in what appears to the public as a desperate last gasp for why a significant building should not be saved in favor of development, which typically results in generic new construction. She concluded that she is in full support of the nomination and asked that the Committee recommend designation.
- Margaret Manzer, a board member of the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association, the nominator, stated that the current board supports the nomination as written, though it is sympathetic to the School for the Deaf's mission. She commented that the neighborhood would be supportive of construction at the rear of the property to allow the school to further advance its mission.
- Allison Weiss of SoLo Germantown Civic Association supported the nomination.
- Grace Flisser, member of the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association, supported the nomination and stated that this particular block of W. School House Lane is historically significant. She added that she supports the school's mission but asked for a compromise such as the one Ms. Manzer presented in which the house is preserved but the rear is developed.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Following public comment, Mr. McClure contended that several individuals, including Patrick Grossi, admitted that the building does not feature distinctive Colonial Revival architecture. He reiterated that the nomination does not adequately argue for Criterion C and D. Regarding Ms. Fedeli's comment, he asked that when the Historical Commission receives ad hominem attacks that it mute that individual, asking that people speak with respect to each other. He then stated that the School for the Deaf has reached out to the Penn Knox Neighborhood Association several times in writing about further meetings, including meetings to discuss a new design for the property. Those offers, he remarked, were rejected by Penn Knox on the basis that it first wanted the Committee on Historic Designation to make a recommendation on the nomination. He added that the offer to meet with the neighborhood still stands.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that she did not hear an ad hominem attack but instead heard a critique of methodology, adding that the Committee would not encourage such an attack. She commented that she hopes that architectural historians have moved beyond the idea that there is a correct Colonial Revival style as opposed to an incorrect version. She added that the Committee has previously discussed that the archaeological approach by the style's later practitioners presented by Mr. Thomas is not relevant to Mantle Fielding. She further noted that in past reviews of nominations the Committee agreed that Mantle Fielding was a very important practitioner in this part of the city, adding that other architectural historians such as Michael Lewis have opined about the significance of Mantle Fielding in embodying a particular approach to the Colonial Revival. She asserted that Mr. Thomas's assessment is not necessarily the opinion of all architectural historians.
- Mr. Cohen stated that he read the nomination a few months ago before reading the reports by the owner's representatives, and following his initial reading he had a few minor issues, largely pertaining to dates. At that time, he continued, he considered the staff's recommendation of the carriage house and found that he agreed that the structure did not merit the same degree of protection as the house. At today's discussion, he added, so many larger issues have emerged from a lot of articulate testimony. He opined that he found the arguments to be overzealous advocacy rather than a fair-minded assessment. He underscored Ms. Cooperman's observation that Mantle Fielding and his generation come to the fore in the 1890s were designing much more animated forms of Colonial Revival architecture than were those who came later under the archaeological approach. He opined that architects designing in the Colonial Revival style in the late 1880s and 1890s took remarkable creative freedom. In the 1880s, he continued, much of the style is Federal Revival in which elements were made taller and thinner and buildings demonstrated a lighter quality. He contended that Mantle Fielding operated during that generation when the Colonial Revival was lightened. He argued against the concept that a "good" Colonial Revival is archaeologically based and that the nominated building does not qualify because it was designed in an earlier phase. Mr. Cohen further countered that the argument against Mantle Fielding's significance is an attempt to disqualify the nomination. He stated that Fielding was an architect, along with Will Price, Wilson Eyre, and other founders of the T-Square Club, who used elements of the Colonial Revival style to individualize buildings and not be archaeologically anonymous. He acknowledged that Mr. Thomas was correct to characterize the building as being more Victorian but argued that the Colonial Revival began in the era when this building was designed. He contended that in that era, architects portrayed the individuality and influence of the patron in ways that are

