

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

**18 OCTOBER 2017, 9:30 A.M.
1515 ARCH STREET, ROOM 18-029
DOUG MOONEY, ACTING CHAIR**

PRESENT

Douglas Mooney, M.A., acting chair
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.
Bruce Laverty
R. David Schaaf, RA

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

ALSO PRESENT

Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
John Buffington, Historical Society of Frankford
Joseph J. Menkevich
Cindy Hamilton, Heritage Consulting
Jacob Roller, J. Roller Development
Oscar Beisert
Dwight Chavis, Victory Baptist Church
David Blumenfeld, Cross Properties
David Orphanides, Esq., Orphanides & Toner
Joseph Purcell

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mooney called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Messrs. Cohen, Laverty, and Schaaf joined him.

ADDRESS: 1930-54 WELSH RD

Name of Resource: Memorial Church of St. Luke the Beloved Physician

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: St. Luke's PE Church

Nominator: Joseph Menkevich

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1930-54 Welsh Road as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and I. The nomination argues that the circa 1861 Memorial Church of St. Luke the Beloved Physician and Sunday School are significant as examples of Neo-Gothic Ecclesiastical architecture, and are the work of prominent architects Richard Upjohn & Son. The nomination asserts that the largely undisturbed site, including the cemetery, has high archaeological potential owing to its early settlement. The property includes a modern parsonage, hall, and garage, all of which are considered to be non-contributing for the purposes of the designation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1930-54 Welsh Road satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and I. All references to "posthumous co-nominators" and other such frivolities should be removed from the nomination, which will become an official government document if adopted.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Nominator Joseph Menkevich represented the nomination. No one represented the property owner.

Mr. Menkevich thanked what he calls his "deceased co-nominators," his contributor John Manton, and the staff for their assistance with the nomination.

Mr. Mooney asked if anyone was in attendance to represent the property. No one responded. Mr. Mooney then asked for public comment. John Buffington, chair of the history committee at the Historical Society of Frankford, asked if the property file could be supplemented with additional information in the future. Ms. Chantry responded that any additional information will be retained in the property file in the Historical Commission's archive. Mr. Buffington responded that he is interested in more details about Pauline Henry and her wealth, so he may provide additional information about that topic in the future.

Mr. Cohen applauded Mr. Menkevich for his extensive research. Regarding the writing style, he asked that Mr. Menkevich summarize every quotation rather than letting the quotation speak for itself. This would include indicating who is speaking and why the quotation is important. He corrected the use of "Tudor arches," a term employed in the architectural description. He noted that the arches in question are actually "pointed segmental arches." Mr. Menkevich responded that his contributor, John Manton, wrote the architectural description, and he would be sure to inform him of his egregious error. Mr. Cohen observed that Mr. Menkevich included a remarkable amount of research on the Gothic Revival. He cautioned that one does not need to write a book each time one writes a nomination. Mr. Schaaf asked how the architect Richard Upjohn became involved with this parish, as Bustleton must have been fairly rural and remote in 1860. Mr. Menkevich responded that Pauline Henry was a member of All Saints Church on Frankford Avenue, and her parents are buried there. Frank Wills designed that church, and designed Eden Hall which was near it. He opined that Ms. Henry understood the Gothic Revival style of architecture, as she traveled extensively in Europe. She chose Upjohn likely because he

was the most prominent living architect at that time, since Frank Wills had died. The nomination hypothesizes that had Frank Wills been alive, he may have been commissioned to design the church. Ms. Henry had connections to people associated with St. Mark's Church in Philadelphia, and she may have heard that people living in Bustleton had to travel either to Trinity Oxford or All Saints, so this location made sense to serve that community. Mr. Buffington added that Ms. Henry's parents were buried at All Saints, so she was familiar with the area.

Mr. Cohen commented that this is the kind of building that first started to be built in the 1840s. It is associated with this notion of "ecclesiology" and Upjohn was on the list of ecclesiological architects that design in a historically accurate version of the Gothic style. Mr. Cohen noted that the polychrome use of brick arches rather than all stone is interesting. This church, designed in 1861, represents some initial impulses toward the High Victorian. It is an interesting transition point.

Mr. Mooney thanked Mr. Menkevich for including Criterion I. He asked if anything else had been built on this site prior to the church. Mr. Menkevich responded that he does not believe that there were any earlier buildings on the site. He noted that there is a historic building fronting Welsh Road, next to the property. Mr. Mooney commented that it is correct that there very well could be privies and other historic archaeological features associated with the church and the Sunday School, but it is also important to note in this case that part of the archaeological value is the cemetery itself and the individuals contained in it. The archaeological information contained in those physical remains of the people can relate not only to issues of health and other aspects of everyday life, but also changing burial practices over time. Mr. Menkevich commented that what we call cemeteries or grave yards today, were called church yards historically. People like A.J. Downing, a theorist of architecture and landscape design of the time, understood not just a church, but the whole planned site was important.

Mr. Cohen commented that he is a big fan of Samuel Fitch Hotchkin, the chronicler who documented the architectural history of Philadelphia's periphery. He attended this church, and that is a significant association. Mr. Cohen opined that the nomination does not successfully make an argument for Criterion A. Mr. Menkevich responded that he intended for Upjohn to satisfy the Criterion, as an association with the life of a person significant in the past. Mr. Cohen responded that Upjohn is already covered under Criterion E. Ms. Chantry clarified that the nomination's conclusion states that it is significant for its association with the lives of persons significant in the past, including but not limited to Pauline Henry. Much of the information on Henry was moved to an appendix. Mr. Cohen commented that he is somewhat skeptical of determining that the donor of a church can satisfy Criterion A. Mr. Lavery opined that Mr. Menkevich made a strong enough point of Henry's importance, not just to Bustleton but to Philadelphia and the eastern seaboard.

Oscar Beisert asked about the historic house next to the church. Mr. Menkevich responded that it is not part of the nomination, and he is unsure if it was ever associated with the church.

Ms. Chantry asked again if the property owner or representative of the property owner was present. No one responded. Ms. Chantry stated that letters notifying of the proposed designation were mailed on 18 September 2017 to the address on file for the owner and to the building address itself, which were the same address of 1930-54 Welsh Road, which is the city-recognized address for the property. Both letters were returned as "undeliverable." Ms. Chantry explained that she then emailed the church via the email address provided on its website, but has not yet received a response. She observed that the address used on their website was 1946 Welsh Road, which clearly falls within the previously-used address. She used this

amended address to mail the original correspondence, with an explanation that it had been returned, on 27 September 2017. She noted that she has received no communication from the property owner to-date.

