

**THE MINUTES OF THE 663RD STATED MEETING OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**FRIDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2017
ROOM 18-029, 1515 ARCH STREET
BOB THOMAS, CHAIR**

PRESENT

Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D.
Terry Dillon, Department of Licenses & Inspections
Steven Hartner, Department of Public Property
Melissa Long, Division of Housing & Community Development
John Mattioni, Esq.
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
Rachel Royer, LEED AP BD+C
R. David Schaaf, RA, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
H. Ahada Stanford, Commerce Department
Betty Turner, M.A.

Jonathan E. Farnham, Executive Director
Randal Baron, Historic Preservation Planner III
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II

ALSO PRESENT

Jeffrey Hill, Christian Street Baptist Church
Venice Whitaker
Connie Winters, Historic Germantown Properties
Matthew Edwards, Orndorf & Associates
Sarah Richardson, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Stephen R. Murphy, Esq.
J.F. McCarthy, Historic Germantown
George E. Lotustu
Mary K. Doherty
Ben Leech, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Jared Solomon
Andrew Dalzell
Susan Reel Panish, Pella
Laurie Yuhnke, Trinity Church Oxford
Alex Aberle
Joseph Menkevich
Kay Healy
Stephen Wagner
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
John Buffington, Historical Society of Frankford
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Virginia McCracken, Trinity Church Oxford

Kyle Sammin, Trinity Church Oxford
Rustin Olher, Harmon Deutsch Architecture
Jeff Watson, Harmon Deutsch Architecture
Rich Villa, Ambit Architecture
Michael Gevurtz
Gary Gevurtz
Dwight Chavis, Victory Baptist Church
Allison Weiss, SOLO/GCA
Clayton Hicks, Christian Street Baptist Church
Linda Richardson, UEDC
David S. Traub, Save Our Sites
Gary Grisafi, Burholme Civic Association
Henry Clinton, Esq.
Tahnee Hall, Christian Street Baptist Church
Diane Hall, Christian Street Baptist Church
Adam Montalbano, Moto Design Shop
Heather Miller, Trinity Church Oxford
Margaret Katziner, Trinity Church Oxford
Susan McConomy, Trinity Church Oxford
Ron Cappella, Trinity Church Oxford
Joseph Bozzelli
Timothy Miller, Trinity Church Oxford
Nicholai Jablovkov
T. Jablovkov
Thomas Truesdale
Geoff Schwartz
Amy Furlong, Trinity Church Oxford
Lorie Henry, Trinity Church Oxford
Dava Costello, Christian Street Baptist Church
James Duffin, Apex Beauty School
Elaine Brown, Christian Street Baptist Church
Leslie Stokely, Christian Street Baptist Church
Michael Stokely, Christian Street Baptist Church
Andrea Cline-Thomas, NBC10
Cindy Hamilton, Heritage Consulting
Mark Galbraith
D.M. Harting
M. Shikomba, NOWAC
Josh Yeager
Shawn Wamsley, Trinity Church Oxford
Debra Kessler, Office of Rep. Solomon
Patricia Floyd
Carolyn Payne, Christian Street Baptist Church
Lewis Cook
Denise Cook
David Blumenfeld
Neil Sklaroff, Esq., Ballard Spahr
Oscar Beisert
Betty Graff
Don Graff

Eve Miller
Robert Hornsby
Lee O'Neill
Lawrence Weintraub
Carla Puppin
Marek Maj, MMB Contractors, Inc.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thomas called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Commissioners Cooperman, Dillon, Hartner, Long, Mattioni, McCoubrey, Royer, Schaaf, Stanford, and Turner joined him.

MINUTES OF THE 662ND STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ACTION: Ms. Turner moved to adopt the minutes of the 662nd Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 13 October 2017. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

THE REPORT OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE, 24 OCTOBER 2017

Dan McCoubrey, Chair

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Turner recused from the consideration of the consent agenda, owing to her involvement in the Tulpehocken neighborhood. Mr. Thomas introduced the consent agenda, which included an application for 240 W. Tulpehocken Street. Mr. Thomas asked if any Commissioners had comments on the Consent Agenda. None were offered. Mr. Thomas asked if anyone in the audience had comments on the Consent Agenda. None were offered.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to adopt the recommendation of the Architectural Committee for the application for 240 W. Tulpehocken Street. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

AGENDA

ADDRESS: 329 S 25TH ST

Proposal: Demolish roof and front and rear walls; construct addition and deck; reconstruct front façade

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: Geoffrey Schwartz

Applicant: Adam Montalbano, Moto DesignShop Inc.

History: 1855; façade replaced 1958

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval of the reconstruction of the front façade with corrected details, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9; denial of the demolition and addition as proposed, pursuant to Standards 9, 10 and Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance, the prohibition against demolition.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish the rear slope of the gable roof, front and rear walls, and rear dormer of this contributing row house in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District and to construct a third-floor addition behind the ridge pole of the roof. This level of removal constitutes a demolition in the legal sense and would require a finding of financial hardship or necessity in the public interest before any approval. Although much of the addition probably cannot be seen from the street, the roof deck and pilot house comprise a floor above the ridge line and would be visible from the park across the street. The current c. 1958 façade would be demolished and reconstructed, however, some details are not correct on the current elevations. The staff would support an addition that sits below the eave line of the existing building at the rear, preserving the rear slope and dormer.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Historical Commission. Architect Adam Montalbano and owner Geoffrey Schwartz represented the application.

Mr. Montalbano summarized the project. He said that, in response to the Architectural Committee's initial comments, they are now proposing a revised project that retains the front

gable slope and dormer. He said that the rear addition would likely not be visible from the park across the street, but that it might be visible from Panama Street. He displayed a photograph. He distributed a revised drawing showing that they have removed the pilot house and replaced it with an inverted stair from the back of the main block. He said that the front façade of this house has the greatest impact on the public, and they are proposing to reconstruct it. Mr. Thomas confirmed the location of the rear addition north of Panama Street. Mr. McCoubrey asserted that the applicant has proposed demolition of too much original fabric including the rear slope of the roof and dormer as well as the rear wall. He contended that it would constitute a demolition in the legal sense. Mr. Schwartz countered that the rear wall is already removed at the first floor.

Mr. Thomas opened the floor for public comment. Judy Fletcher, the neighbor at 327 S. 25th Street, expressed her concern that the work at 325 S. 25th Street could cause structural damage to her house. Mr. Montalbano assured her that an engineer will be reviewing their plans. Mr. Dillon, the representative of the Department of Licenses & Inspections on the Commission, said that sometimes brick facades are tied together. Mr. Montalbano explained that, when this façade was reconstructed in 1958, the brick was saw cut at the property line, separating this façade from the adjacent one. Mr. Thomas observed that the Department of Licenses & Inspections will review the plans for structural stability, not the Historical Commission.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the reconstruction of the front façade with corrected details, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9; and to deny the demolition and addition as proposed, pursuant to Standards 9, 10, and Section 14-1005(6)(d) of the historic preservation ordinance, the prohibition against demolition. Ms Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADDRESS: 240 W TULPEHOCKEN ST

Proposal: Construct enclosed exterior stair and elevator; install fence; construct dormer

Review Requested: Review In Concept

Owner: Tulpehocken Palazzo/Darin Bielby

Applicant: Adam Montalbano, Moto DesignShop Inc.

History: 1893; Harry K. Cummings Residence; Frank Miles Day, architect

Individual Designation: 3/9/2012

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend approval, provided ornamental caps are added to the fence, the steps are salvaged and rebuilt in the new location; the stair connector including its roofing and cladding material is restudied; and a dormer can be constructed on the west side, but the dormer on the south is unmodified, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to remove an existing non-historic rear fire escape and construct an enclosed stair and elevator as a primary means of egress from the second and third floors of this former single-family residence, which is being converted into apartments. After meeting with the Architectural Committee in October, the applicant withdrew the previous options and has returned with a revised design. The new enclosure would be more solid than last time and would sit further from the building to preserve more of the roof fabric. One south facing dormer is proposed to be replaced with a similar but slightly larger dormer. The staff asks whether the amount of space and light that is being gained from the larger dormer justifies the

removal of the original. The applicant also requests approval of a 48-inch high black metal fence with vertical pickets along Tulpehocken Street.

ACTION: See Consent Agenda.

ADDRESS: 321 S CAMAC ST

Proposal: Demolish rear wall and ell; construct addition; cut parking entrance in garden wall

Review Requested: Final Review

Owner: Catalina Gonzalez and Mark Galbraith

Applicant: Adam Montalbano, Moto DesignShop Inc.

History: 1829

Individual Designation: 2/28/1961

District Designation: None

Staff Contact: Randal Baron, randal.baron@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial of the rear addition and gate, but approval of the front rehabilitation if it is historically accurate, with the staff to review the details.

OVERVIEW: This row house faces onto Camac Street; at the rear is a garden with brick fence on Fawn Street. A series of early houses face onto Fawn Street, as well as some rears. This application proposes to remove the highly visible original rear wall of the house set back from but facing Fawn Street and replace it with a two-story addition and green roof. The proposed glass and wood faced addition would use an architectural vocabulary incompatible with the existing building. The brick fence wall at the rear of the property would be largely demolished and replaced with garage doors.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Baron presented the application to the Historical Commission. Architect Adam Montalbano and owner Mark Galbraith represented the application.

Mr. Baron explained that the application has been revised to retain a portion of the rear wall at the second floor. The front façade has been modified to correct some details at the bulkhead and the windows. However, the dormer has reverted to the older incorrect window design. The issues of the demolition at the rear garden wall and the incompatible design of the addition still remain. Mr. McCoubrey stated that he appreciates that the rear wall is now being retained. However, the design of the addition is still incompatible with the building and its surroundings. He noted that the Committee could not come to consensus regarding the matter of the garden wall.

Mr. Montalbano said that he had researched the approvals for the neighboring building at 319 S. Camac and found that the Historical Commission had allowed for the demolition of the dormer and rear slope of that roof in 1980 and a large addition with deck in 2014.

Mr. Thomas opined that the massing of the addition appears acceptable. However, the Historical Commission would need to consider the design of the façade of the addition. He suggested that the design of the addition be remanded to the Architectural Committee for additional review. Mr. Baron pointed out that the Architectural Committee had recommended denial of this exact design for the façade of the addition.

Mr. Thomas opened the floor for public comment. David Traub of Save Our Sites urged the Commission to treat this application as a front façade. He said that Fawn Street at the rear of the building is a significant street with a mix of front and rear facades and that this addition will be highly visible along this streetscape.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the restoration of the front façade, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standard 9; and to deny the demolition and addition as proposed, pursuant to Standards 9 and 10. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADDRESS: 2016 LOCUST ST

Proposal: Demolish rear roof and dormer; construct addition and rear deck

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 2016 Locust Street LLC

Applicant: Richard Villa, Ambit Architecture

History: 1845; refaced c. 1960

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Rittenhouse Fitler Residential Historic District, Contributing, 2/8/1995

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

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend denial, pursuant to Standards 2, 9, and 10.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish the rear slope and dormer of the main block of this building, and to construct an addition with a flat roof. The addition would extend from just below the ridgeline of the gable roof and across a portion of the building that spans between the original house and a later three-story addition. The addition would be clad in fiber cement panels and wood decking material and would open out onto a new deck. New windows would be installed in the existing rear window openings, but the application does not specify the material of these windows.