- very inventive. He stated that he did not believe the notion of inferring intent as opposing development was incompatible with the notion of saving historically valuable buildings. Mr. Cohen added that, with all respect to the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, the Committee does not relax its procedures and rules owing to the good character of an institution. When hospitals and universities comes before the Committee, he continued, it is not being asked to judge the quality of the institution; instead, the Committee is being asked whether a building qualifies for designation. In this case, he added, the Committee must determine whether this building has historical significance. He asserted that he has not heard a compelling argument against its historical significance, with Mr. Thomas's use of terms such as "mish-mash" and his references to it as being developer grade. That argument, he suggested, does not diminish the building's degree of historical value.
- Ms. Milroy questioned the relevance of Criterion J, given valid arguments others made in identifying this building as a distinctly Germantown house and one that embodies the character of Germantown.
 - Mr. Cohen agreed.
 - Mr. Mooney stated that the property has archaeological potential, owing to its relationship to the Revolutionary War Battle of Germantown. The center of the main British encampment, he noted, was established on this side of School House Lane. He commented that the School for the Deaf was planning an expansion in 2011, and the Historical Commission required the school to hire a professional archaeologist to conduct a Phase 1A archaeological investigation. The subsequent report by AECOM, he continued, found that there was potential on the school's property to contain features and artifact deposits associated with the Battle of Germantown, the main British encampment, and potentially graves of British soldiers killed in battle. He stated that the main building on the school's campus, which served as a field hospital for wounded British soldiers, still bears scars from the battle. The report, he continued, recommended that additional archaeological investigations be conducted prior to the construction of an addition, though he noted that none were conducted. He argued that the Phase 1A investigation establishes the significance of the immediate vicinity, including the property at 156 W. School House Lane, which neighbors the school. He asked that Criterion I be included in the nomination and that, owing to its association with the Battle of Germantown, Criterion B also be included. He argued that Criteria A and J also apply.
 - Mr. Cohen asked to consider the significance of the carriage house. He contended that the school could achieve some of its goals for the property by developing the rear of the property.
 - Mr. Farnham noted that Mr. McClure would like to speak again.
 - Ms. Cooperman acknowledged Mr. McClure's desire to speak but stated that she is proceeding in accordance to the Guidelines of Conduct for Historical Commission meetings and that all comment had closed once the Committee started to deliberate on the nomination.
 - Mr. Reuter agreed with Ms. Cooperman's desire to follow the Guidelines for Conduct, but stated that the Committee is considering adding three Criteria for Designation that were not originally part of the nomination and that were not discussed in the previous presentation. He asked that Mr. McClure be given the opportunity to briefly address the addition of Criteria for Designation. He clarified that all parties will be able to fully vet the criteria at the Historical Commission meeting.
 - Mr. McClure stated that the nominator has the burden of proof. Basic due process, he continued, is that the nomination speaks for the nomination. He argued against

adding criteria that are not contained in the nomination when that nomination has been opposed by the property owner. He called it a violation of due process. If the Commission would like to add criteria, he asserted, it can resubmit a modified nomination and restart the process. He claimed that regardless of what the Committee has recommended in the past, it cannot add criteria to a nomination. He then objected to Mr. Mooney referencing a report written by the company at which he is employed, calling it a conflict of interest. Mr. Mooney referenced the report, but never acknowledged that he worked at the company that wrote the report. Mr. McClure noted that there is nothing in the nomination about archaeological significance or the Battle of Germantown. This is the first that he and his client are hearing that the property might be designated under those criteria. His consultant has not had an opportunity to consider and respond to those criteria.

- Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Reuter to offer comments in response to Mr. McClure's statement and the motion on the table.
- Mr. Reuter stated that he understands Mr. McClure has preserved his argument in terms of what the Commission can do but noted that Section 5.10.b of the Commission's Rules and Regulations regarding designation explicitly states that the Committee shall refer nominations to the Commission with an advisory recommendation for or against designation, with or without amendments to the nomination. Mr. Reuter clarified that, under the rules, the Committee has the authority to request an amendment to a nomination, adding that there is no specific prohibition on an amendment, including changes to the criteria. He commented that there are many instances when the Committee finds that a criteria that is listed in the nomination does not apply. He remarked that if the Committee can do that, he does not see why the Committee cannot add criteria, though he acknowledged that Mr. McClure has the right to challenge the rule. Mr. Reuter clarified that the Committee is currently proceeding under the rules.
- Mr. Cohen asked whether Mr. Mooney would need to recuse.
 - Mr. Reuter responded that this is an advisory committee and that he does not have enough details related to the report cited by Mr. McClure. He elaborated that, if there is a current financial interest or stake in the outcome, that would create a conflict. An issue regarding a prior engagement, he continued, would not create a conflict, though he stated that he does not want to opine on the issue and that he cannot make a determination on the matter. He added that if a problem arises, it can be addressed later.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- Notice of the nomination was mailed on 7 February 2019 when the property was owned by Teen Challenge Training Center Inc. The property was subsequently sold to the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, the main campus of which is adjacent to 156 W. School House Lane.
- The school does not have immediate plans for the property but opposes designation with a claim that declining to designate would support the school's mission and benefit the public's interest.
- The nomination contends that the building was designed in the 1890s in the Colonial Revival style by architect Mantle Fielding.
- The 1890s-designed building was an adaptation of an earlier brick building on the site.

- A building at the adjacent School for the Deaf served as a field hospital during the Revolutionary War, and the main British encampment was formed in close proximity to 156 W. School House Lane.
- The rear carriage house, or “cottage-stable,” does not exhibit sufficient character-defining features to be considered reflective of or exemplary of the Gothic Revival style.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property is located in an area directly impacted by the Battle of Germantown, satisfying Criterion B.
- The building represents the Colonial Revival style of architecture represented in many upper-class suburban residences found throughout Northwest Philadelphia at the end of the nineteenth century, satisfying Criterion C.
- The design of the building, with its Victorian influence and Colonial Revival motifs, represents the earlier period of Colonial Revival architecture, satisfying Criterion D.
- Architect Mantle Fielding was a significant designer of suburban residences in Northwest Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion E.
- Significant archaeological artifacts related to the Battle of Germantown, the adjacent British field hospital, and main British encampment are known to exist in the immediate area, satisfying Criterion I.
- The building is emblematic of the distinct Germantown suburban landscape that developed in the late nineteenth century, satisfying Criterion J.
- The cottage-stable does not exemplify the Gothic Revival style and fails to satisfy Criterion D as argued in the nomination. The structure should be considered non-contributing.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 156 W. School House Lane satisfies Criteria for Designation B, C, D, E, I, and J. Mr. Mooney seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 156 W School House Ln MOTION: Designate, B, C, D, E, I, and J MOVED BY: Cohen SECONDED BY: Mooney					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 5151 WISSAHICKON AVE

Name of Resource: Robeson Lea Perot Residence

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: American Legion, North City Post

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, Meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the building at 5151 Wissahickon Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation D and H. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the house, designed by owner and architect Robeson Lea Perot in 1905, embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Tudor Revival style of architecture. Under Criterion H, the nomination claims that the building is an established and familiar visual feature.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the building at 5151 Wissahickon Avenue satisfies Criterion for Designation D.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:30:25

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner.
- Steven Peitzman and Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Cohen noted that Criterion H was also included in the nomination, even though it was not mentioned in the staff overview.
 - Ms. Keller apologized for the oversight, adding that the staff does not typically support Criterion H unless the building and its site are very prominent. A single-family house would not generally satisfy Criterion H.
- Ms. Cooperman asked whether the property owner has contacted the staff.
 - Ms. Keller confirmed that the staff has not heard from the owner.
- Mr. Peitzman stated that he and Mr. Besiert became interested in the property independently but that he took the lead on writing the nomination. He commented that the building is Tudor Revival in style and, after listening to the previous discussion, noted that revival does not mean replication. He contended that the building has been a very visible landmark since its construction in 1905.
- Ms. Milroy thanked Mr. Peitzman and Mr. Beisert for nominating the property and stated that it was a thorough nomination.
- Mr. Cohen stated that as a private residence, its flank is very visible and contended that the property was intentionally designed to be very visible owing to its scale. The arches, he elaborated, seem too tall for domestic architecture, but he reasoned that it must have been calculated into the design. He called the design remarkable, adding that there is a freedom to the design that the categorical label of the style does not capture. He commented that it is a worthy addition to the Register. Regarding Criterion H, Mr. Cohen argued that it is a very visible feature along Wissahickon Avenue. He contended that the public values the building more as part of the landscape because of its siting.
 - Ms. Cooperman agreed that the building has presence.