Mr. Menkevich opined that the buildings are works of art and are one-of-a-kind. He suggested that sometimes people who object to designations may not understand or appreciate their own history.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1930-54 Welsh Road satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and I.

ADDRESS: 4238-40 WALLACE ST

Name of Resource: Memorial Chapel of St. Michael and All Angels

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Victory Baptist Church

Nominator: Joseph Menkevich

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 4238-40 Wallace Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J. The nomination argues that the Memorial Chapel of Saint Michael and All Angels, which was originally part of the Saint Michael and All Angels for Young Colored Cripples campus, is significant for its cultural and social heritage. Originally a chapel whose use was limited to disabled African-American children and a mission church for African Americans, it later was the church where a white congregation and a black congregation merged in 1945, and an African-American priest was elected as rector of the combined church. It was referred to as “an experiment in inter-racial fellowship and worship” in a newspaper article announcing the merge. The nomination further contends that the building, constructed about 1889, is significant as a remaining work of architect William Masters Camac, while employed in the office of Frank Furness.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4238-40 Wallace Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J. All references to “posthumous co-nominators” and other such frivolities should be removed from the nomination, which will become an official government document if adopted.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Nominator Joseph Menkevich represented the nomination. Dwight Chavis represented the property owner.

Mr. Menkevich thanked Mr. Cohen for authoring the book on Frank Furness, which he used to write this nomination. He explained that this nomination is a byproduct of his nomination for 1930-54 Welsh Road, because of the connection with Pauline Henry. She was involved in benevolent acts all throughout Philadelphia. This was a mission chapel born out of St. Mark’s on Locust Street. It started as a chapel for black crippled children. It was designed by William Masters Camac while he worked for Frank Furness. Mr. Laverty commented that that association is very important, and it is much appreciated to shine light on someone working behind the shadow of the great Frank Furness. He commented that we do not often think about what an important role Camac played, not just in terms of his architecture, but in terms of his

social and financial connections. Mr. Cohen added that Camac had better social connections than Furness. Mr. Menkevich hypothesized that Camac did not need to be working in Furness's office because he was independently wealthy. Mr. Laverty commented that the office was designing not just churches, but institutions for the benefit of people who were helpless. They were investing in this long before it became popular.

Minister Dwight Chavis, an Associate Minister at Victory Baptist Church, thanked Mr. Menkevich for the nomination. He explained that he is in attendance to learn more about the heritage and history of the building, and also about the historic designation process. He stated that the congregation does not have any concerns, but wants to understand what it means to be declared historic. He noted that the church is still working and doing some of the original mission, and would be honored by the designation because this is who they are as a church and who they are as a people. Mr. Mooney commented that the staff would be happy to speak with Mr. Chavis in greater detail about the implications of historic designation. Mr. Menkevich commented that John Manton, who wrote the architectural description, had mentioned that there may be an original painting of value in the church, and it might be worth having an art dealer look at it, if it does not hold importance to the current congregation.

Mr. Mooney asked for public comment. John Buffington, chair of the history committee at the Historical Society of Frankford, commented that anything associated with Frank Furness holds importance. He added that he loved what was written about the place as the site of an early effort to meld the races. Mr. Menkevich commented that Pauline Henry financed the chapel, likely with her connections at the Rittenhouse Club. Oscar Beisert commented that this chapel was historically part of a larger campus that included three twins on North 43rd Street, two of which remain, which was known as the Home of St. Michael and All Angels for Young Colored Cripples. He suggested that a nomination could be written for the remaining twins on North 43rd Street, especially since the research has already been done, and because so few of these types of African American resources survive. Mr. Laverty asked if the twins are private residences. Mr. Chavis responded that they are privately owned, and the one on the corner is a funeral home. Mr. Schaaf clarified that the twins are not part of this nomination. Mr. Laverty commented that they are not part of this nomination, but could be the subject of a future nomination. He added that the information about the 1945 merger is extremely important. He stated that he was pleased that the period of significance extends through 1945, when the merger took place, because it is a very important part of the story. It was groundbreaking and made national religious news.

Mr. Cohen noted that the arch above the front door is a good example of a Tudor arch. He corrected that the front steps are made of concrete rather than cement. Additionally he suggested that the tiles should be referred to as terra cotta rather than tiles.

Mr. Cohen explained that an architect could work in another architect's office, but he could take independent work. It is likely that Furness never gave approval for this design, but rather it was entirely Camac's design. Furness did not really design in this mode very much. It is more delicate than something designed by Furness, and it mixes a lot of motifs. He asked if a photograph showing the second-floor windows before alterations is known. Ms. Chantry provided the only earlier photograph obtained, from the 1982 Pennsylvania historic resource survey form. Mr. Chavis explained that the church installed plastic years ago to preserve the windows. Mr. Cohen commented that one of the things that really distinguishes it from Furness's work is the continuity of the roof. The roof is one plane that continues and brings parts together. He suggested that, if Furness had this commission, he would have done something more

craggy. He commented that Camac's work in Maine is very much his style and not Furness at all.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4238-40 Wallace Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.

ADDRESS: 1250 E PALMER ST

Name of Resource: Joseph Paxson Frame Store & Dwelling

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Joseph Purcell and Julie Ciotti

Nominator: Kensington Olde Richmond Heritage, LLC

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

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1250 E. Palmer Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, and J. The nomination states that the building, named the Joseph Paxson Frame Store & Dwelling by the nominator, was likely constructed in the 1830s. The nomination contends that the building represents "both the development, as well as the economic, social, and historical heritage of Fishtown, in Kensington, and the larger realm of Philadelphia's river wards." The nomination asserts that the property satisfies Criterion C; it "reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style," the "Georgian Vernacular Style." The nomination claims that the building is "representative of a frame dwelling type as articulated in the said [Georgian Vernacular] style" and "is an unusual surviving specimen as a frame dwelling built upon a corner and being fully detached."