DISCUSSION: Ms. DiPasquale presented the application to the Historical Commission. Architect Richard Villa and property owner Marek Maj represented the application.

Mr. Villa explained that the building is currently multi-family, and is proposed to remain multi-family. The rear roof and dormer would be removed and none of the construction would be visible from Locust Street or Latimer Street, which is the back alley. Latimer Street is not a through-street, and dead-ends against the rears of properties along 20th Street just past this property. He opined that the addition would not be visible from any public right-of-way. He noted that the existing/original building probably had a light well. A two-story addition at the back, was replaced at some point and built out to where it currently sits, which is about eight feet from the Latimer Street property line. The existing rear addition blocks views of the proposed addition. He noted that they are not proposing to modify the front façade, pitched roof, or dormer. He opined that the building is not individually designated, and is only designated as part of the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District. Mr. Thomas clarified that the building is, in fact, designated, even if only as a resource within the district. Mr. McCoubrey explained that the Architectural Committee agreed with the staff that, even though the alteration would not be visible, it is a proposal to remove character-defining features, the rear gable and dormer.

Mr. Thomas asked whether page D-1 of the architectural drawings, the demolition section, is the only section drawing included in the submission. Mr. Villa confirmed that it is. Mr. Thomas asked whether the dotted line depicts the existing building. Mr. Villa responded affirmatively, and explained that page A-4 shows that the third story in the back does exist, but will be reframed and reinsulated. Mr. Thomas noted that the proposed modifications will take place in the middle of the building.

Mr. McCoubrey explained that the Architectural Committee felt that the loss of the rear gable and dormer resulted in the gain of only a small area in the room at the rear, and that if the gable and dormer were to remain, the dormer could provide access out to a roof deck. Mr. Villa responded that they would be willing to retain the beams in the building and construct the addition over top the beams. Mr. Thomas clarified that the Committee suggested retaining the massing, but to cut the dormer window down to become a door. Mr. McCoubrey confirmed that the massing of the gabled roof and dormer, which are character-defining features. Mr. McCoubrey noted that there is little left of the original rear wall below the third floor. Mr. Villa explained that there is a small portion, but it is not properly supported.

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

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to deny the application, pursuant to Standards 2, 9, and 10. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 9 to 2. Messrs. Hartner and Mattioni dissented.

ADDRESS: 4044, 4046, 4048, AND 4050 MAIN ST

Proposal: Demolish buildings; retain façades; construct building

Review Requested: Final Approval

Owner: 4044 and 4046 Main St, Allegheny Distribution & Delivery

4048 Main St, 4048 Main LP

4050 Main St, Gary and Susan Gevurtz

Applicant: Rotciver Lebron, Harman Deutsch

History: 4044, 4046, and 4048 Main St, 1860

4050 Main St, 1850, Roxborough Mills/Fidelity Machine Works/Wilson ChildsWagon Works

Individual Designation: None

District Designation: Manayunk Historic District, Contributing and Significant, 12/14/1983

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

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Architectural Committee voted to recommend that the Historical Commission find that the selective demolition is necessary in the public interest and approve the application, with the staff to review details, provided:

- the facades of the rowhouses are braced, retained, and reused, not demolished and reconstructed;
- the rooflines, windows, and doors of the rowhouses are restored to their original appearances;
- the balconies on the mill building have a simple metal rail and no projection;
- the metal panels above the addition's windows are removed and the window openings are punched openings;
- the addition has a sloped roof and its height is reduced;
- the windows in the historic buildings are wood, those in the addition are aluminum, the second-story windows in the existing rear building have a historic industrial appearance, and no vinyl windows are used in the project; and,
- real stucco, not EIFS, is used.

OVERVIEW: This application proposes to demolish most of the three rowhouses at 4044, 4046, and 4048 Main Street, leaving only a portion of the side façade of 4044 Main Street and the front facades of the three rowhouses intact. The historic Wagon Works buildings would be retained, though most of the adjacent structure behind would be demolished. It proposes to convert the remaining sections of the structures into a mixed-used residential and commercial building with indoor parking. The proposed multi-story addition would be set back approximately 42-feet from Main Street, with another significant setback from the Shurs Lane façade. The new building would total four stories in height, and would be clad in red brick. The material of the addition's windows is not identified, and the application proposes to retain the existing vinyl windows at the rowhouses or to replace them in kind and to install aluminum coping around the frames. Two second-story window openings on the mill building would be converted to doors and Juliet balconies would be installed. A garage door would be inserted at the first floor of 4048 Main Street to allow access to interior parking. The rear elevation, which faces the Schuylkill River, would feature balconies within the proposed addition, and several new openings would be punched through the existing second-story façade of the mill building.

The staff contends that this application proposes a demolition, the destruction of a building in whole or in significant part, and is therefore prohibited by the preservation ordinance unless the Historical Commission finds that the buildings cannot be feasibly adaptively reused or that the demolition is necessary in the public interest. The application makes no reuse or public interest arguments, but such an argument might be formulated, owing to numerous violations as well as

problems associated with redeveloping properties in the flood plain. If an argument is made and the project is considered, the front facades should be faithfully restored and the additions should be clad and fenestrated in ways that are compatible with the historic mill building. For example, stucco and stone would be more appropriate than brick for cladding.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Keller presented the application to the Historical Commission. Attorney Henry Clinton and architects Rustin Ohler and Jeff Watson represented the application.

Mr. McCoubrey commented that the revisions reflect the Architectural Committee's comments and concerns very well. The Committee, he continued, found that, although the proposal would constitute a demolition, the work could be considered necessary in the public interest, since there would be no other alternative to saving the three rowhouse facades, given that they exist in the floodplain. The rowhouses, he added, are also considered imminently dangerous and are subject to flooding at least twice a year, which has eroded foundation material. Mr. McCoubrey argued that this project enables their preservation. He then stated that the application does not propose new construction immediately above the historic structures and that their mass would be maintained. Those aspects of the application, he contended, offer a favorable argument for considering the proposal as necessary in the public interest. He stated that the Committee was prepared to accept those arguments as a legitimate consideration.

Mr. Thomas noted that the application presents information pertaining to the violations on two of the rowhouses, which were issued by the Department of Licenses & Inspections. Mr. McCoubrey added that the rowhouses are in very poor condition and that three additional rowhouses had been demolished owing to imminently dangerous conditions.

Mr. McCoubrey reiterated that the design of the addition reflects the Architectural Committee's comments. As a point of clarification, he request that the muntins on all fenestration have depth and dimension and not be sandwich muntins. He further asked that the profile of the new construction be kept as low as possible and expressed concern over the spandrels above the windows. Ms. Cooperman asked for clarification on the muntin type. Mr. McCoubrey answered that the muntins could be simulated-divided-light muntins, so they contain an exterior profile and are not sandwiched between glass panes.

Mr. Thomas asked the applicant if he is agreeable to the muntin condition, and Mr. Ohler responded that he agreed to the same request made by staff prior to the meeting. He confirmed that the project would incorporate exterior applied muntins. Mr. Thomas then asked if the applicant was amenable to the other conditions of the Committee's recommendation. Mr. Watson responded that he has agreed to those conditions and revised the application to reflect the Committee's requests.

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

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to approve the revised application, with the staff to review details, pursuant to Standards 6 and 9. Ms. Royer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION, 18 OCTOBER 2017

Emily Cooperman, Chair

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

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.

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.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Thomas Truesdale represented the property owner. No one represented the nomination.

Mr. Truesdale stated that he is the Property Chairman for the church. He stated that the address that the Commission is using is incorrect, and claimed that the correct address is 1946 Welsh Road. He stated that because of the incorrect address, he personally did not get notice of the proposed designation until Monday, 6 November 2017. He stated that a meeting of the vestry was held the same day, and they respectfully decline to be historically designated at this time. He commented that the church is "going through something right now and cannot handle it."

David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, commented that he is unsure why a custodian of this church would object to its historic designation, because he cannot imagine anyone wanting to demolish or inappropriately alter the buildings. He commented that he has visited the church several times and it is one of the first English Gothic churches in the region, and should be historically designated. Oscar Beisert, representing the Keeping Society of Philadelphia, commented that he supports the historic designation, as this is one of the great buildings in this section of Philadelphia.

Mr. Schaaf commented that the church was highlighted as a property to designate as historic in the Planning Commission's Far Northeast District Plan.

Mr. Farnham explained that the staff originally sent the notice to the property owner at the address 1930-54 Welsh Road, the official address assigned by the City's Office of Property Assessment. That notice was sent on 18 September 2017. Those letters were returned as "undeliverable." Owing to the returned letters, on 27 September 2017, the staff sent a second notice to 1946 Welsh Road, the address that the church lists on its website. Additionally, one

day prior, on 26 September 2017, the staff sent an email to the email address listed on the church website, but no response was received. The staff's contention is that 1930-54 Welsh Road is the correct address and the notice requirement was satisfied.

ACTION: Mr. Schaaf moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1930-54 Welsh Road, also known as 1946 Welsh Road, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and I, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

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.

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.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. No one represented the nomination or the property owner.

The Commissioners discussed the nomination and agreed that the property satisfies the cited Criteria for Designation.

Mr. Thomas asked for public comment, of which there was none.

ACTION: Ms. Turner moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 4238-40 Wallace Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

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.

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.”

DISCUSSION: Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Oscar Beisert represented the nomination. No one represented the property owner.

Mr. Beisert stated that he was asked to research the history of the house by numerous Fishtown residents and found that the structure was likely built in the late 1820s, potentially as late as 1839. The property, he continued, had remained in the family since the late 1700s and was eventually sold in the 1920s. He argued that the most unusual aspect of the building is its type, which, he contended, the Committee on Historic Designation acknowledged. Mr. Beisert noted that the scale is large for a wooden house in that part of the city. In conducting a basic survey of the 1916/1917 Sanborn atlases, he identified approximately 926 wooden houses within the traditional boundaries of Fishtown, which extended from Girard Avenue and Wilkey Street at the south, Front Street at the west, York Street at the north, and the Delaware River at the east. He concluded that only around 170 of those structures survive today. Among the original 926 wooden houses, he added, 42 were corner properties. He asserted that only eight survive and most are single-pile houses. Mr. Beisert suggested that the structure is an example of an unusual survivor.

Fishtown resident Venice Whitaker remarked that she observes demolition of wooden houses over and over as she walks down the neighborhood street. These houses, she added, were built in Fishtown and are being lost. She commented that this house is across the street from the Adaire Alexander School and that her daughter loves the building. She contended that the building contains a wood-frame storefront and represents an example of the remaining building stock that speaks to the history of the river wards in Fishtown. As a resident, she implored the Commission to designate the property, adding that only the Commission can set precedence of the importance of wooden frame houses in the river wards.

Joseph Jaeger stated that this house in particular caught his interest, because of the significance of the property, being a corner unit, which he contended is now very rare. The wooden structure, he continued, has a detailed and rich history of both retail and residential use. He concluded that the property is worthy of historic designation.

Mr. Thomas asked if the property owner is present, noting that the owner attended the Committee on Historic Designation meeting. No one came forward.