- Ms. Milroy asked about the architect's role in the military, owing to the building's seemingly strategic location and the incorporation of large buttresses in the design.
 - Mr. Peitzman replied that Robeson Lea Perot was in the military during WWI, though the house was constructed well before the war. He clarified that the dramatic section facing Wissahickon Avenue was a 1913 addition, which he opined may have been built as a studio. He then contended that it is hard to ignore the building when driving or walking down Wissahickon Avenue and argued that it represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community.
- Mr. Cohen asked whether the staff would like to make a counter-argument regarding Criterion H.
 - Mr. Farnham stated that Ms. Keller could offer counter-argument if she desires, but the staff does not have strong feelings about the Criterion.
- Ms. Milroy stated that if Criterion H is included in a nomination, there should be more photographic documentation to define the context and support the argument that a property is an established and familiar visual feature.
- Mr. Cohen asserted that Criterion H should be included.
 - Ms. Barucco agreed, adding that the building's visibility speaks to its siting and landscape, being very dramatic at its location on top of a hill.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Allison Weiss of SoLo Germantown Civic Association supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The building was designed in 1905 by architect Robeson Lea Perot, who used the building as his residence.
- The building has the appearance of half-timbering construction and incorporates tall buttresses, Tudor arches, and leaded glass, elements characteristic of the Tudor Revival style.
- The building is sited on a corner property on Wissahickon Avenue in Germantown.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Tudor Revival style of architecture, satisfying Criterion D.
- The building is prominently located atop a hill on the corner of Wissahickon Avenue and Hansberry Street and is an established and familiar feature within the neighborhood, satisfying Criterion H.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5151 Wissahickon Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation D and H. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 5151 Wissahickon Ave MOTION: Designate, D and H MOVED BY: Cohen SECONDED BY: Cooperman					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 121 PLEASANT ST

Name of Resource: The Joseph Meehan House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: CDPHI LLC

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 121 Pleasant Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the property is significant owing to its association with the life and work of Joseph Meehan, “a prominent editor, horticulturalist, landscape gardener, nurseryman, writer and veteran of the Civil War.” Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the property is significant as a representation of the “commercial and cultural legacy of the larger Meehan family in Mt. Airy, Germantown, and Philadelphia.” Joseph Meehan was the brother of famous botanist, author, and publisher Thomas Meehan, who ran Meehan & Sons Nursery in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia. The nomination implies that the yard to the west of the house is historically significant because Meehan “no doubt began planting on the grounds” when he purchased the property in 1880. However, the nomination does not identify any specific features including plants that might convey that significance. The nomination states that “the feeling of a bygone era is further amplified by the ample landscape of matured trees and plantings that occupy the large undeveloped lots on both sides of the dwelling.” The yard to the west was historically associated with the Meehan house. Houses stood on the parcels to the east until after 1962. The parcels were not historically associated with the subject property and are currently owned by the City.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 121 Pleasant Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 02:44:15