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Making its case for Criteria A and J, the nomination essentially argues that: all frame houses are historically significant; the building at 1250 E. Palmer Street is a frame house; therefore, the building at 1250 E. Palmer Street is historically significant. However, the staff suggests that the nomination never demonstrates that the major premise in its syllogistic reasoning is true; the claim that all frame houses are historically significant is merely presented as true, without substantiation. The staff recommends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property satisfies Criteria A and J. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criterion C; it "reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style," the "Georgian Vernacular Style." The staff disagrees that the building is "Georgian Vernacular" in style, and that the building reflects the environment in an era characterized by that style. The staff suggests that the building is a vernacular version of either the late Federal style or the early Greek Revival style, but is not Georgian. The staff recommends that the nomination fails to demonstrate that the property satisfies Criterion C.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Owner Joseph Purcell represented the property. Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

Mr. Beisert indicated that the nomination resulted from the concerns over the building's fate expressed by many Fishtown neighbors. The house, he determined, appears to have been built between 1827 and 1839. He added that the same family owned this building and several adjacent buildings through the 1920s. He explained that the family acquired the property in the eighteenth century and that the land was developed in the early nineteenth century. It remained in the family until the 1920s, he added. Mr. Beisert stated that this type of wood frame building

represents this early development of Kensington and that, as a type, it is an unusual survivor. He noted that the aerial photograph being projected on the screen shows a fairly wide expanse for a corner frame house along E. Thompson Street. He referred the Committee members to the nomination, commenting that on pages 24, 25, and 26, he shows several examples of detached frame dwellings with small stores at the front. He added that very few survive and that they represent a rare surviving housing type. He remarked that in 1915, Fishtown contained approximately 950 to 1,000 wood-frame houses but that today approximately 180 remain standing.

Mr. Lavery asked Mr. Beisert where he found the information on the number of frame houses. Mr. Beisert answered that he counted the number of frame dwelling depicted in atlases. Mr. Lavery asked if the total included stables and outbuildings. Mr. Beisert replied that he only counted houses.

Mr. Cohen noted that Mr. Beisert cited a substantial enumeration from 1811 completed in each district that showed this area was comprised almost equally of wood and brick structures. Mr. Beisert responded that wooden structures defined this part of the city, where there were an unusual number of frame dwellings along the waterfront. Mr. Cohen agreed, adding that there is good reason to separate buildings from one another when building in wood, owing to the fire hazard.

Mr. Schaaf observed that the interstitial space between this house and the neighboring building contains a glazed area with a door at the second level. He stated that he suspected the buildings were now engaged and no longer freestanding. Mr. Cohen responded that an atlas shown on page 10 of the nomination depicts the building as freestanding.

Mr. Mooney asked if the property owner is present. Owner Joseph Purcell identified himself and asked for clarification on the recommendation that was read at the start of the review. Mr. Cohen explained that the staff made a recommendation to the Committee. Mr. Purcell stated that he agrees with the staff's assessment, adding that when he first received notice of the nomination, it piqued his interest. He noted that when he received notice of the nomination, he wondered if something historically significant occurred at the building. However, he continued, the nomination lacks hard evidence and contains stream speculation with obfuscation. He read a passage from page 8 of the nomination: "Because the building is sheathed in topical siding, the integrity of feeling is temporarily compromised." Mr. Purcell described the building as indeed being compromised with new construction comprised of siding and brick. He questioned what lies underneath the modern cladding, adding that it could be stone walls. He commented that no photographic evidence exists to allow him to restore the house. He then stated that he researched the Paxsons and Krauskopfs, finding that Krauskopf was the maternal grandfather of Paxson's wife and that she, along with other siblings, inherited the land at the corner of Palmer and Thompson Streets. She married Paxson, he continued, and Paxson sold lumber from the corner property for about 27 years. He then focused on Krauskopf, informing the Committee that he found no information on him and adding that Krauskopf is German and translates to "curly hair." He concluded that he agrees with the staff that the nomination provides no basis for the satisfaction of the Criteria for Designation and suggested that the nomination should be rejected.

Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Purcell what he thought was purposely obfuscating. Mr. Purcell answered that the nomination contains many repeat phrases throughout and that the phrases like "temporarily compromised" and "extant" when referring to wood framing are used. He noted that extant means existing and that no proof that the elements described as existing is included in

the nomination. He argued that “likely extant” would have been more acceptable, but as written, the nomination implies that the material is extant, which is factually inaccurate.

Mr. Cohen inquired whether the material at the second-story front consists of clapboards or another material. Mr. Purcell answered that the material is siding. Mr. Cohen responded that the siding could possibly be applied to brick but typically wood would be found underneath. Without investigating the inside of the wall, he continued, it cannot be determined. However, he added, it is likely that this building follows patterns, which would indicate the underlying structure is a frame building. Mr. Cohen defended Mr. Beisert, asserting that he believed Mr. Beisert was not trying to obfuscate facts in that regard. Mr. Lavery observed that the 1910 atlas indicates that a frame building existed on the site and that unless there was a major building effort between 1910 and the time the siding was applied, there would be no reason to believe the frame structure no longer exists underneath the current cladding. He contended that there should be a building permit if an alteration of that significance occurred since 1910.

Mr. Schaaf remarked that the first-story brick looks relatively new, likely having been installed within the last 30 or 40 years. Mr. Cohen questioned why Mr. Beisert refers to that brick as fascia. Mr. Beisert replied that the brick appears to step out from the plane of the wall. Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Beisert to clarify the meaning of fascia in that regard. Mr. Beisert answered that he considers it to be a topical treatment. Mr. Cohen responded that it seems to be an incorrect usage, but asked if the brick projects from the face of the original structure. Mr. Beisert responded that it is difficult to tell with the pent roof separating the first story from the second. He added that, despite the exterior alterations, the building retains its character. Mr. Schaaf commented that the aerial photograph in the staff’s presentation features the building well and provides information on the building’s historic integrity, much more than the photograph taken from the ground.

Mr. Cohen opined that one deficiency in the nomination is its failure to describe the house as a vernacular type and instead trying to describe it as representative of a high architectural style. By removing the phrase “Georgian style,” one could describe a vernacular type with a side-gable roof, cornice, and useable attic, which would delineate a type like the other buildings depicted in photographs in the nomination. Mr. Cohen contended that this building serves as an example of a wooden building type, with the roof ridge parallel to the road, that has largely disappeared in Philadelphia. Mr. Cohen then noted that the staff took issue with the term “Georgian style,” and argued that substituting the word “type” for “style” brings the building to a structure that warrants protection every bit as much as the Commission protects examples of styles. He contested the staff’s objection to including Criterion C, adding that the property is an important representative of a type that has disappeared. He questioned whether one of the Criterion for Designation accommodates the defense of a vernacular type. Mr. Beisert answered that Criterion C relates to type and that Criterion D relates to style. Mr. Cohen stated that he would happily substitute the word “type” in this instance, and in doing so, believes the property merits historical protection.