Mr. Dillon inquired about the notice posted by the Department of Licenses and Inspections. Several community members replied that it is a zoning notice.

ACTION: Ms. Turner moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1250 E. Palmer Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, I, and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

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.

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 noted that a representative of the property owner would like to request a continuance of the review. Attorney Stephen Murphy explained that he was recently retained to represent Bellao LLC, the property owner. He noted that he is not familiar with the situation and would like time to review the materials and confer with his client. Mr. Thomas asked whether it would be acceptable to continue the review to the December 2017 meeting of the Historical Commission. Mr. Murphy responded that that would be fine.

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

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to continue consideration of the nomination for 714-16 W Girard Avenue to the 8 December 2017 meeting of the Historical Commission. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

David Blumenfeld, the owner of 1601-03 Lombard Street asked the Historical Commission to delay the review of the reclassification application for the property until David Orphanides, his attorney, arrived at the meeting. Mr. Thomas agreed to delay the review until the attorney arrived.

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

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.

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.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the rescission request to the Historical Commission. Developer Jacob Roller represented the application.

Mr. Thomas stated that the case has been made very clearly for the rescission of the designation of the property. He asked if any Commissioners had questions or comments. None were offered. He asked if anyone in the audience had comments. None were offered. He asked the equitable owner, Mr. Roller, if he wished to make a statement. He replied that he did not.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to 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. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

ADDRESS: 18 AND 20 E JOHNSON ST

Name of Resource: Samuel Harting House, Office, and Stable

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Igor and Nadeshda Jablovkov

Nominator: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 18 and 20 E. Johnson Street satisfy Criteria for Designation A, C, D, I, and J.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the properties at 18 and 20 Johnson Street as historic and list them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the Samuel Harting House, Office, and Stable are significant under Criteria for Designation A, C, D, and J. The nomination contends that the properties hold significance to the development and heritage of Germantown and together comprised one of several properties purchased by developer Thomas Reilly following the subdivision of the Chew estate. The nomination argues that the structure at 20 E. Johnson Street represents the bracketed mode of the Gothic Revival style, and that all three buildings represent the house, office, and stable typology historically prevalent in the city. The nomination further assigns significance to the properties' former owner Samuel Harting, a prominent local contractor and builder who lived in the Gothic Revival structure and operated his business out of the adjacent office.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Owners Tania and Nicholai Jablovkov represented the property. Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

Mr. Jablovkov read a prepared statement:

During World War II, our parents were refugees without a home, living and working in labor camps in Germany. They came to America in the 1950s in search of a new and better life, the American Dream. Within days of their arrival, my father was working as a watchmaker on Jewelers' Row, a job he continued until his retirement. Our parents lived frugally, renting an apartment until they saved enough money to buy a house. In 1957, Igor and his wife Nadeshda found such a house at 20 E. Johnson Street. When we grew up, our parents, who made memories of playing in the same house, this an experience every parent can share with a child. This is a home filled with memories made over sixty years, twice as a long as the Hartings lived there. After careful consideration over the

past seven months, we have yet to understand what the historical value of the property serves in the real history of Germantown. The historical value of Germantown is not contingent upon Samuel Harting's contributions in the early twentieth century, but rather for its role in the struggle for independence from British rule. Every October, people come to witness the reenactment of the Battle of Germantown led by George Washington. Visitors spend a day immersed in and learning about the colonial era of Germantown. This is the true historical significance of our heritage. Tourists come to visit the eighteenth-century sites and colonial mansions. They are not interested in seeing the original home of the contractor and builder Samuel Harting, who was not a famous person. Who before this nomination knew the name Samuel Harting or my father, Igor Jablovkov? They were just two ordinary men who both bought the East Johnson Street home and are not significant to the history of Germantown. They only matter to their own families and not to the community at large. The nomination of the properties creates a financial hardship for the owners. The properties need updating and repairs. There is no market now or in the foreseeable future for small office space or stables. 20 E. Johnson Street is in need of energy-efficient windows and other façade improvements. For all the reasons I mentioned, I implore the Historical Commission to not place the property at 18 and 20 E. Johnson Street on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Thomas stated that the Commission received letters from Cliveden and SoLo/Germantown Civic Association in support of the nomination. Mr. Jablovkov asked to see copies of the letters.

Mr. Beisert remarked that the letters were submitted in part because David Young, director of Cliveden, manages an important historic property surrounded by other historic properties. He contended that when an individual attends the reenactment of the Battle of Germantown, that person does not experience an isolated historic property surrounded by apartment buildings. That person, he continued, experiences a battle that is surrounded by nineteenth-century architecture that lends to the feeling of the historic place. Mr. Beisert argued that the E. Johnson Street property is significant under Criteria for Designation C and D, which pertain to building type and specifically the Gothic Revival house built as part of the suburbanization of Johnson Street and its surrounding small development. In 1908, he added, Samuel Harting purchased the E. Johnson Street property and reused the historic house, even as a builder, and constructed the Colonial Revival real estate office at the corner. He asserted that anyone traveling on Germantown Avenue sees that E. Johnson Street is lined with historic properties, though, he noted, not all are designated. He described Harting's stable at the rear of the property, calling the ensemble a unique surviving property type that combines residential and commercial. As presented in the nomination, he continued, these little one-story office buildings once stood all over the city, but now very few survive. He claimed that at least three of the neighbors in the area had said they would love to turn the office into a small house, though it is zoned commercial. He observed that much of the property had never been developed and that when E. Johnson Street was established, Andrew Chew had a cemetery built for the British soldiers uncovered during construction. He noted that the Committee on Historic Designation recommended the inclusion of Criterion I.

Robert Harting, grandson of Samuel Harting, voiced his support for the nomination as a mechanism to preserve the property. He spoke of his grandparents and how, during World War II, they, like many others, built a victory garden at the rear of the house. He recollected how he was told, in the late 1940s, as his grandparents dug the soil, they discovered muskets, coins, buttons, and many other Revolutionary War artifacts. He reiterated that the property is located immediately across from Cliveden and that the battle took place on those grounds. He argued

that the property holds more than architectural significance due to its links to the Revolutionary War, as has been mentioned. He contended that it is vital to preserve the area and keep some of the Revolutionary War concepts in mind.

Mr. Thomas asked Mr. Beisert why he did not include Criterion I when writing the nomination. Ms. Cooperman responded that the Criterion was recommended by the Committee.

Ms. Jablovskaya responded to Mr. Harting's comment about recovering muskets and other artifacts from the property by suggesting that all artifacts must have already been dug from the site. Her mother, she continued, maintained an orchard and 100 tomato plants. She recalled that her mother planted any vegetable imaginable and also composted. There was an above-ground swimming pool that was dug into a portion of the ground to allow the kids to jump and dive, she added. Ms. Jablovskaya recalled that six kids grew up in the house and never came home with coins or artifacts. She then stated that she and her brother have no plans to demolish the buildings and that the family has owned the property for over 61 years. She offered a number of personal anecdotes about her father and the property and discussed her current extended family and their use of the house.

Joe McCarthy expressed support for the nomination on behalf of Historic Germantown and the local RCO. In response to the discussion on the Battle of Germantown, Mr. McCarthy noted that the battle did not just take place on the grounds of Cliveden and that it occurred up and down Germantown Avenue. The Johnson Street property, he continued, was one part of the entire battle. He opined that historic preservation guarantees protection not only of a building but that a property will be saved for whoever owns it. He asserted that he understands the personal investment of the present owners, but argued that the Commission needs to think past their ownership and think of the next 100 years. He then acknowledged that the E. Johnson Street house is not another Cliveden or equivalent first-rate historic property but is important because it contributes to the neighborhood and is part of the fabric of Germantown. He noted that more than one house resembles the Gothic Revival structure, but to not guarantee its future would rip at the fabric of Germantown.

Connie Winters, an owner of historic Germantown properties, spoke in favor of the nomination, stating that the property is important in the context of Germantown Avenue and the overall neighborhood. She contended that it is very important to guarantee that the property is properly restored, since it is imminently marketable. She commented that she owns the property at 239 W. Walnut Lane, which is directly across from an apartment building that has been owned by the same family for years and that has had the cheapest materials installed with no regard to the impact on the neighborhood. Without designation, she continued, there would be no guarantee that the building would be sensitively renovated in a manner that contributes to the history of the neighborhood.

Mr. Farnham stated that three or four years ago, the staff of the Historical Commission conducted a survey of Gothic Revival buildings and identified this building at 20 E. Johnson Street on that list. He called it one of the finest Gothic Revival buildings discovered during the citywide survey. As far as buildings of that style go, he continued, this building is one of the more important in the city. However, he contended that he does not find the arguments at all compelling regarding the office building and stable and noted that he is disagreeing with the Committee on Historic Designation. Harting, he continued, was a very minor character among contractors in Northwest Philadelphia in the early twentieth century, adding that there were many grand stone houses built in Germantown, Mount Airy, and Chestnut Hill during that period.

Mr. Farnham stated that Harting built a handful of those buildings, but he is not a George Woodward or Ashton Tourison. He further expressed concern about the designation of the office building and stable for their association to Harting and also as a type. He urged the Commission to consider the relative importance of the house compared to the stable and office building.

Mr. Beisert claimed that the nomination does not contend that Samuel Harting is significant. Instead, he continued, it contends that the office and stable represent a property type that is vanishing, adding that it is less usual to see an office building, stable, and house all on one property and all over 100 years old. He argued that many of those buildings have been lost. He again defended his claim that he did not contend that Samuel Harting was greatly significant, but instead argued that the other buildings represent a type of middle-class business that was family-owned and is representative of the period. Samuel Harting, he continued, could have built a stucco-clad office with a flat roof, but instead chose to build an office with Flemish bond brick. He added that the office, unlike the house, was built along the street because it served as a commercial property. He reiterated that it represents a time and period and disagreed with Mr. Farnham on his point about the office and stable.

Mr. Thomas noted that Vice Chair Betty Turner recused, owing to her lack of previous knowledge of a support letter submitted by SoLo/Germantown Civic Association, of which she is associated.

David Traub of Save Our Sites noted that the owners had stated that they do not have any intention to demolish the building, but argued that the owners may change their minds in the future. He then contended that restoring, maintaining, and repairing the existing Gothic Revival house would not present an insurmountable financial burden, adding that the house could be incrementally restored over a period of several years so as not to impose a terrible burden upon the owners. He stated that Save Our Sites endorses the designation of the property, commenting that the office building and stable provide context for the Gothic Revival structure. For that reason, he continued, he feels the site should be saved in its entirety.

Paul Steinke stated that he would like to go on record that the Preservation Alliance supports the nomination and pointed out for the benefit of the property owners that historic designation does not compel the owner to take any action to restore, change, or renovate the properties. Instead, he continued, it means that when the time comes for the owner to decide to make a change, he or she would work with the Historical Commission staff to obtain approval for any plans. He added that designation does not cause an owner to incur costs immediately, and only when work such as window or roof replacement is necessary does the owner need to seek approval.