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Attorney Michael Phillips represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman asked the staff to clarify the cardinal directions used in the overview to describe the history of the subject property and the adjacent parcel.
 - Mr. Farnham responded that east in the overview referred to the right of the subject property when looking at it head on and west referred to the left. Mr. Farnham clarified that the area to the right of the house is not a part of the subject property and had buildings on it until the 1960s. He explained that the area to the left of the house was associated with the property under consideration for designation.
- Ms. Barucco requested confirmation that the nomination was proposing to designate the entire parcel including the yard and not just the house.
 - Mr. Farnham observed that nearly all nominations propose to designate entire tax parcels. He confirmed that this nomination makes claims about the open land next to the house.
- Ms. Cooperman asked to hear from Mr. Phillips, an attorney representing the property owner.
 - Mr. Phillips informed the Committee members that the owner objected to the inclusion of the grounds and land adjacent to the house in the nomination. He explained that the nomination was submitted while the owner was in the midst of preparing redevelopment and subdivision plans for the property. Mr. Phillips said that his client was willing to refrain from taking a position regarding the nomination of the house. However, the client objected to the inclusion of the unimproved land on the parcel since it had no significance related to the Criteria for Designation argued in the nomination.
- Mr. Beisert, the nominator, said that he was available for questions. He remarked that, prior to beginning his research, he had always assumed that houses related to the Meehan family had already been demolished, and so he was very happy to learn that this house still stood. Mr. Beisert stated that he was thrilled to be able to nominate this property and hoped to see the house preserved and alongside any future development plans the owner had for the property.
- Mr. Cohen remarked that landscape is ephemeral and that it was great to have a representation of it with this building. He said that he assumed there would have to be a discussion as to whether the unimproved land on this property was essential to telling the story of this site.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jeffrey Hayes spoke in support of the nomination.
- Althea Banks spoke in support of the nomination. She recalled the fruit trees and greenery that she grew up with close by to the subject property and attributed these features to Meehan.
- Jim Duffin spoke in support of the nomination. He echoed Mr. Beisert's comments about having assumed that all evidence of the Meehan family's residences had long disappeared and he was very surprised to discover this house.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman commented that she would like to hear from Mr. Mooney about the archaeological potential of the unimproved area of the property under consideration.
 - Mr. Mooney responded that archaeology could be used to perform landscape reconstruction. He stated that if native plants were grown on this land, it raised

the question of whether evidence was revealing what was intentionally planted or just plants that already existed in the area.

- Ms. Barucco asked Mr. Mooney if archaeology could be used to determine historic hardscapes such as paths.
 - Mr. Mooney responded that it was possible if evidence remained on the site.
- Ms. Barucco asked Mr. Beisert if he had looked for a landscape plan for the property during his research.
 - Mr. Beisert replied that he searched the Meehan papers available at the Germantown Historical Society but no landscape plan was found. He stated that he had also spoken with two descendants of the Meehans and they did not have any such documentation either.
- Ms. Milroy commented that she believed that Thomas Meehan's papers were at the Philosophical Society.
 - Mr. Beisert responded that he had not consulted with the Philosophical Society for this nomination.
- Ms. Barucco stated that she had thought about the archaeological potential of this site when reading the nomination because she was reminded of the depth of Philadelphia's horticultural history. She added that so many historic nurseries had been lost, so the fact that the subject property had contained both Meehan's residence and garden contributed to its significance. Ms. Barucco said that she had worked on a project where very significant gardens were able to be reconstructed on paper and that this sort of analysis on the landscape gets overlooked too often.
- Ms. Milroy agreed with Ms. Barucco that she was also aware of projects where archaeological evidence was used to reconstruct historic gardens. She commented that for people working in the field of horticultural and landscape history, the legacy of the Meehan family was not forgotten. Ms. Milroy said that the remarks made by Ms. Banks about her childhood memories of the trees were powerful and Ms. Barucco agreed.
- Mr. Cohen requested that Mr. Beisert restate his argument for including the unimproved land to the left of the house.
 - Mr. Beisert responded that he included it because Meehan's garden had been described in Edwin Costley Jellett's book entitled *Germantown Gardens and Gardeners*.
- Ms. Cooperman stated that the letter of support provided by Joel Frye also referenced Jellett's description of Meehan's garden. She added that the site of a garden with minimal disturbances was a rare thing and the archaeological potential of the unimproved area of this property contributed to its significance. Ms. Cooperman argued that nurserymen such as Meehan were not just growers of plants, they were the designers of their time.
- Ms. Milroy agreed with Ms. Cooperman and commented that the nomination supported how well regarded both Joseph and Thomas Meehan were in their community.
- Mr. Phillips reiterated that there was no claim to archaeological significance of the unimproved area of the lot made in the nomination and to argue there would be pure speculation. Mr. Phillips stated that Mr. Beisert confirmed that no landscape plan had been located. Mr. Phillips also remarked that the trees and landscaping currently on the property were not under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission as there was no evidence that the lot's current appearance was in any way close to the conditions when Meehan resided there. He reiterated that the

property had been nominated under Criteria for Designation A and J, not I, and the members of the Committee on Historic Designation should evaluate it as such.