Mr. Mooney opened the floor to public comment, of which there was none.

Mr. Schaaf inquired about a comparison of a period photograph of a nearby house shown with the subject house on page 25 of the nomination. He read from the nomination: “Above is a comparison of the subject building to a similar specimen that once stood on N. Front Street. Like the example, the subject building historically had a store entrance at the corner with a residential entrance at the rear of the side elevation.” Mr. Schaaf questioned how the conclusion was drawn that the frame structure on the left is not the original condition of that building, and

that there was not originally a store in the subject building. Mr. Beisert answered that both arguments are possible, adding that he believes the brick wall at the first-story supports the theory that the material was added following the building's use as a store. He opined that storefronts are commonly infilled with brick. Mr. Schaaf contended that the building's use as a store is not readily known. Mr. Beisert responded that he found documentation that the owner rented to cigar sellers. Mr. Schaaf argued that cigars can be sold out of a living room and reiterated his skepticism that the building originally functioned as a store, since the original condition remains unknown. The property owner and some Committee members objected generally to the highly speculative nature of the nomination.

Mr. Cohen offered several technical suggestions for improving the nomination, but added that Mr. Beisert "hit the nail on the head" in identifying a disappearing type. He called the property a great example of the type, but agreed with Mr. Schaaf's argument that the original use is unknown. However, Mr. Cohen argued that that information is not essential, adding that its use is not a critical part of the Criteria for Designation. He opined that it is easy to adapt a wooden building, even if it never had a bay large enough for a store window.

Mr. Beisert directed the Committee members to page 25 of the nomination and identified alterations over time between an 1859 photograph and later photograph depicting the same building. Mr. Lavery responded that the photographs show real evidence that is visible for a different building, but not for this building. He asserted that the same sort of evidence is not available for the nominated property. Mr. Beisert replied that he was responding to Mr. Cohen's comment that wooden structures were easy to adapt. Mr. Cohen agreed, adding that a shop owner does not want to force prospective buyers to go around the side window to look at their goods. Rather, he added, the owner would expand the front window. Again, several objected to the speculation.

Mr. Cohen questioned which other Criterion for Designation were contested by the staff. Focusing on Criterion J, he agreed with Mr. Beisert's assessment that Fishtown was a place with a lot of wooden buildings and a large artisan population, many of whom did their business in their houses and sold things out of the front. He described the practice as being closely related to the river's economy, adding that it speaks to the small-scale artisan population and the kind of buildings that are lived in. Others asked rhetorically if all wooden houses are inherently historically significant. Mr. Cohen then affirmed the inclusion of Criterion J, but expressed skepticism over Criterion A, questioning what the building's significance is to the city, state, or nation. Mr. Beisert answered that the argument centers on the development of that area in that part of the city. He asserted that the lot was inherited by particular individuals and eventually those individuals started subdividing the lot and building new, separate dwellings, which later included a corner building. He contended that the fact that the property stayed in the same family until the 1920s represents the type of development that occurred in older parts of the city. He argued that the same pattern emerges in areas of Center City closer to the waterfront, where a number of houses remained in the same family for a hundred or so years. Others suggested that the subdivision of larger lots into smaller lots for development is common to nearly every parcel in the city.

Mr. Purcell stated to Mr. Beisert that he noted in the nomination that Paxson died in 1837 and rented the building to the tenants who ran the cigar shop. The family did own it, he agreed, but it was rented out as a tenant property for 50 years or so. He asked if every rental property in the city is historically significant. Mr. Cohen stated that, if Paxson was the builder, he built multiple buildings and could not live in them all. Mr. Beisert stated that Betsy Ross's father or grandfather owned many rental properties and her house was built by her grandfather. Mr.

Purcell replied that the Betsy Ross House is important because of the flag, not because it was a rental property.

Mr. Mooney argued that the nomination needs to include Criterion I for its archaeological potential. He remarked that, as is evident from the results of the I-95 excavations in the Fishtown neighborhood, even homes with small backyard spaces have a tremendous potential for archaeological features and artifacts that can be preserved. He contended that those artifacts date to the late 1820s and 1830s when development in Fishtown boomed and spread from the waterfront to more inland areas, and those artifacts were preserved in these small spaces. What has been found in Fishtown, he continued, is that the archaeological preservation there is extraordinary. Anytime a building from this time period has a preserved backyard space that has not been dug out by a basement, he added, the odds of finding important archaeological resources contained within it are extremely high.

Mr. Cohen asked if the backyard is open. Mr. Purcell answered that there is no structure at the rear. Mr. Mooney stated that, in looking at the aerial photograph, it appeared that there was a cement patio at the rear behind the house. Whether or not that impacted the soils there, he continued, is irrelevant as long as there has been no deep excavation, since the deeper features are going to be preserved. Mr. Beisert expressed concern over adding Criterion I to the designation of this house on this lot, adding that the house is most important in his perspective. He advocated for the significance of archaeology, but argued that he fears designating a single wooden house and adding archaeological restrictions would be overwhelming. Mr. Mooney asserted that the addition of Criterion I is not necessarily a restriction, because there is no guarantee that there would need to be any archaeology, should there be construction in the future. He maintained that the Criterion would allow the Commission the option to review a proposal to determine whether or not further studies are needed. He reiterated that the archaeological preservation of hundreds of similar properties has been astounding. He contended that the findings are not speculation but have been demonstrated day in and day out just a few blocks from the nominated property. Mr. Cohen added that, with such a small backyard, the likelihood of finding artifacts is great. He agreed with the addition of Criterion I.

Mr. Cohen asked for other opinions on Criterion A. The Committee members agreed that Criterion A should not be included.

Joseph Menkevich questioned whether the building has a dirt basement. Mr. Purcell confirmed that it does not have a dirt basement. Mr. Menkevich stated that sometimes dirt basements can have a “ton of archaeological stuff” in them. Mr. Mooney added that even non-dirt basements can be constructed above archaeological artifacts.

Mr. Purcell objected strenuously to the designation of his property based on the flawed nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1250 E. Palmer Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C, I, and J.