Mr. Jablovok responded that he finds it very gratifying that so many people are interested in his home. He observed that there has been more discussion about 20 E. Johnson Street than some other properties. He then implored the Commission, as Mr. Farnham had suggested, to find that the stable and office building do not contribute to the historical value of Germantown. He then noted that Mr. Beisert has some interest in purchasing the office building, as he learned on Mr. Beisert's Facebook page. He stated that there is some vested interest on Mr. Beisert's part for having the building designated. Mr. Jablovok questioned Mr. Beisert's intentions in nominating the properties when he has an interest in purchasing them. He then requested that the Historical Commission vote on the properties separately, rather than holding a single vote for all three buildings, since the buildings have different merits. For example, he continued, the Flemish bond brick of the office is found throughout Center City. He also argued that the Gothic Revival

house was not yet constructed when the Battle of Germantown took place and that he could not understand the connection between his property and the battle or how the house is significant to that aspect of history.

Mr. Thomas clarified that the property's connection to the Battle of Germantown is based on the archaeological Criteria for Designation, Criterion I. Mr. Jablovok countered that that is not what is being discussed; archaeology is never mentioned in the nomination. Mr. Thomas responded that there are 10 criteria, and one of those pertains to archaeology, which was discussed at the Committee on Historic Designation meeting. Mr. Jablovok acknowledged that archaeology was discussed, but argued that in all 60 years his family has been digging at the property, nothing has been recovered.

Mr. Thomas addressed Mr. Jablovok's request to vote individually on the properties and stated that the Commission could consider taking separate votes, though the Commission's standard practice is to vote on a single parcel in one motion. Mr. Jablovok replied that the property consists of two separate parcels. Mr. Farnham confirmed that the nomination includes two separate OPA addresses, two separate tax accounts, so the Historical Commission and the City consider it two different properties, though both are proposed for designation under one nomination. Mr. Thomas asked whether, in terms of voting, the Commission should vote on them separately. Mr. Mattioni answered that the Commission should vote on them however the motion is made.

Mr. McCoubrey requested clarification on the property line. Mr. Farnham answered that the nomination documents the property boundaries for the two parcels. Ms. Cooperman clarified that the stable is included on the same parcel as the house and that the office is separate.

Mr. Schaaf remarked that he finds that the office building and stable provide an edge to the site and define a de facto street leading back to Harrison Court, which consists of small nineteenth-century houses. The way that this site is composed, he added, the office and stable do provide definition of a small street. He contended that losing those buildings would cause the site to lose some of its power and historic definition. It was noted that the driveway to the apartment complex is not part of the nominated property. Mr. Thomas observed that some older atlases copied in the nomination show those houses being accessed not from Johnson Street but from Germantown Avenue. Mr. Jablovok stated that he believes it is not a public street, but that there is an easement that allows its use.

James Duffin posited another approach to the property. The office is fairly significant, he argued, particularly because of the streetscape, adding that it is clearly visible from the corner of Germantown Avenue and Johnson Street and also highly visible on Johnson Street. He noted that Johnson Street is a busy street and functions as a major cross street that connects Lincoln Drive to points like Belfield Road and further into parts of East Mount Airy and West Oak Lane. The office itself, he reiterated, is an important part of the streetscape. He suggested that the Commission could not designate the carriage house at the rear but could retain the office, though potentially just the front portion of the building, since the rear has a later addition. He asserted that in that scenario, the main streetscape and visible façade would be preserved, but not the other non-visible building on the property. He called the office "stunning" because of its Flemish bond style and stated that it is "striking" compared to other office styles that survive, though he contended that there are not many.

Mr. Thomas clarified that Mr. Duffin suggested not designating the office addition. Mr. Duffin affirmed, adding that the front of the building is the most significant part because it represents Harting's public face that he created as a contractor by advertising that little building.

Ms. Cooperman stated that she remembered remarking at the Committee on Historic Designation meeting that she found compelling the evidence produced in the nomination regarding the relationship between residential and office properties historically in Germantown and that this represents that pattern very forcefully. She added that the office is a building that stands on its own merit. She added that, given the fact that the rear building, the stable, is not concurrent with the construction of the house itself, it does not have any historic association with that building though it is part of the same parcel.

Mr. Thomas asked whether Ms. Cooperman was stating that the significant components are the house and office but not the stable at the rear of 20 E. Johnson Street. Ms. Cooperman affirmed.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the properties at 18 and 20 E. Johnson Street satisfy Criteria for Designation A, C, D, I, and J, and to designate them as historic, listing them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, with the stable at 20 E. Johnson Street to be considered non-contributing to the historical significance of the property. Mr. Schaaf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Following the motion, Mr. Jablovskiy stated that the Commission had discussed the office being two separate pieces and inquired whether only the front portion of the building was designated and whether the rear addition is not designated. Members of the Commission asked if a motion to clarify designation of the office building could be made. Mr. Farnham stated that he believed that the Commission could clarify the motion but stated that if the goal is to indicate that the rear piece is not historically significant, the Commission could direct the staff to take that into account whenever it reviews permit applications for the property. He added that the Commission could also find that the office addition is a non-contributing piece to the 18 E. Johnson Street property.

ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to clarify the designation of 18 E. Johnson Street, identifying the rear addition of the office building as non-contributing to the historic significance of the property. Mr. Mattioni seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

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.

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 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.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Farnham presented the reclassification request to the Historical Commission. Consultant Cindy Hamilton, attorney David Orphanides, and developer David Blumenfeld represented the application.

Mr. Farnham informed the Historical Commission that a third party had submitted additional information regarding the history of the building in question. He noted that he had emailed the information to all Commissioners upon its receipt. He explained that the information regarding the use of the building as a nightclub and later as a beauty school expanded on information already provided by the property owner in his request to correct the classification of the property. He also noted that he had received two emails expressing opinions about the request and had provided copies of those emails to the Commissioners at the start of the meeting.

Mr. Orphanides described the property with frontages on Lombard, 16th and Addison Streets. He stated that the extant building resulted from the interconnection of multiple buildings. He explained that the resulting building has had many uses. Mr. Orphanides observed that the building was incorrectly classified twice in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District inventory, once as contributing and once as non-contributing. He stated that the building confused the Commission at the time it designated the historic district. He stated that the building has been altered many times. Mr. Orphanides stated that, while the building has been altered, the conversation should be correctly limited to the determining whether the building should have been classified as contributing or non-contributing, based on the definitions of those terms in the Rules & Regulations. He noted that a contributing building is one that reflects the character of the district as set forth in the statement of significance in the nomination for the historic district. A non-contributing building is one that has no relationship to the character of the district through history, architecture, design or plan as set forth in the statement of significance. He observed that some of the conversation at the Committee on Historic Designation meeting as well as the new information submitted by the third party was irrelevant because the Commission's task is to determine whether the building reflects the character of the district as set forth in the statement of significance, not to determine whether the building has an interesting history. He asserted that the Commissioners need to place themselves in the context of 1995 and determine how this building should have been classified at that time. He reported that the Committee members were split on this matter and offered no recommendation. He contended that the Committee members who favored a classification of contributing seemed to be looking for new information about this building's history that is unrelated to the district's statement of significance, while the members who supported a classification of non-contributing seemed to rely on the statement as a basis for determining its historical significance. He stated that the new information may reveal new aspects of this building's history, but it is unrelated to the historic district as defined. He suggested that that new information may be introduced through other processes, but it is irrelevant to this review, which is predicated on the adopted statement of significance. He asserted that the Commission must apply the very narrow standard, as Mr. Farnham noted at the Committee on Historic Designation meeting. He stated that, if the appropriate criteria are applied, this property should be reclassified from both contributing and non-contributing, to non-contributing in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District. He stated that he is in no way disparaging the other aspects of this building's history, but simply asking the Historical Commission to maintain the correct focus and not be distracted by extraneous information, however interesting it may be.

Ms. Hamilton stated that this is a commercial building in a residential district. She stated that her report demonstrates that this building is more analogous to the non-contributing buildings in the district than it is to the contributing buildings. She stated that the building was a "non-descript,

vernacular, commercial building” when it was constructed. It had a transient occupancy with frequent tenant turnover. No single tenant was associated with the building for more than a decade. Photographs show that the building has been modified numerous times. Stucco has been added. Storefronts and fenestration has been significantly altered. The cornice has been removed. Every exterior feature of the building has been altered or removed. The historic district was designated as a cohesive residential neighborhood of architectural significance. Buildings classified as contributing in the district are residential or directly support the residences. Commercial buildings were generally classified as non-contributing. Some buildings that were originally residential and then converted to commercial uses, that are also architect designed and retain high integrity, are classified as contributing. However, other commercial buildings like this one are classified as non-contributing. The report demonstrates that this building is more like those classified as non-contributing. The building does not reflect the historical or architectural character of the historic district. The building is wrongly listed as both contributing and non-contributing. The Commission should address that technical question, the appropriate classification of the building.

Mr. Orphanides stated that this building clearly should have been classified as non-contributing, when evaluated in the context of the district’s statement of significance. He observed that the statement describes the district as a residential neighborhood where Philadelphia’s most sophisticated and talented architects designed residential buildings. Mr. Orphanides noted that some at the Committee meeting worried that a reclassification here would result in numerous other requests. He asserted that such a concern is unfounded. Such reclassifications have already occurred and have been fairly rare over the years. If a reclassification was going to open the floodgates, then that would have already happened. This would not be the first reclassification and would not set any precedent. He asked the Commission to review his request on its merits and not base a decision on an unfounded fear. If this building is evaluated on its history, it must be reclassified. Mr. Orphanides addressed the building’s limited use as a branch of the Apex Beauty School. He stated that this site was not the first or most important branch of the Apex Beauty School, but was one of many branches throughout the country. He concluded, asking the Commission to look at these unique circumstances and facts.

Linda Richardson introduced herself as the president of the Uptown Entertainment and Development Corporation, owner of the Uptown Theater. She stated that she has been trained by the National Trust as a preservationist. She stated that she has identified many African-American historical sites and is working to develop tours of the sites. She stated that the first tour will involve sites in the 7th Ward, where this building is located. Five other tours will be developed. She stated that the beauty culture business was one means through which African Americans moved into the middle class. She stated that buildings are significant to African-American history for what happened inside, not for who designed them. She observed that many residential buildings were used for commercial purposes along Lombard Street. She stated that she is working to preserve historic sites like the Uptown Theater. She contended that the Apex Beauty Movement was a movement designed to bring African Americans into the middle class. She noted that Avon and Mary Kay may have taken advantage of knowledge from Apex. She stated that this has become the model for selling beauty products in this country. She concluded that many buildings have become “desensitized” because of the current uses, but historic preservation is “very vital” so that “we save sites that no longer exist.”