- Ms. Milroy said that she was struck by the size of the trees on lots surrounding the subject property, causing her to question the statement that there was no evidence of what the garden may have looked like in the past.
- Ms. Coopeman and Mr. Cohen agreed that the nomination provided clear reference to a “wild garden” adjacent to Meehan’s house, allowing them to move beyond speculation with regards to the archaeological potential where the garden used to be.
- Mr. Mooney commented that the only speculation was that the lots did not possess archaeological evidence of the past garden because this could not be known unless the site was studied.
- Ms. Cooperman acknowledged that the Historical Commission had no way to regulate plants. However, the existing greenery could be used as indications of what might remain below the surface.
- Ms. Barucco said that because the unimproved area of land adjacent to the house was once the site of a garden, it made it significant in a way that other unimproved parcels might not be.
- Mr. Lavery argued that the nursery industry was very important in nineteenth-century Philadelphia. He recommended that they add Criterion for Designation I to their recommendation and apply it to the entire nominated parcel. Mr. Lavery stated that George Washington had passed by this site twice, once on his way to Cliveden and again when he was retreating from it.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The building at 121 Pleasant Street, constructed about 1886 in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia, served as the private residence and garden of Joseph Meehan, an important nurseryman a member of the Meehan family, known for their contributions to the field of horticulture as well as for their success in the commercial nursery industry.
- Archival documentation notes that the currently unimproved area to the west/left of the house was once the site of Joseph Meehan’s garden.
- The minimally undisturbed site of a garden associated with such an important nurseryman was rare and the archaeological potential of the unimproved area of this property contributed to its significance.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The property is significant owing to its association with the life and work of Joseph Meehan, an important horticulturalist, landscape gardener and nurseryman, satisfying Criterion A.
- The property is significant owing to the survival of the minimally undisturbed site of Meehan’s personal garden and the archaeological potential of this area adjacent to the house.
- The property is significant as a representation of the commercial and cultural legacy of the Meehan family who contributed to Philadelphia’s role as a national leader in the nursery industry, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Ms. Barucco moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 121 Pleasant Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, I, and J. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 121 Pleasant St MOTION: Designate, A, I, and J MOVED BY: Barucco SECONDED BY: Cooperman					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 2038-48 E CUMBERLAND ST

Name of Resource: Cumberland Street Methodist Episcopal Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Urban Worship Center Inc.

Nominator: East Kensington Neighbors Association

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2038-48 E. Cumberland Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the former Cumberland Street Methodist Episcopal Church building reflects the environment of the country, state, and city in the third and early fourth quarters of the nineteenth century, when the architecture of church edifices was characterized by the Italianate style. The nomination further argues that the design of the building is based on a ubiquitous urban “preaching box” church type of red brick construction with a distinctive Italianate treatment.

Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Italianate style, prevalent in American architecture between 1840 and 1885 and seen in a wide variety of building forms.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2038-48 E. Cumberland Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:23:16

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Schmitt presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Cooperman asked if there was a representative of the owner present.