ADDRESS: 714-16 W GIRARD AVE

Name of Resource: National Security Bank

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Bellao, LLC

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 714-16 W Girard Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 714-16 W Girard Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former National Security Bank, constructed in 1887, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J. The nomination contends that the property is significant as a prominent commercial building evidencing the late Victorian interest in eclecticism with a design by Frank R. Watson, a prominent architect best known for his ecclesiastical and residential buildings. The nomination argues that this building is a rare surviving example of Watson's commercial work, constructed in an era when the only common design characteristic of banks was their intent to impress. For the design of the building, the nomination contends, Watson liberally borrowed from a variety of architectural traditions to create a striking house of finance in the late Victorian tradition. In addition to its architectural significance, the nomination contends that the National Security Bank played an important role in the development of the new national banking system in Philadelphia, and in the surrounding German-American immigrant community. The nomination also argues that the bank's second President, Isaac Sheppard, was a significant local figure.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation. Oscar Beisert represented the nominator. No one represented the property owner.

Mr. Beisert commented that it is a great building, and one of the most distinctive buildings on Girard Avenue. He noted that it reminds him of the former bank at the corner of School House Lane and Germantown Avenue with which it shared similarities of design.

Mr. Mooney asked if the property owner or any members of the public would like to comment on the nomination. Ms. DiPasquale noted that the staff was contacted by someone representing the property owner regarding the meetings, but had not had any additional contact since that time.

Mr. Schaaf noted that, while he understands that the Historical Commission is not considering the interior of the building, the photographs of the interior are incredible. He remarked that the door and cartouche are magnificent, and received a new inset with New Deal-era imagery and heraldic eagles during its 1930s renovation. Mr. Laverty asked if there is a reason that the nominator limited the period of significance to 1930 and did not carry through the period of significance to the Tilghman Moyer renovation. Mr. Beisert responded that he would be amenable to that change. Mr. Laverty noted that numerous banks in that time were having their Victorian interiors "tidied up," the most prominent example of which was the Union Trust Company on Chestnut Street; it was a Willis Hale building that Paul Cret renovated. Mr. Laverty opined that the renovation of this building tells an important story and recommended extending the period of significance. Mr. Beisert noted that the primary reason for the end of the period of significance in the nomination was owing to the decline of the bank after the Stock Market crash.

Mr. Schaaf opined that it is an excellent building, and appears to have been treated well over its life. Mr. Cohen noted that the nomination is well-researched, and expressed amazement over the building's extensive architectural details.

Mr. Cohen pointed out a few minor typographical errors, including the use of "filial" instead of "finial" and the inaccurate use of the word "cresting" instead of "spines." Mr. Beisert responded that he was hoping for more meaningful criticism about architectural style. Mr. Cohen objected to the use of "purely" in the phrase "all three chimneys were designed to be purely decorative," and suggested that the word be removed, because the chimneys were not faux chimneys. Mr. Cohen also suggested more detailed figure captions. Rather than only crediting "HSP," the nominator should provide the maker of the photograph or image and provide a more detailed finding aid, he explained. He also suggested giving full citations in footnotes.

Mr. Cohen explained that one connection that was not fully articulated in the nomination was the Germanic character of the building. He argued that the building's design is remarkably 1880s. He mused that it is Queen Anne meets Germanic, with its overly steep pediment, but noted that it also has a certain degree of Richardsonian. He noted that all the currents of 1880s are present in the building including rusticated stonework and a naïve classicism with elements that are too steep, but at the same time, the strapwork and extreme decoration that really identify the Germanic community that is responsible for the bank. He also noted the quick assimilation of German and Anglo communities in the neighborhood.

Mr. Cohen opined that the examples at the end are intriguing and all over the place. He argued that the best comparison is the Windrim example in Germantown. He noted that, if one compares the two buildings, this is a more Germanic example with the strapwork and decorative elements than the one in Germantown. Mr. Beisert agreed that it is the most compelling comparison.

Mr. Cohen argued that ultimately this is a building worth protecting, and agreed that the period of significance should be extended into the 1930s.

Mr. Cohen questioned why the nomination included Criterion A. Mr. Beisert responded that the argument has more to do with the role the bank played in the development of the area. Mr. Cohen replied that that argument would be better suited under Criterion J with the heritage of the community. Mr. Cohen opined that it was one of many national banks, it was not the first, and he does not believe every national bank represents the development of the national banking system.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 714-16 W Girard Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, E, and J, but not A, and that the period of significance should be extended to 1934.

ADDRESS: 1601-03 LOMBARD ST

Proposed Action: Correct classification of property currently classified as both contributing and non-contributing to non-contributing

Property Owner: CP Acquisitions 23 LP

Applicant: Cindy Hamilton, Heritage Consulting Group

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to correct the classification of the property at 1601-03 Lombard Street, which is mistakenly listed as both contributing and non-contributing, to non-contributing in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District. Owing to a misunderstanding of the extent of the building at the time of designation, it was classified twice in the district inventory. The listing under 1601-03 Lombard Street classifies it as contributing. The listing under 1602 Addison Street classifies it as non-contributing; the Addison address corresponds to the rear façade of the 1601-03 Lombard Street building. The building was constructed as a commercial building, has been modified numerous times, and retains few, if any, of its original historic features.

Section 5.14.a of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations on amendments of designations acknowledges the Commission's authority to amend the classification of a property in the inventory of a historic district, but provides no guidance on evaluating such a request. However, the section does indicate that the Commission must follow the procedures for designating when considering amendment requests. Section 5.7.c.6, part of the designation section, indicates that every property in a historic district must have an inventory entry that includes:

a classification of the resource as significant, contributing, or non-contributing. A significant building, structure, site, or object within a district is one that qualifies for individual listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. A contributing building, structure, site, or object, while perhaps not eligible for individual listing, reflects the character of the district as set forth in the statement of significance. A non-contributing building, structure, site, or object has no relationship to the character of the district through history, architecture, design or plan as set forth in the statement of significance.

The conflicting classifications must be corrected. Therefore, the question before the Historical Commission in this case is: Does the property in question reflect the character of the district as set forth in the statement of significance? The Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District was explicitly designated as a cohesive residential neighborhood of architectural and social significance. Residential buildings as well as buildings that directly supported the day-to-day activities of the residents—houses of worship, schools, and corner shops—are called out in the statement of significance as reflecting the character of the district. Commercial and office buildings that did not directly support the residential character of the district were classified as non-contributing. Also, buildings of low integrity, which had lost most or all of their character-defining features, and were therefore unable to reflect the character of the district, were classified as non-contributing.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the application demonstrates that the building at 1601-03 Lombard Street does not reflect the character of the district as set forth in the statement of significance and therefore its conflicting classification should be corrected to non-contributing. The staff also recommends that the listing for 1602 Addison Street should be stricken from the inventory, with its descriptive information transferred to the 1601-03 Lombard Street entry.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the reclassification request to the Committee on Historic Designation. Consultant Cindy Hamilton, attorney David Orphanides, and developer David Blumenfeld represented the application.