James Duffin remarked that the building will be demolished if it is reclassified. He stated that he conducted research on the building and submitted his results to the Historical Commission as a report. He asserted that the Apex Beauty School, which rented the building for about a decade,

was historically significant. He stated that important African-American figures spoke at the school's commencements. He stated that it is important to consider this building and its many uses within the context of the historic district. This site was used as a bar and drug store as far back as the 1860s. The building that once stood at 1603 Lombard was used as a tavern. Victor Hamilton and his partner constructed the extant building as a saloon and restaurant. The use is consistent with the neighborhood. Mr. Duffin quoted Richard Tyler, the former director of the Historical Commission, who said in 2004 that the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District "did not have an end date for its period of significance and that the classifications were based on the building's historic use, massing, scale, and rhythm." He also noted that the Committee on Historic Designation suggested in 1987 that "the term Contributing applies to buildings that add to the historical and architectural fabric of the district. This includes buildings that have been refaced at a later period but still retain the scale of the streetscape, and modern buildings that contribute positively to a streetscape through their scale, materials or detail. Buildings that are both relatively contemporary and badly out of scale to their streetscape are labeled non-contributing." Mr. Duffin noted that the building at 1601-03 Lombard Street was classified as an office building in the inventory for the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District. He stated that other office buildings in the district are classified as non-contributing because they are out of scale with their surrounds. He stated that 19 of the 21 buildings listed as non-contributing in the inventory are out of scale. He contended that the scale of this building fits in with the Lombard and 16th Street streetscapes. He acknowledged that the back of the building was characterized as non-contributing in the inventory. He stated that some contributing buildings are missing their cornices. He stated that 64% of the non-contributing buildings are houses. He stated that the applicants are misleading the Commission. Both scale and use were factored into the classifications. He stated that the one factory in the district is classified as non-contributing. The people who created the inventory classified the buildings based on their assumptions about the original uses. Mr. Duffin stated that his report shows that the building was used by people in the neighborhood. He again stated that the applicants are seeking to mislead the Commission.

Paul Steinke of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia stated that a member of his organization's board of directors, Kevin Michaels, works for the firm representing the property owner in this matter. He stated that he shared this application with his organization's executive committee, which includes a preservation architect, city planner, land-use attorney, historic site manager, structural engineer, and two historic preservation consultants, and requested an opinion. He stated the executive committee did not object to the reclassification. He stated that the committee did not have Mr. Duffin's report.

David Traub of Save Our Sites stated that he loves the flavor of Rittenhouse Square. He described the building as he saw it in a photograph being projected in the room. He noted the brick and windows. Ms. Cooperman asked Mr. Traub to move back from the microphone because his constant contact with it was resulting in extremely loud popping, crackling, buzzing, and other distortion. Mr. Traub stated that corner stores are common in the district. Mr. Thomas asked him to move about one more foot from the microphone to prevent the distortion. Ms. Long suggested that he avoid touching the microphone. Mr. Traub apologized and stated that the lower floor of the building has been "mutilated," but could be restored. Mr. Traub stated that reclassifying this building would set a bad precedent.

Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society stated that the historic district is as much about maintaining the scale and materials as it is about history. He stated that this building is in line with the streetscape and is visible from three angles. He stated that it "is not a particularly attractive building," but it is a "surviving building." He noted that the storefront has been infilled,

but the upper floor is intact. He noted that the building is related to an important “African-American beauty movement.” It would be a mistake to demolish this building. This building has been altered, but it should not be reclassified. This building can be revived.

Mr. McCoubrey noted that a building at the corner of 16th and Addison was incorporated into the larger building in question, which faces Lombard. He asked for clarification regarding their current classifications. Ms. Cooperman stated that the fact that two parcels have been merged into one does not negate the fact that this was historically two buildings. Mr. Farnham suggested that some may be misinterpreting the current inventory. He stated that the current inventory acknowledges the separate building at 16th and Addison that has been merged into the larger building and indicates that it is part of 1601-03 Lombard Street. The inventory does not classify this part of the building in the inventory entry in the 16th Street section, but simply refers the reader to the Lombard Street entry. The problem in the inventory is with the conflict between the 1601-03 Lombard and 1602 Addison entries. The façade at 1602 Addison is the rear façade of the 1601-03 Lombard building. They are not now nor were they ever separate buildings. The inventory classifies the building from the front as contributing and from the rear as non-contributing, which is a mistake. The front and rear facades have been altered differently and the surveyor in the field likely mistook them as two separate buildings and then classified one building in two ways. The two classifications for the building at 1601-03 Lombard Street conflict, regardless of the merged-in building at the corner.

Mr. Mattioni stated that the building in question is “rather non-descript,” but it appears to be very significant for its connections to African-American culture. He asked if the Commission should consider this request to reclassify as though it were making the classification decision initially when it created the district in 1995, or if it should determine whether the building is historically significant based on the new information provided today. Mr. Farnham stated that this building would certainly qualify as a significant property in a historic district related to African-American history such as a 7th Ward historic district owing to the Cinderella Inn and the Apex Beauty School, which rented the building for nine or 10 years. He stated that whether this building qualifies as a contributing site in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District as that district is described in its statement of significance is a much more difficult question. He noted that copies of the nomination for the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District were provided to the Commissioners with this application. He stated that fabricating a credible argument that this building should be listed as contributing in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District is difficult. Fabricating such an argument for an imagined 7th Ward Historic District is much easier. Mr. Mattioni restated his question for Mr. Farnham. He asked if the Commission should be determining whether this building satisfies one or more of the Criteria for Designation, for example Criterion B, that it is associated with an event of importance to history. He asked if determining whether the building satisfies one or more Criteria is an appropriate way for judging this reclassification request. Ms. Cooperman stated that the district is named a “residential” district and the nomination includes discussions of the high-quality residential architecture designed by prominent architects, but it also mentions the institutions in the district. She read from the first page of the statement of significance in the second paragraph: “this community was the joint creation of working class and elite groups that collided and intermingled east and west of 20th Street, creating pockets of wealth in working neighborhoods and pocket’s of workingmen’s housing as far east as 16th and Rittenhouse Streets.” Ms. Cooperman questioned whether the Historical Commission could credibly categorize this building with its various uses as an institution that served the surrounding community as defined in the nomination. She responded to her own question: “Maybe we can. Maybe we can’t.”

Mr. Thomas noted that the overview of the application stated that: “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.” Mr. Thomas stated that this building housed uses that served the community. Ms. Cooperman agreed. Ms. Royer disagreed and stated that the architecture and uses of the building more closely resemble those that are classified as non-contributing than those that are classified as contributing. She stated that this building does not seem to fit in with the description of the significance of the historic district with regard architectural style or use. The nomination explicitly calls out high-style buildings. Mr. McCoubrey stated that the height, scale, and massing fit in with the residential community. It may be a “background building,” but it fits well. Ms. Stanford stated that this building satisfies several of the Criteria for Designation. She stated that the businesses housed in this building impacted the neighborhood and the city. Each one of the businesses had an impact on the area. She concluded, saying “I don’t know what the question is.”

Mr. Schaaf explained that the Committee on Historic Designation did not have the benefit of the additional information provided by Mr. Duffin.

Mr. Orphanides stated that this building may qualify for individual designation, but the question before the Historical Commission today is not whether this building has any historical significance, but instead whether this building reflects the historical significance of the district as it is defined in the nomination’s statement of significance. Mr. Orphanides contended that Mr. Duffin did not look comprehensively at the ways in which buildings were classified in the historic district, but instead “cherry-picked” those examples that fit his argument. Mr. Orphanides asked the Historical Commission to look very closely at the building at 16th and Spruce Streets, which is classified as non-contributing. It is two stories in height, on a corner, served as a grocery store, retains some original architectural features at the second-floor façade, and has been significantly altered at the first floor. He stated that it is almost identical in every aspect to the building in question, yet is deemed non-contributing to the historic district. He stated that architecturally and in terms of use, it is very similar to the building in question. He noted that it is two stories in height, like the building in question. Mr. Thomas pointed out that the buildings to the south of the two-story, former grocery at 16th and Spruce are three and four stories in height and therefore have a different scale than the grocery. The buildings around 1601-03 Lombard, which is also two stories in height, are much more similarly scaled. They are three stories in height. Some are taller. Mr. Orphanides disagreed and contended that the situations are almost identical, yet the former grocery is classified as non-contributing. Further disagreeing with Mr. Thomas, Mr. Orphanides showed photographs of several contributing buildings in the district that are of significantly different scales than those around them. If relation in scale to surrounds was a primary criterion, they would have been classified as non-contributing. He pointed to numerous other examples in his consultant’s report and contended that the classifications are inconsistent. He also noted that there are several very large buildings including a school building and a rehabilitation facility in the immediate vicinity of 1601-03 Lombard. Any claim that scale was a determining factor in the classifying is clearly proven incorrect by a review of the surrounds of the building in question. He added that the building to the north is a parking garage that is 40 or 50 feet in height. He concluded that the scale argument is invalid. Scale is not a valid criterion for determining significance. He again noted that the building has been “substantially modified.” He stated that many other buildings were classified in the district as non-contributing because they were substantially modified. He again noted that this building has housed a variety of different businesses, with the uses changing every few years. He concluded that, based on the evidence in the record, the Historical Commission should reclassify the

property at 1601-03 Lombard Street as non-contributing in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District.

Ms. Turner cautioned the Historical Commission to be careful with its definitions of key terms such as contributing and significant. She noted that the definitions employed during the discussion today shifted over time. Mr. Orphanides thanked Ms. Turner for her comment and suggested that the Commissioners are obligated to put themselves in the shoes of the Commissioners who designated the district and employ their definitions. He stated that, if someone believes that this property should be designated for reasons other than those that were used to justify the original designation, that person can nominate this building for individual designation. He stated that there is a process for such a designation, but this is not that process. Mr. Traub started to speak, but Mr. Thomas warned him that he was going off track and had already had an opportunity to speak at length on the application. Mr. Duffin stated that the Commission should reject Mr. Orphanides assertion that this is not the appropriate forum to consider other claims of significance for this building, not because Mr. Orphanides is incorrect about the process, but because not allowing consideration of other claims would lead to the demolition of the building. Mr. Duffin stated that, if the Commission limits its scope as Mr. Orphanides suggests and reclassifies this building, Mr. Orphanides will obtain a demolition permit before the report with the new information can be resubmitted as a nomination for this building. Mr. Duffin acknowledged that there is a better process for considering the historical information that he submitted in his report, but he asserted that he will not be able to submit the report for review under that better process before a demolition permit is obtained. He asked the Historical Commission to use its discretion and act on his additional information, even if the rules do not necessarily allow it. He stated that his "hands are tied." This is the only way for him to put this information before the Commission, he explained, even if doing so goes beyond the accepted process. Mr. Orphanides responded that Mr. Duffin had sufficient time to follow the appropriate process and submit a real nomination rather than providing this information at the last moment.

Mr. Thomas acknowledged that the inventory is flawed, owing to the two conflicting classifications for one property. He asked for a motion that would correct the mistake. Ms. Royer moved to reclassify the property at 1601-03 Lombard Street as non-contributing in its entry in the inventory of the Rittenhouse-Fitler Residential Historic District and to remove the entry for 1602 Addison Street. Mr. Thomas asked for a second to the motion. No one offered a second.

ACTION: Mr. McCoubrey moved to deny the request to reclassify 1601-03 Lombard Street as non-contributing to the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District, but to remove the entry for 1602 Addison Street from the inventory, shifting its descriptive information to the 1601-03 Lombard Street entry. Ms. Cooperman seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 8 to 2. Ms. Royer and Mr. Dillon dissented. Mr. Mattioni abstained.

ADDRESS: 1020-24 CHRISTIAN ST

Name of Resource: Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission & Church of L'Emmanuello

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Christian St Baptist Church Inc.