- Ms. Schmitt responded that the staff had not heard anything from the owners and that no representative seemed to be present. Ms. Schmitt informed Ms. Cooperman that she had called the church office and left a voicemail with her contact information so that they could follow up. However, she never heard back from them.
- Nominator Oscar Beisert said that he was available to answer any questions.
- Ms. Barucco asked if someone could explain where the term “preaching box” came from. She remarked that she was not familiar with it and could not find any reference to it, and since the nomination cited it frequently, it should have been defined clearly and identified. Mr. Lavery agreed with Ms. Barucco.
 - Ms. Cooperman responded that she had heard the term used more than once; however, she did not know anything about its origin.
- Mr. Cohen commented that he understood the term “preacher box” to refer to a long, narrow rectangular church building. He went on to say that he was pleased that this building had been nominated because it was a type prevalent throughout Philadelphia from the middle of the nineteenth century. Mr. Cohen noted that there were some grammatical errors throughout the nomination that should be corrected. He said that he believed the subject building was much more interesting than simply “Italianate” because there were architectural details here that distinguished the building as a later example of the Italianate style. Mr. Cohen noted that designs such as this one move beyond the bounds of the proportions and ratios that governed Italian Renaissance architecture. He suggested that in this case, one needed to focus less on trying to label the building with a specific style and rather focus more on what they saw.
- Ms. Milroy agreed that when a strict definition of an architectural style is applied, it ends up suggesting that there is a correct way and an incorrect way to execute that style. She added that, within the Methodist church, the term “preaching box” referred to a portable pulpit.
 - Others indicated that they had heard the term used to describe a pulpit or altar, but never a building.
- Ms. Cooperman remarked that they all seemed to agree that the subject property was worthy of designation, even if there were differences in how to describe the architectural features or style.
- Mr. Lavery told Mr. Beisert that he thoroughly enjoyed the inclusion of the Haines Street Church in the nomination, as it was remarkably similar to the subject property.
- Mr. Cohen suggested that nominations should end with a paragraph summarizing the argument in support of designation. This on just ends. He also commented that it is fine to begin by characterizing a building’s architectural style using commonly accepted labels, but a more nuanced analysis should follow.
- Mr. Beisert told the members of the Committee on Historic Designation that he struggled with using one specific architectural style to describe this building. However, he felt that Italianate was the most appropriate.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites spoke in support of the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The church at 2038-48 E. Cumberland Street was first constructed in 1872 and later reconstructed in 1875.

- Though the architectural features of the building had elements of the Italianate style, the building could not be summed up so simply, and was more nuanced than just that label.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The former Cumberland Street Methodist Episcopal Church building reflects the environment of the country, state, and city in the third and early fourth quarters of the nineteenth century, when the architecture of church edifices was characterized by nuanced interpretations of the Italianate style, satisfying Criterion C.
- The building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Italianate style, prevalent in American architecture between 1840 and 1885 and seen in a wide variety of building forms, satisfying Criterion D.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Cohen moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2038-48 E Cumberland Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 2038-48 E Cumberland St					
MOTION: Designate, C and D					
MOVED BY: Cohen					
SECONDED BY: Cooperman					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 2006 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: The Durham & Co. Radio Showroom/Philadelphia W3XM Radio Station

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: AGAS Holdings LLC

Nominator: Center City Residents' Association

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2006 Chestnut Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Durham & Co.'s Radio Showroom and Philadelphia W3XM Radio Station building, constructed in 1928, satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. Under Criterion D, the nomination explains that the property embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Art Deco style as applied to modest commercial buildings in Philadelphia. The nomination further contends that the building represents an era distinguished by low-rise commercial buildings in the Art Deco style that defined business districts across the country, satisfying Criterion C.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2006 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:40:00