Mr. Orphanides stated that he and his client are in agreement with the recommendation of the staff. He stated that the building in question shares characteristics with many non-contributing buildings in the historic district, but not with those that are classified as contributing. Ms. Hamilton summarized her report. When constructed, the building in question was a nondescript vernacular commercial building. She stated that its history is “inconsequential.” She stated that it originally housed a liquor store and nightclub. It was later used as a beauty school, offices, a medical clinic, and apartments. She stated that tenants frequently turned over and no one tenant is associated with the building. It is a building of low integrity that has been altered numerous times. It has been stuccoed, windows and door have been changed, and the cornice removed, and the tapestry brick painted; every feature on the exterior has been altered or removed. The Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District is significant as a residential neighborhood of architectural and social importance. Buildings classified as contributing in the district are residential buildings as well as those that directly supported the day-to-day activities of the residents. Commercial and office buildings in the Rittenhouse-Fitler district were generally classified as non-contributing. Ms. Hamilton directed the Committee members to some photographs in her report showing building classified as non-contributing in the district and contended that the building in question is like those classified as non-contributing, not those classified as contributing. She concluded that the building does not reflect the historical or architectural character of the district and should be reclassified from both contributing and non-contributing to non-contributing only.

Mr. Schaaf asked the applicants to speak about the fact that the current building looks as though it was created by merging two buildings, one of which looks like it may have been a house at one time. Ms. Hamilton explained that the three-story section at the northeast corner, at 16th and Addison, appears to have been a residential structure that was significantly altered and merged into the later, larger building. She noted that the earliest Sanborn maps depict the three-story section as a store, but it may have had an earlier residential use. Mr. Cohen noted that the 1858 Hexamer & Locher map indicates that the building on the site at the time was used as a store. He opined that the three-story corner section “was an older building that was swallowed up in the renovations.” Mr. Orphanides agreed, calling it a “mish-mash of a building.”

Mr. Cohen stated that the report was “admirably well researched and figured out. It’s a complex case. But I think that there is not a lot to argue for saving here.” He noted, however, that he wanted to make some points because he was worried about setting a negative precedent. He objected to Ms. Hamilton’s assertion that this building was “inconsequential.” He stated that this building stood at the intersection of two communities, the affluent white community to the north and west around Rittenhouse Square and the African-American community to the south. He observed that the report notes that this building was used as a “black and tan” club for a short time, a club where black and white could mingle, and is therefore important. He stated that this was a place for racial mixing, which was not “inconsequential.” He stated that, if the building were more “intact,” he would argue for its significance. Mr. Cohen expressed his disagreement with the notion that painting a building results in a loss of integrity. Mr. Cohen stated that his greatest concern is the possible precedent of reclassifying a building that does not align with the significance as defined in the statement of significance in the nomination, but nonetheless seems to have some historical significance. He asked if a commercial building that has no relationship to the district as its significance is defined, but has significance in some other realm

would be unprotected by the district designation. He asked how one would protect such a building. Would it need to be individually designated? Mr. Farnham replied that a significant building within the bounds of a historic district that has no relationship to the significance of a historic district as it is defined in the nomination must be designated in some other manner to be protected. He stated that the Historical Commission could not justify regulating a building simply because it was caught up in a district to which it had no relation. Mr. Cohen noted that one could either nominate the building individually or revise the historic district nomination to include the history and significance of the building. Mr. Cohen concluded that he would not want to see buildings lost simply because they are unrelated to the history of a district. He observed that, in this instance, the consultant has made a good case that this building should be reclassified.

Mr. Schaaf remarked that the rowhouses to the west of the building in question have also been altered from their historic conditions. He noted that they have been stuccoed, openings have been altered and infilled, pent eaves have been installed, and brick has been painted. Mr. Cohen stated that he would argue that there is a “visibility of the historical nature” of the rowhouses “that is absent” in the building proposed for reclassification. Mr. Schaaf stated that “he would applaud the urbanism” of the building being reconsidered for reclassification. “The building holds the street wall.” It is as tall as the historic buildings to the west. And it is brick, like the neighboring buildings. Mr. Schaaf also noted that some of the historic openings, which had been infilled, have been reopened. He acknowledged that the first floor has been significantly modified. Mr. Schaaf concluded that “this is a building that has been regularly insulted over time.” Mr. Cohen remarked that the more he looks at the photographs, the more he realizes how much of the building has survived. He noted that the awning distracts one from the building behind it. Mr. Schaaf noted that the cornice and parapet have been removed; only the corbelling survives. Mr. Cohen asked if an architect has been identified for the building. Ms. Hamilton replied that one has not been identified.

Mr. Orphanides pointed out that the buildings to the west are residential and therefore in keeping with the significance of the district. The building in question has served various uses and is not related to the significance of the district. He also contended that the alterations to the building in question are far more extensive than the changes to the rowhouses. Mr. Orphanides noted that the report indicated that the building has been painted, but they were not claiming that the paint significantly detracted from its integrity. He concluded that, when one considers the history of the building as well as its significant integrity problems together, then one has a good argument for reclassification. He suggested that the Committee members review the photographs of other non-contributing, commercial buildings in the districts that were included in the report. He stated that, when considered in this context, the building in question certainly merits reclassification as non-contributing. He stated that their building is very comparable to a non-contributing building at 15th and Spruce Streets with a CVS pharmacy. It too has some original architectural features at the second floor, but has been modified at the first floor. He pointed out other examples of non-contributing buildings provided in their report. He stated that these buildings have some architectural detail intact, yet are still classified as non-contributing. Mr. Cohen asked if the district has a period of significance. Mr. Farnham replied that it does not; the Commission decided explicitly not to stipulate a period of significance for the district. Mr. Cohen commented that some of the buildings offered as examples of non-contributing resources in the district should have been classified as contributing. Mr. Orphanides stated that he is simply suggesting that the Commission needs to be consistent when classifying buildings in historic districts. He observed that other buildings like the one at 1601-03 Lombard Street appear to have been classified as non-contributing; the building at 1601-03 Lombard is the exception, not the rule. He stated that his client’s building should have been classified as non-contributing, owing to its historic uses as well as its lack of integrity.