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

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

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the buildings at 1020-24 Christian Street satisfy Criteria for Designation A, E, and J.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION ACTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1020-24 Christian Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 8 to 3. Commissioners Fink, Long, and Stanford dissented.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1020-24 Christian Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination argues that the chapel and parish house are significant under Criteria for Designation A and J. Founded as Philadelphia's first and only Protestant Episcopal Italian Mission, the subject property is one of the oldest purpose-built Italian missions in Philadelphia, constructed between 1890 and 1904.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Chantry presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Oscar Beisert of the Keeping Society of Philadelphia represented the nomination. Christian Street Baptist Church representative Jeffrey Hill and Pastor Clayton Hicks represented the property owner. Attorney Sean Whalen and developer Ori Feibush of OCF Realty represented the equitable owner.

Mr. Thomas reminded the Commission that it voted at its last meeting to continue the review of the matter for 30 days so that the owner and nominator could engage in additional discussions. He asked about the outcome of those discussions. Mr. Hill responded that he has not met with Mr. Beisert. Mr. Beisert commented that he spoke with Mr. Feibush after the Commission's October meeting and they discussed options. He said that he made it clear to Mr. Feibush that he would recommend that the nomination be withdrawn if there was some sort of alternative preservation option. Mr. Feibush confirmed Mr. Beisert's recounting of their discussion. Mr. Hill commented that he has an order of witnesses for his presentation and he would like to proceed. Mr. Thomas reminded everyone that this discussion should be limited to what has been learned over the past month, rather than a rehashing of last month's discussion.

Mr. Hill stated that the church assembled additional materials, which he distributed to the Commissioners. He also distributed several photographs. He stated that the church façade has been substantially altered. The most prominent feature of the original façade is the circular rose window, which was commonly used on church buildings. It has been removed and replaced with a small sash window. Almost the entire brick façade is covered in stucco. Photographs of mold and damage throughout the building were distributed to Commissioners. Pastor Hicks referenced the mold and moisture investigation report, dated 27 March 2017. He explained that the investigation was done in the basement, chapel, kitchen, second-floor men's bathroom, chapel office, first-floor meeting room, and second-floor meeting room. The church was found to have high concentrations of mold that, if left untreated, could turn into black mold. The mold expert recommended that the congregation vacate the chapel and the church altogether. Everything must be cleaned and remediated. There is structural damage to the roof owing to water infiltration. Mr. Thomas noted that the reports were just provided to the Commission, so

he asked Mr. Hill to summarize the findings. Mr. Hill commented that included in the packet of material which was just distributed is a highest-and-best-use analysis. Mr. Thomas asked that Mr. Hill summarize the findings. Mr. Hill stated that the conclusion was that the analysis recommends that the existing improvements are at the end of their economic life, and should be razed to make way for residential subdivision and redevelopment in accordance with zoning. This would likely provide for five or more single-family building lots, with three fronting on Christian Street and two smaller lots fronting on Salter Street. There is a second option with eight lots. The packets also include letters of support for the congregation from New Hope Temple Baptist Church, Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, and the Philadelphia Council of Clergy, Inc. with the International Council of Bishops. Pastor Hicks read the letter from Pastor John Goger of the New Hope Temple Baptist Church, dated 8 November 2017. Minister Michael Stokely read the letter from Reverend Dr. Alyn E. Waller of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, undated. Carolyn Bolger Payne read the letter from Archbishop Anthony Floyd, Senior of the Philadelphia Council of Clergy, Inc. and International Council of Bishops, dated 10 November 2017.

Mr. Whalen stated that he is present on behalf of the equitable owner, OCF Holdings, which entered into an agreement of sale to purchase this property. He noted that he represents a neighbor of Mr. Farnham's in opposition to a zoning matter. He explained that Mr. Farnham appeared in support of his neighbor's position in his personal capacity at the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Mr. Whalen stated that Mr. Farnham is not a client. The purchase offer submitted by OCF Holdings was for approximately \$1.5 million. It was submitted in response to a public listing of sale by the church. The listing was for townhomes. The property is zoned RSA-5, which allows for only single-family residences. The congregation has, in essence, abandoned the property. It is arguable that this church has abandoned its church zoning, and would only be allowed to proceed as a church with a variance. Therefore, even if another church wanted to purchase the property, it may need a variance to use the structure as a church. From a zoning perspective, it can only be used by-right for single-family residences. After the purchase proposal was accepted, the nomination was submitted and those merits were already addressed at the October Commission meeting. The proposed designation is for the entire parcel. The Historical Commission requested at its last meeting that the parties seek a compromise. Mr. Feibush did speak with Mr. Beisert, and the only potential compromise that makes sense is to retain the front façade on Christian Street, including the tower. This is because the entire historic structure on Salter Street has been completely and significantly renovated and changed. It no longer maintains the historic character that it once had. The front façade on Christian Street, while beautiful, is also largely altered, including stucco over brick. The overall condition of the church building resulted in the abandonment of the church building six months ago by the small congregation. OCF Holdings stands to lose nothing through this transaction. Mr. Feibush would obviously like to see the sale go through, as it is beneficial for both the church and the developer; however, OCF Holdings has no money on the line. It is the church that stands to lose everything. The Commission will destroy this congregation if it designates the property. By designating, the Commission will usurp the single asset that the congregation has that will allow it to move and grow. The Commission is given broad latitude to make such decisions. The possible compromise would be to maintain the front façade along Christian Street. There are restoration costs assumed with any historic property. Mr. Whalen stated that are engineers present from Orndorf & Associates to discuss the structural steel and construction involved in performing a facadectomy, which will cost more than \$1 million. In order to retain just the front façade, it will be an investment of over \$1 million. Mr. Thomas commented that the façade of the Royal Theater on the 1500 block of South Street is currently braced by structural steel, as was also done at the Curtis buildings on the 1600 block of Locust Street.

Mr. Thomas stated that the Historical Commission continued this matter to allow for a discussion of alternatives. The Commission can review the nomination in two parts. Ms. Cooperman reminded Mr. Thomas that the Commission voted at its October meeting that the nomination demonstrates that the property satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J. Mr. Thomas responded that the Commission must then decide whether or not to designate the property. Mr. Whalen agreed, and offered his engineers for questioning. He explained that Salter Street cannot be accessed for construction because it is too narrow. If the façade is retained, and assuming a cost of \$1 million for structural steel, a crane would have to be placed on Christian Street, which would essentially block the street. The crane would have to reach over the façade, and contractors would have to perform hand demolition. The escalation in demolition and construction costs would be astronomical. Even a facadectomy would be a death knell to this development. Designating would merely kick the can down a couple of years; the Historical Commission would eventually face the fact that this building cannot be feasibly reused. This development does not work financially or viably unless the property was sold to a developer for \$1, which is what happened at the Royal Theater. A designation in this case would instruct the church that they have to sell the property for \$1. That is a loss of over \$1 million for the congregation. The Commission's options are to not designate, and then the church proceeds, and a beautiful façade will be lost; however, it cannot be economically retained. If the Commission chooses to designate, it will essentially tee up future arguments about demolition, public interest, hardship, and perhaps the building being imminently dangerous or suffering from demolition by neglect. Zoning matters. No one would purchase the property for 35 apartment units because the neighborhood would reject dozens of apartments without parking. The Commission should not assume that the neighborhood would support a zoning variance for this property. Any one of the neighbors could come out in opposition to a variance and kill a reuse project; we would all be right back here discussing the fate of this building. Commercial rental is not viable. The same arguments apply. This is a congregation that already cannot sustain the building. The congregation is hoping to be revitalized by moving to another location and the church is their only asset. Designation of any kind would be futile. Mr. Thomas commented that the nomination is correct and complete and meets the Criteria for Designation. The Commission's role is to listen and weigh all of the information provided. If it were simply a matter of whether or not it meets the Criteria, then everything that is nominated would subsequently be designated. The Commission has declined to designate in the past. Mr. Whalen agreed, and reiterated that designation would only hurt the congregation. Mr. Thomas commented that, if the Commission designated the property, the property owner would be compelled to apply for a demolition permit, and go through the hardship process. The Commission should consider today whether it wants to designate and thereby initiate that process. He suggested that the Commission could handle the issue here and now, recognizing that either decision has significant implications.

Mr. Feibush stated that the Royal Theater sits on a 17,000 square foot lot, which is zoned CMX-4. The proposed use is 57 apartments and seven townhomes. He stated that he would not be interested in purchasing 1020-24 Christian Street even for \$1 if it were historically designated. The logistical nightmare that would ensue in trying to develop it far exceeds any potential profit, even if it was gifted. The best use by zoning or any other practical standards is rowhomes. The existing buildings clearly do not fit into the streetscape. There is no practical way that it can be developed. It is important to note that at the Royal Theater, there is more structural steel below ground than above ground. It is an incredible feat of engineering. The engineers would be happy to speak on the record that the subject property is substantially more complicated than the Royal Theater. Mr. Thomas concurred, and noted that his office is on the same block as the Royal Theater. He added that there is a façade easement for the Royal Theater, held by the

Preservation Alliance, which contributed to the façade's preservation. He personally agreed that it is very expensive to brace with structural steel, and the Commission needs to look at the overall picture. The Commission has already determined that the property meets the Criteria. Now it must listen to all of the information presented from both sides.

Mr. Beisert asked to respond. Mr. Thomas stated that he may respond only if he is presenting new information. He stated that it is new information. Then he reiterated that the building was identified in the Historical Commission staff's South District preservation memorandum as a distinctive building in 2014, which is a report that is publicly available online, and concluded that this was not nominated on a whim. Mr. Mattioni interjected that the Commission has already made the determination that it meets the Criteria for Designation. He asked that Mr. Beisert provide new information, or let someone else speak. The Commission has determined that the building is historically significant. It is now determining whether it is in the public's interest to designate it.

Eugene Desyatnik, representing the Bella Vista Neighbors Association, commented that the two-step process is important. He asked if the Commission has enough information to determine hardship, or if it should instead proceed with the designation based on the Criteria, and allow the Committee on Financial Hardship to make the hardship determination. He opined that it is not the intention to pose an undue hardship, but it is a question of whether hardship can be determined today, and if all other options have been ruled out. He noted that it was claimed earlier that five townhomes would be constructed on the site, but corrected that zoning would only allow for four townhomes by-right. Mr. Thomas stated that there is no need to discuss the zoning any further. He stated that the Commission has a very difficult decision to make. The Commission can listen to the reports from all interested parties as well as the various committees, but ultimately must make the difficult decisions. Mr. Desyatnik opined on what the neighbors would support in terms of zoning variances. Mr. Mattioni stated that zoning issues are well beyond the Commission's purview. Mr. Beisert exclaimed that Mr. Desyatnik is responding to information that was presented earlier. He asked if Mr. Desyatnik is allowed to respond to the information already on the record. Mr. Mattioni attempted to respond, but Mr. Beisert interrupted, exclaiming that he wanted to speak and asserting that he was not being allowed to provide new information. Mr. Mattioni suggested that Mr. Beisert address the Commission in an orderly fashion. Mr. Thomas stated that the Commission would render a judgment in the matter. Mr. Beisert retorted that the judgment would merely be based on the property owner's information. Mr. Mattioni stated that the Commission cannot make zoning determinations based on the representations of the various parties. He stated that he does not accept the representations regarding zoning offered by Mr. Whalen because abandonment is a much more complicated issue than was stated. Therefore, the Commission will disregard statements made earlier about zoning and abandonment, and instead will decide on its merits.