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- No one represented the property owner. Ms. DiPasquale noted that the staff had not heard from the property owner.
- Timothy Kerner of the Center City Residents' Association and Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Kerner explained the building is an excellent example of the Art Deco style and also represents an important social history. He opined that the meaningful combination of the use as a radio showroom and a start-up radio station with the Art Deco style evokes the modern aspirations of the Jazz Age as well as the birth of the media age.
- Mr. Kerner noted that 2006 Chestnut Street is a contributing building in the Center City West Commercial National Register Historic District and is also worthy of listing on the Philadelphia Register.
- Ms. Cooperman remarked on the significance of Philadelphia in broadcast, recording and related sound technologies. She noted that sound is as important as other designs in Philadelphia but is often underappreciated.
- Mr. Laverty questioned the setback of the building, noting that the buildings on the east and west precede this building, even though the nineteenth-century Italianate structure to the west precedes its construction. He questioned why the builders would have decided to cede six feet of retail space.
- Ms. Cooperman agreed with the bases for the nomination.
- Mr. Cohen commented on the ziggurat motif. He suggested that the ziggurat motif more likely a reflection of the setback aesthetic that is starting to happen in skyscrapers, rather than a reflection of the radio use of the building. He noted that the motif aligns the creases from each offset that imply an effect that is almost like a linen fold but in modern terms.
 - Ms. Milroy noted that Ziggurat design was truly ubiquitous.
- Mr. Cohen noted that he had always associated WCAU with Harry Sternfeld rather than Gabriel Roth.
 - Mr. Laverty responded that he believes Ralph Pinker was associated with WCAU.
- Mr. Cohen remarked that, if there was a Piano Row and Jewelers' Row, this was Shoe Row.
- Mr. Cohen noted that the nomination ends abruptly and urged the nominator to include conclusions that summarize the arguments in the nomination.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub of Save Our Sites supported the nomination. He noted that the building is set back from the street which gives the building a certain distinction.
 - Mr. Farnham explained that the City of Philadelphia changed the legal width of Chestnut Street repeatedly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, resulting in a variety of setbacks for buildings along the corridor. He suggested that the setback for 2006 Chestnut likely resulted from the legal width of the block being wider in 1929 than when the neighboring properties were constructed. The

setback was not an aesthetic or design decision. Mr. Farnham offered for the staff to do additional research and provide more information to the Historical Commission.

- Steven Peitzman supported the nomination, noting that the building is interesting architecturally and also as a representation of the radio history of Philadelphia.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The building at 2006 Chestnut was constructed in 1928 in the Art Deco style
- Radio, broadcast, and sound history are significant to the development of Philadelphia.
- The ziggurat motif employed in the design of the building was ubiquitous in Art Deco design of the period.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The building at 2006 Chestnut Street embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Art Deco style, satisfying Criterion D.
- The building represents an era distinguished by low-rise commercial buildings in the Art Deco style, satisfying Criterion C.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Lavery moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2006 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 2006 Chestnut St MOTION: Designate, C and D MOVED BY: Lavery SECONDED BY: Cooperman					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney	X				
Total	6				

ADDRESS: 4412 E THOMPSON ST

Name of Resource: St. John Cantius Roman Catholic Church

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Nominator: Celeste Morello

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the church building at 4412 E. Thompson Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the St. John Cantius Roman Catholic Church, constructed in 1898, satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the church building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Gothic style of architecture. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the church represents the Polish cultural and historical heritage of the Bridesburg community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the St. John Cantius Roman Catholic Church building at 4412 E. Thompson Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J.

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 03:51:55

PRESENTERS:

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

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Morello summarized the historic significance of St. John Cantius Roman Catholic Church.
- Mr. Cohen suggested that a nomination for this Gothic church need not tell the history of the Gothic from the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, but rather should discuss nineteenth-century Gothic, and specifically how this church may be specifically Polish in design.
 - Ms. Morello responded that she researched churches in Krakow and Warsaw, but the stronger argument was for their desire to replicate St. Laurentius Church.
- Mr. Cohen suggested that images that compare certain things should be placed on the same page.
- The Committee members thanked Ms. Morello for submitting the nomination and stated that it is a building worthy of historic designation.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, supported the nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- St. John Cantius Roman Catholic Church was constructed in 1898 in the Gothic style.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The church building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Gothic style of architecture, satisfying Criterion D.
- The church represents the Polish cultural and historical heritage of the Bridesburg community, satisfying Criterion J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: Ms. Barucco moved to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the church building at 4412 E. Thompson Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J. Mr. Lavery seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

ITEM: 4412 E Thompson St					
MOTION: Designate, D and J					
MOVED BY: Barucco					
SECONDED BY: Lavery					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney	X				
Total	6				

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at 1:31 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Minutes of the Committee on Historic Designation are presented in action format. Additional information is available in the video recording for this meeting. The start time for each agenda item in the recording is noted.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

§14-1004. Designation.

(1) Criteria for Designation.

A building, complex of buildings, structure, site, object, or district may be designated for preservation if it:

- (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 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.