Mr. Lavery suggested that the Committee not consider this matter as a new designation and seek to determine whether the building has any historical significance, but more appropriately to consider this matter within the bounds of the district nomination and seek to correct an inventory entry that is inherently flawed. He asserted that the Committee must look at this application as if it were classifying the property for the first time in 1995. Mr. Lavery noted that the inventory is incorrect in that it classifies the property as both contributing and non-contributing. He stated that, applying the rules as they would have been applied in 1995, he finds that this property would have been classified as non-contributing. Mr. Lavery moved to adopt the staff recommendation and recommend that the application demonstrates that the building at 1601-03 Lombard Street does not reflect the character of the district as set forth in the statement of significance and therefore its conflicting classification should be corrected to non-contributing; and also to recommend that the listing for 1602 Addison Street should be stricken from the inventory, with its descriptive information transferred to the 1601-03 Lombard Street entry. Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Lavery if he had concluded that 1601-03 Lombard Street does not contribute to the district's historical significance. Mr. Lavery replied that he had concluded that 1601-03 Lombard Street does not contribute to the district's historical significance. Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Schaaf to weigh in. Mr. Schaaf replied that his thoughts on the building come from a city planning perspective, not a historic preservation perspective. Mr. Schaaf stated that the building "does a really good job" of holding the street walls. Buildings in this area should hold the street walls, he asserted. He stated that the exterior materials of the building "are commensurate with an historic streetscape." He stated that the rhythm and fenestration of the facades are like those of the 1850s rowhouses to the west on Lombard. He concluded that his reasons are unrelated to historic preservation and could, in fact, vote for Mr. Lavery's motion, if it is seconded. Mr. Cohen stated that he is "torn," but can see the 1916 building behind the bad awning. He noted the lost cornice as well as the changes to the ground-floor façade. He asked about the original ground-floor façade. Ms. Hamilton replied that it was likely stucco, but not the stucco that exists today. Mr. Cohen that the building says: "I'm colonial up top, but with it on the bottom." Mr. Schaaf disagreed with Mr. Cohen and stated that the windows at the ground floor as seen in the photograph are not original but probably date to the 1950s. Mr. Cohen conceded. Mr. Farnham suggested that the Committee find a second for Mr. Lavery's motion, or proceed to a new motion. Mr. Schaaf stated that he would not second the motion.

Patrick Grossi of the Preservation Alliance stated that his organization is not opposed to the reclassification of the property to non-contributing. He noted, however, that he is concerned about any precedent that might be set by such a reclassification. Commercial ground floors are often altered, he noted.

Mr. Mooney asked again for a second to Mr. Lavery's motion, but none was forthcoming.

Mr. Mooney stated that this building has at least as much integrity as the Palmer Street building, which was considered earlier. The second story of the Lombard Street building does retain its integrity, he suggested. Mr. Cohen stated that he is hesitating to vote to recommend reclassification because the second floor does retain its integrity. Ms. Hamilton interjected that the only feature of the building called out in the inventory is the tapestry brick, which has been degraded with paint, obscuring its texture. Paint does not typically impact integrity, but it does in this case. Mr. Cohen asserted that the building retains sufficient integrity. Mr. Schaaf asked if 1916 was early for tapestry brick. Mr. Farnham stated that it was not; 1916 marked the midpoint of the tapestry brick period.

Oscar Beisert stated that he objects to the reclassification because the building is contributing, falls within the district's "timeframe," and likely had a storefront. He contended that the building

should be protected because there have been many demolitions and much new construction on Lombard Street. He noted that the building is visible from three streets. He observed that people like historic districts because the buildings are old. This building should be renovated, not demolished. Mr. Lavery noted that this building is at the very edge of the historic district. Mr. Schaaf pointed out that the school across the street, which is not in the historic district, is a “very handsome” building. Mr. Orphanides described the immediate surroundings and opined that they are very different from this building. He stated that the building in question is not very noticeable. It does not stand out. Mr. Orphanides reported that he obtained the zoning approval for the project proposed for this site and it was strongly supported by the community. He again contended that the building in question is like the buildings classified as non-contributing in the historic district.

David Blumenfeld explained that his development company has undertaken numerous historic preservation projects. He stated that he would preserve this building if he could. He reported that he and his consultants have looked very carefully at this building and have decided that it does not merit reuse. He noted that he discussed the matter with representatives of the Preservation Alliance, who went through the building and then agreed that they would not oppose his request to reclassify. He stated that they determined that there is no economically feasible reuse for the building. He noted that this property is on the edge of the historic district and could have been as easily left out and included in the district. He stated that the historic district is defined as a residential district and this was not a residential building. He asked the Committee to recommend the removal of this building from the historic district.

Mr. Farnham offered some background on the staff recommendation. He stated that the question of integrity is secondary for the staff. He asserted that, even if this building had been in its original, 1916 condition, the staff would have recommended classifying it as non-contributing. The primary question is whether this building “reflects the character of the district as set forth in the statement of significance.” He noted that that is the definition of a contributing building in the Commission’s Rules & Regulations. He stated that, according to the Rules & Regulations, a non-contributing building has no relationship to the character of the district through history, architecture, design or plan as set forth in the statement of significance. Mr. Farnham pointed out that the staff included the statement of significance for the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District in the materials provided to all Committee members. He observed that the questions about this building’s integrity or lack thereof are distractions. The Committee needs to address whether this building partakes in the district’s significance as it is defined in the district nomination. He asserted that the statement of significance clearly indicates that buildings that contribute to the district are buildings that played a role in the residential character in the area. He asserted that Ms. Hamilton’s research shows that this building had nothing to do with the mid and late nineteenth-century elite enclave that is defined by the statement of significance. Mr. Cohen reviewed the statement of significance for a moment and asserted that the building did play a role as the area’s history is defined in the statement. He asserted that this building is important because it stood at the intersection of two neighborhoods, the African-American corridor between South and Pine and the Rittenhouse-Fitler neighborhood to the north. It was a commercial venue that attracted black and white residents from the two neighborhoods surrounding the building. He concluded that he believes that the building is related to the district’s statement of significance. Mr. Cohen explained to Mr. Blumenfeld that the Committee’s task is to review the buildings history, not its viability for redevelopment. He concluded that he does see enough evidence to overturn the decision regarding significance that was made in 1995.

Mr. Mooney reminded everyone that the Committee makes non-binding recommendations, not final decisions. Messrs. Lavery and Mooney suggested that the Committee consider the matter in pieces, starting with the question of the 1602 Addison entry in the inventory.