David Traub, representing Save Our Sites, commented that the argument made about the steel required to support a facadectomy will certainly color the Commission's vote. It is an argument that was not heard at the October meeting. At that meeting, Mr. Traub proposed that the matter be continued in hopes of reaching a compromise, but apparently no progress has been made in that regard. Today's arguments are the same as last month's, plus the argument about the cost of preserving the façade. He commented that there needs to be imaginative ways to save facades. He proposed retention of 10 or 20 feet of the church building back from the façade, an entry into a courtyard, with townhomes at the rear. He suggested that it is just one of many solutions that could be considered. He described it as a lack of will and imagination, and noted that there appears to be no compromise and no effort to reach one.

Paul Steinke, representing the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, commented that the belief that historic designation will result in a massive decrease in value of this property is wrong. At 17th and Fitzwater Streets, until very recently, a historically African American congregation called First Colored Wesley Methodist Church operated in an 1859 building designed by Samuel Sloan. The church was listed for sale because the congregation had a new location in East Oak Lane. They had an agreement of sale, and after the agreement of sale was consummated, the Preservation Alliance nominated the building for listing on the Register. The sale went through. The sale price was \$1.65 million. Bella Vista is a thriving neighborhood. Philadelphia is full of creative developers who have proven that they are able to adaptively reuse historic properties, including historic churches. If 1020-24 Christian Street were to receive historic designation, and if Mr. Feibush were to walk away from the sale, there is little doubt that there would be multiple other offers, potentially even above the price which was offered by Mr. Feibush. This is because it happened nine blocks away at 17th and Fitzwater Streets. Mr. Feibush responded that he made an offer on the church at 17th and Fitzwater Streets cited by Mr. Steinke for \$2 million more than the final price prior to nomination for designation. He withdrew the offer as soon as the property was nominated. The nomination significantly reduced the value of the church building. Moreover, he asserted, one neighborhood cannot be compared to another. The moment the nomination was submitted, he withdrew his offer, which was \$2 million more than the offer that was ultimately accepted. Therefore, the designation had an immediate adverse effect on the value of the property. Also, that church was a much easier building to restore.

Mr. Hill stated that the preservation perspective never includes the actual cost, and it is like the preservationists are totally unaware of what it will cost this African-American congregation. It is unacceptable. This Commission should do what is morally and ethically right. The hardship that designation will cause is both unreasonable and in opposition to the greater public good. By rejecting the nomination today, the Commission will have chosen the greater good over good but misguided intentions.

Lawrence Weintraub, a preservation architect, neighbor, and co-chair of the Bella Vista Zoning Committee, commented that he has personally heard from a private party who is interested in purchasing the property and converting it into a single-family home. He admitted that he has not been inside of the building, but by looking at the massing, he envisioned a conversion to eight two-bedroom apartment units. The layout of the building is ideal for conversion because of the courtyard on the left, and the rear building has windows on both sides, so the units could have windows on both sides. The church building itself could have two-bedroom bi-level units running east to west. As co-chairman of the Bella Vista Zoning Committee, he opined the Committee would likely support eight units, or probably even 10 units if the gable roof were removed from the rear building and a third floor were added. He commented that he has a lot of experience in adaptive reuse projects, and this is an easy case. Given that the church went under contract for sale almost immediately after listing, it did not give other potential buyers an opportunity to make an offer or negotiate. There are a lot of other options for this building. This is an expensive neighborhood. He is surprised that the congregation is ready to throw in the towel and walk away. He has seen buildings in much worse condition that have been restored. Mold and rot are easily repairable. The façade was covered in stucco in the 1990s, but it was done in a reversible way. A rose window is easy to recreate. Bella Vista has a rich cultural heritage, including the history of the large African-American population that did exist in Bella Vista and still does to some degree. It is these buildings that will not be built anymore. Monumental stone and timber buildings will no longer be constructed. Community identity, pride, and place-making have much

to do with the significant architectural buildings and structures that are within them. As these irreplaceable buildings are lost, a part of the neighborhood's collective soul is also lost. There is opportunity if the property is remarketed for sale.

Mr. Thomas commented that the Commission has agreed that the building is significant and worthy of designation. Now the Commission must consider all of the factors. The Commission was hoping for a discussion of alternatives owing to the continuance, but that has not happened. This is not just about the building. It is about a congregation as well, which is actively involved in the community and has been for a long time, and wants to continue. It is something the Commission needs to consider and has the authority to consider. If it was a hardship or public interest issue, that would be considered. If it was just a building, it would be a much easier choice about how to proceed. Mr. Thomas stated that, if other developers may be interested in the buildings, the Commission could offer another continuance. Mr. McCoubrey responded that the hardship process is rigorous and subjects the property to other considerations. Mr. Mattioni commented that there is no basis for not making a decision today. Mr. Thomas agreed, adding that it behooves the Commission to take into consideration what was presented today by Mr. Feibush and the church. The Commissioners are familiar with the kinds of costs involved. Mr. Feibush was interested in the property. Mr. Thomas asked if someone else would have been too. There is a time factor here also. This congregation needs to move ahead to continue its spiritual work. The Commission has to step up and make a decision today. Ms. Cooperman suggested that, if the property were to go back on the market, another purchaser could appear and offer the same amount of money or even more than Mr. Feibush's offer. The church understands it as a hardship, but there has been evidence presented that suggests that perhaps it is not. Mr. Thomas commented that, if the Commission designates the property, the property owner is then compelled to go through a hardship process. Ms. Cooperman responded that that is not true if they find another buyer. Mr. Mattioni commented that it is part of the process. Ms. Cooperman agreed that it is part of the process for a hardship application, but not if they could simply sell the building to a different buyer who wants to preserve it. Mr. Mattioni commented that the intent to sell the property is part of the hardship process in any event. Ms. Stanford commented that, if the Commission designates the property, it not only affects the amount that the property might sell for; the hardship application process itself is costly. She recalled looking at a situation where the hardship process must have cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000 dollars. The impact of designating this property could result in the loss of \$500,000 or more. She opined that the Commission sometimes forgets to think about the economics, but should. Mr. Thomas corrected that this meeting is the appropriate venue for the Commission to do that. The Commission can consider anything that it feels is important. The various committees report to the Commission on what they have found. Ultimately, the Commission makes the decision.

Mr. McCoubrey commented that it is a question of whether there is another buyer who would see value differently in the property. There is not enough information to know what the market might bring, although every other aspect of a hardship is understood. Ms. Cooperman agreed. Mr. Thomas agreed that he sees every aspect of a hardship. He asked how the Commission might allow this congregation to move forward. He asked if the Commission should delay its decision, in which case the jurisdiction remains. He asked if the Commission should ask the congregation and preservation community to look for other buyers. Mr. McCoubrey responded that the previous continuance was granted to allow for such a discussion, and it did not happen. Ms. Stanford commented that these weeks were spent waiting to hear something definitive from the potential buyer. That was important. Time has not been wasted. She opined that Mr. Feibush is a good potential buyer. She asked Mr. Thomas if he is suggesting that the church

should go back again and shop around for additional buyers. Mr. Thomas stated that the question is if there is the potential for a preservation-minded buyer, who would reuse the building in the way that Mr. Weintraub suggested. That puts the onus on those that want to see the building designated. The Commission could allow another month to see proposals with costs listed, and how it affects the sales price. If no additional information and proposals are provided, then the Commission can conclude that there is no information other than what was provided by Mr. Feibush. Ms. Cooperman commented that all the Commission knows is that there is one potential buyer at this point, who has said that reuse is infeasible. Given the current real estate market, it seems unrealistic to believe that there would be only one potential buyer. Mr. Thomas agreed. Leonard Reuter, representing the Law Department, cautioned against this line of thinking. He noted that there is a buyer for the property. OCF Holdings is the current equitable owner of this property. The Commission is suggesting a delay of the decision until either OCF Holdings backs out of the deal, which it said it would do if it was designated, or that someone else would approach OCF Holdings and seek an assignment of Mr. Feibush's right to purchase the building. Ms. Cooperman responded that that is not what she is talking about. Mr. Reuter continued, and explained that no one that can make a direct offer to the owner of this building because of the existing agreement of sale. Many Commissioners expressed confusion. Mr. Thomas commented that he believed that the agreement of sale was withdrawn. Ms. Cooperman and Ms. Turner confirmed that they too believed the agreement was withdrawn. Mr. Whalen clarified that the agreement of sale is executed. Mr. Reuter asked if there is a right of assignment in it. Mr. Whalen responded that he is not sure. Mr. Reuter commented that it might not even be assignable. He asserted that suggesting interfering with a contractual obligation places the Commission into very tricky legal territory that it should avoid. He recommended that the Commission make a decision today as to whether or not to designate. More than sufficient evidence has been presented by all parties. All that will result from waiting another month is another set of speculative projections about what might or might not happen. He cautioned against delaying a decision for all of the reasons just stated.

Mr. Steinke commented that Mr. Reuter's point is excellent. He reminded the Commission that if it chooses to reject the designation of this property that clearly meets the Criteria, the building will be lost. He opined on different scenarios. He suggested that, if the Commission designates the property today, Mr. Feibush may withdraw his offer. The congregation would likely return the property to the market. If several months go by and there is no satisfactory offer, the congregation would have the opportunity to present a real hardship application. He suggested that Mr. Feibush may be waiting in the wings to see the result. Meanwhile the building remains standing. If the hardship application is approved, then the building can be demolished and Mr. Feibush can move forward with his plan. He suggested that the Commission has three options: doom the building today by rejecting the nomination; designate the building today in hopes that a preservation-oriented buyer will come forward; or designate the building today and allow for the well-established hardship process to play itself out if there is no feasible reuse. As the City's principal steward of historic resources, the choice that the Commission must make is to give this building a shot to survive, since it does meet the Criteria for Designation. The Commission would be derelict in its duty if it rejects the nomination when there is a chance that the property could find another buyer and still satisfy the congregation's needs. Ms. Cooperman concurred.

MOTION: Ms. Cooperman moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1020-24 Christian Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Mr. McCoubrey seconded the motion.

Mr. Hill attempted to interrupt the motion, and after it was made, he stated that he has continued to hear from the preservation community that they have another buyer. One month has passed, and no one has presented the congregation with another buyer. No one has approached the congregation, just as no one approached it in 2014 when the property was identified as an ideal candidate for historic designation. Three years passed with the congregation suffering to maintain the building. When the congregation finally made a decision to move, the preservation community reacted. The preservationists peruse the MLS and internet and wait until a property goes up for sale, one that they identified three years ago, so that they can interfere with the sale once it takes place. This is obstructionism. This is not community development. No one has presented a buyer. The preservation community keeps acting as if someone is waiting in the wings. There is no one waiting in the wings. It was made clear. Mr. Hill opined that a child could understand the logistics involved in maintaining the façade, including his five-year-old granddaughter. There is no one else to refute that. There needs to be some discernment. Otherwise there is no sense in having commissions that make decisions that are life-changing and affect millions of lives. This church's ministry can affect thousands of young people. It can have a grand impact on the city. Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, which has endorsed the congregation, has done just that. It is ludicrous that this speculation is entertained, and no one has provided proof that what they say can work. Even with the reuse examples mentioned earlier, there is always a reduction in the value of the property. Most times it was a 50% reduction. Let's be honest and tell the whole story. This property can be sold for something, but it will not be anywhere near the equity that the property deserves. All of the supporters of the designation are oblivious to that. He asked how these people would feel if they were in the same position, and if someone wanted to destroy their trust funds, something that was given to them and not something that they earned. He opined that they would be appalled. This congregation has toiled for 75 years to build a ministry that, because of forces outside of their control, has been stifled. They had to make a painful decision to put it in the Lord's hands and He told them what to do. It is appalling to have to listen to this. He beseeched the Commission to do the right thing.