The Committee members unanimously voted to recommend that the Historical Commission strike the listing for 1602 Addison Street from the historic district inventory and transfer its information to the 1601-03 Lombard Street entry.

Mr. Orphanides reminded the Committee that this building is comprised of three buildings that were merged and combined together. He emphasized that this building has been modified in numerous ways and has lost most of the historic character that it might have had. Mr. Lavery stated that many have assumed that the mistake was made with the non-contributing listing for 1602 Addison, whereas he would assert that the mistake was made with the contributing classification for 1601-03 Lombard. He contended that we need to look at the problem with 1995 eyes, not with 2017 eyes. He asked if a mistake was made regarding 1601-03 Lombard's classification in the 1990s and asserted that one was made then. He contended that we should not apply our current mindset to this problem, but should address as we would have in the 1990s.

Mr. Lavery moved to recommend that the application demonstrates that the building at 1601-03 Lombard Street does not reflect the character of the district as set forth in the statement of significance and that its conflicting classification should be corrected to non-contributing. Mr. Mooney seconded his motion, which failed with a tie vote. Messrs. Cohen and Schaaf voted against the motion. The Committee on Historic Designation could not agree on a recommendation on the reclassification request.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee offered no recommendation regarding the proposal to amend the contributing classification of 1601-03 Lombard Street in the historic district inventory. The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission strike the listing for 1602 Addison Street from the historic district inventory and transfer its descriptive information, but not its classification, to the 1601-03 Lombard Street entry.

ADDRESS: 718 S 2ND ST

Proposed Action: Rescind Designation

Property Owner: The Quarters at Queen Village

Applicant: Jacob Roller, J. Roller Development, LLC

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

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to rescind the designation of 718 S. 2nd Street. The Historical Commission designated the property on 24 June 1958. It was one of a very long list of Southwark properties designated that day. No explanation for its designation was provided in 1958, but a Historical Commission document from 1969 offers a clue. In 1969, the Historical Commission issued a report making recommendations for the restoration of the building. It stated:

This house was built about 1775. It has had a new front, probably in the 1930's. It is possible that the new bricks were laid over old brick. ... It is suggested, in the case of 718 S. Second Street that the contractor find out FIRST, whether the old, original front wall is behind the newer modern brick front. If so, then the present door and three windows are probably in their original positions and the one large window may even be

original in size (although not in style as it now looks). If this is true, then these openings must not be changed.

The report never suggests a course of action if the old brick façade is not behind the new façade. In fact, the original façade was not behind the yellow brick façade. Moreover, the entire building had been reconstructed, not in the 1930s, but in 1948. Under the headline “House Collapses; 5 Escape Death,” the *Inquirer* reported on 15 April 1945 that the house to the south at 720 S. 2nd Street had collapsed suddenly and unexpectedly. When it collapsed, it severely damaged the house in question at 718 S. 2nd Street. The *Inquirer* reported that the house at 718 was “condemned” and the family occupying it ordered to vacate. In May 1948, the City issued a permit for 718 S. 2nd Street to “rebuild brick front and rear wall to comply with condemnation notice.” While the permit to rebuild was limited to the front and rear walls, a thorough inspection of the property by the staff in 2006 revealed that the entire building had been reconstructed in 1948. All exterior walls of the main block and rear ell were constructed of new brick, mostly yellow. No original walls survived. Also, the framing system was entirely modern, with a steel beam supporting the floor joists in the basement. All finishes in the interior dated to the middle of the twentieth century, not the late eighteenth century. The building had the shape of a late eighteenth-century building, but was constructed entirely of mid twentieth-century fabric, with the possible exception of the front dormer, which appeared to be salvaged and reused.

In 2006, the Historical Commission approved a project that included the removal of the rear ell, rear wall of the main block, and rear slope of the roof in exchange for the replacement of the non-historic front façade with a replication of the historic front façade. The Commission approved the aggressive project because, as it acknowledged at the time, the building was not truly historic. The project also proposed to incorporate the remaining building at 718 S. 2nd Street into a larger residential building to be built on parcels to the south along 2nd Street and well as a leg that extended out to the north side of Monroe Street. The project faced many challenges including changing ownership and bankruptcy as well as work in excess of and without permits. The project eventually stalled and sat in a partially completed state for several years. The Department of Licenses & Inspections issued numerous violations and neighbors sued the developer, demanding the removal of the illegal structures. Eventually, a judge ordered the property owner to demolish the imminently dangerous, illegal structures including all but the front and side walls at 718 S. 2nd Street. That demolition was undertaken, leaving a shell of a building as seen in current photographs. The current applicant requesting the rescission, who is in his due diligence period before purchasing the property, played no role in the failed projects that led up to the demolition.

Section 5.14.b.1 of the Historical Commission’s Rules & Regulations dictates the circumstances in which the Commission may rescind a designation.

- 5.14.b.1 The Commission may rescind the designation of a building, structure, site, object, public interior portion of a building or structure, or district and remove its entry or entries from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places if:
- a. the resource has ceased to satisfy any Criteria for Designation because the qualities that caused its original entry have been lost or destroyed;
 - b. additional information shows that the resource does not satisfy one or more Criteria for Designation; or,
 - c. the Commission committed an error in professional judgment when it determined that the resource satisfied one or more Criteria for Designation.

The Commission may rescind if one or more of the conditions is met. In this case, the property satisfies all three of the conditions for rescission. With the court-ordered demolition, any qualities that might have caused its designation have been lost or destroyed, satisfying condition a. Additional information discovered in 2006 about the complete reconstruction of the building in 1948 shows that the building should not have been designated in 1958, satisfying condition b. And, the Commission's belief that historic fabric survived behind the non-historic yellow brick facades, which was subsequently disproven, demonstrates that the Commission committed an error in professional judgment when it designated the building in 1958, satisfying condition c.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the Historical Commission rescind the designation of 718 S. 2nd Street, removing its entry from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, pursuant to Section 5.14.b.1 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the rescission request to the Committee on Historic Designation. Developer Jacob Roller represented the application.

The Committee members reviewed the submission materials and agreed that the property should be rescinded from the Philadelphia Register because the building was not historically significant at the time of its designation in 1958, but was a later reconstruction, and because any historic fabric that potentially survived was lost with the court-ordered demolition. Mr. Roller introduced himself and stated that he agreed with the staff's presentation.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the Historical Commission rescind the designation of 718 S. 2nd Street, removing its entry from the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, pursuant to Section 5.14.b.1 of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations.

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee on Historic Designation adjourned at ??:?? a.m.

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.