Robert Hornsby, a neighbor at 1012 Christian Street, commented that he has enjoyed getting to know the congregation a little over the last four years. He commented that he also is on the board of an urban parish, and understands the difficulties in maintaining a historic property in the city with limited resources. He commented that he is also a neighbor with an interest in the historic streetscape and the charm and livability of the neighborhood, and does not want to see the church replaced with one more set of generic rowhomes. He stated that his question about the process is that he never knew that the property was for sale. There was no sign on the building, and he questioned how it was marketed. He stated that he only learned of the sale through the rumor mill. Therefore, it is unclear if there was an opportunity for another buyer to come forward, since it was not evident to him, living four doors down, that the property was on the market, and that may have been the case for other buyers who may have been inclined to support historic preservation of the building.

Mr. Farnham asked Mr. Feibush if anyone has approached him about assigning the purchase rights over to them. Mr. Feibush responded that no one has approached him to obtain the purchase rights; it has absolutely not happened. Ms. Stanford asked Mr. Feibush if he has spoken with a preservation-minded architect or developer about how the building could be maintained. Mr. Feibush responded that he is actively developing multiple parcels and restoring them, including a historic school, and the Royal Theater's façade. He stated that he has personal experience in the field, but with this specific property, there is truly no way to make it work.

ACTION: The Historical Commission voted 5 to 4 with two abstentions on Ms. Cooperman and Mr. McCoubrey's motion to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1020-24 Christian Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Commissioners Cooperman, Hartner, McCoubrey, Royer, and Turner voted in favor. Commissioners Dillon, Long, Schaaf and Stanford dissented. Commissioners Mattioni and Thomas abstained.

The Historical Commission announced that the motion carried and that the property had been designated a historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register.¹

Mr. Thomas commented that the next step is to discuss a hardship. Mr. Farnham disagreed, observing that the Commission had concluded the consideration of the matter. Mr. Thomas clarified that there is a hardship process, which includes marketing the property. Mr. Hill asked if the church would be required to go through the hardship process, because, at this point, he would rather go directly to Common Pleas Court. They do not have funds for a hardship application, and they would rather go before the court and seek a more reasoned decision. Mr. Farnham responded that the property owner is free to decide whether to submit a hardship application to the Historical Commission or appeal the decision to the court.

6901 RISING SUN AVE

Name of Resource: Trinity Church, Oxford Parish House

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Rector Church Wardens, Vestryman of Trinity

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the parish house complex at 6901 Rising Sun Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the parish house complex at 6901 Rising Sun Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J.

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the parish house complex at 6901 Rising Sun Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The eastern section of the property with Old Trinity Church, Oxford, which is now part of 6901 Rising Sun Avenue, was designated in 1956. The western section of the property with the parish house was not previously designated. This nomination seeks to designate the parish house complex by arguing that the buildings are significant under Criteria for Designation C, D, and J. The nomination contends that the parish house complex embodies the Colonial Revival style and reflects the cultural environment and popular tastes of an era characterized by the widespread proliferation of Colonial Revival design motifs across a wide range of buildings. The nomination

¹ Upon review, the City's Law Department determined that the announced interpretation of the vote was incorrect. Rule 4.6.e of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations stipulates that "A majority of the members present at the time of voting, including any members abstaining, is required to adopt a motion." Owing to the fact that 11 Commissioners were present at the time of the vote, 6 affirmative votes were required for the motion to carry. Only 5 of the 11 Commissioners voted in favor. Contrary to the interpretation at the time of the vote, the motion to designate 1020-24 Christian Street failed to carry the required majority. Therefore, the Historical Commission declined to designate the property at 1020-24 Christian Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

further argues that the parish house complex represents a significant period of suburban development in Northeast Philadelphia when religious institutions expanded their physical and civic footprints to accommodate new residents.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Historical Commission. Patrick Grossi and Paul Steinke represented the nomination. Attorneys Neil Sklaroff and David Gest, and vestrymen Shawn Wamsley, Amy Furlong, and Lorie Henry represented the property owner.

Mr. Sklaroff stated that he is prepared to oppose the nomination. Mr. Thomas asked to hear from the nominator first and then Mr. Sklaroff.

Mr. Steinke commented that the Preservation Alliance submitted the nomination because it believes the building meets historic criteria as set forward by the historic preservation ordinance. He noted that the 1711 church building, which lies to the west of the nominated property, was designated in the 1950s. That designation, he continued, is listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as 6901 Rising Sun Avenue, which led the Alliance to believe initially that the designation also included the parish house complex. He called the parcel designations a “fluke by which the Commission must operate.” He remarked that he was surprised when he learned the parish house was not designated, since it meets the Criteria for Designation. He noted that the Committee on Historic Designation agreed with the Alliance that the property satisfies the Criteria.

Mr. Grossi added that Mr. Steinke’s statements and the staff’s summary speak for themselves, noting that the building is appropriate to list on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. He remarked that Ben Leech, who authored the nomination on the Alliance’s behalf, is available to answer questions.

Mr. Sklaroff introduced himself and his colleague David Gest, stating that they represent the vestrymen of Trinity Church, Oxford, who have been faithful stewards of Trinity Church for more than 300 years. He reiterated that the property owner is opposed to designation and that designation poses an existential decision for the church. Despite years of hard work and good faith efforts, he continued, the congregation no longer has the financial resources to carry the burden of the parish house, or even to continue to use and maintain the sacred Trinity Church without calling upon its non-sacred asset to produce income. After years of efforts, he argued, the congregation has now found a way to utilize the non-sacred asset, the Sunday school building, through a ground lease, though it will not sell the property under any circumstances. He claimed that the church has entered into a lease that will provide them with sufficient funds for the long-term preservation of the congregation and the truly important Trinity Church, Oxford. He contended that the nomination actually results from opposition to potential plans for the parish house property by the lessee, though that issue is not of concern to the Commission. Mr. Sklaroff asserted that the writing of the nomination commenced no later than February of this year and was submitted to the Commission in April. In July, he continued, the church signed the lease for the property, and in August it was informed that the nomination had been filed. He argued that at no time in the few weeks before the first hearing of this matter did the nominator approach the church. He stated that his case is simple and that the nomination itself fails to support designation. In part, he continued, it attempts to attribute to this building the prominence of the important church at the other end of the block, in whose rhetorical shadow this property sits. Trinity Church, Oxford is a jewel, he added, and is acknowledged in every listing of Philadelphia’s important historic buildings. He explained that the congregation dates to 1698 and has continued in operation without interruption since that time. He offered some facts on the

church, such as its 1711 construction date and the 1880s steeple and addition designed by Frank Furness. He described the graveyard that contains tombstones dating so far back that many inscriptions are now illegible, adding that President Buchanan's brother and sister-in-law are buried on the site, which was a point of pride, since Buchanan was the only president hailing from Pennsylvania. On the other hand, he contended, the parish house has never been on any list of historic places. Mr. Sklaroff referred the Commissioners to the reports within the exhibits provided prior to the meeting, commenting that those reports all purport to identify historic buildings worthy of preservation, and in none of those is the parish house discussed. He asked that the Commission look at the building on the basis of its architecture, adding that the nomination claims that since 1956, the parish house and Sunday school building has held architectural significance in its own right. He argued that, since 1956, there has been no great event and no particular person of note; it was a place where people went to Sunday school, played basketball, and participated in other activities. He contended that there is not a neighborhood in Philadelphia or Pennsylvania that does not contain a favorite gathering place, whether it be a pharmacy with a soda fountain, a stoop, or an intersection where one could play "wireball." Almost every place, he continued, had an empty lot for games, but that does not make it rise to the level of being worthy of designation. He then read a passage from the nomination: "The Colonial Revival style enjoyed a level of popularity that approached the vernacular ubiquity in certain strata of the building environment." True, Mr. Sklaroff concluded, there are hundreds, maybe thousands, of buildings that have the same kinds of features, and as the nomination states, some are more important and of more prominent heritage than this building. He maintained that the nomination does nothing more than recall some features that would be found in Colonial Revival architecture, adding that the building is not a leading or noteworthy example of the style. He stated that he has not been alerted to any special community history in the nomination, but conceded that the building reflects some aspects of the Colonial Revival style. However, he argued that the property does not merit designation simply because a box was checked on the nomination form. It does not oblige the Commission to designate the property to the Register, he concluded. He contended that for a nonprofit, the hardship standards are somewhat relaxed and that he has to make a hardship argument at the present meeting. He asked that the Commission consider the merits of the hardship argument, because the church cannot return tomorrow with a hardship application. Earlier in the meeting, he continued, the Commission heard an estimate that the cost to prepare a proper hardship argument can be \$200,000 to \$300,000. Mr. Sklaroff noted that he has been fortunate to bring some of those successful hardship arguments before the Commission, and he confirmed that the cost extends into the tens of thousands of dollars to do it correctly. He maintained that a hardship argument would show that the congregation has spent years investigating the redevelopment of this property that included community outreach and interaction with community leaders. He stated his intention to prove that designation will put an end to the 300-year continual operation of Trinity Church, Oxford and that it would mean that the church would not get a return on the asset, because it could not create an income stream large enough to cover the cost still associated with the parish house and the cost of the congregation and historic building. The church, he insisted, would be taken over and boarded up. He asserted that his team will prove there is no use of the building that will provide a reasonable rate of return. Lastly, he asked the Commission to acknowledge the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA), which protects worship by individuals and organizations. The prohibition against the substantial land use or landmarking of a property, he continued, would create a substantial burden. He reiterated that he will prove that the building costs so much to maintain and does not produce income; to maintain this building as historic and list it on the Register will exhaust the congregation's income and resources and will place a substantial burden on the church's ability to operate. He argued that there is no compelling reason for the

Commission to designate the building and suggested that such a designation is not only unequal treatment under RLUIPA but is prohibited.

Mr. Wamsley stated that he serves the Diocese of Pennsylvania as Canon to the Ordinary and currently serves as the senior staff person for the Diocese. He indicated that he attended the meeting to demonstrate the bishop's support of the congregation of Trinity Oxford and its vestry, both of which constitute one of the Diocesan Episcopal Church presences in Philadelphia. He asserted that, while it is the opinion of some, including the nominator, the congregation does not find that its non-sacred asset, the parish house, meets the requirements for designation. He added that the church is not remarkable in any enduring sense, nor does he believe the nomination proves that the parish house stands out for historic designation. He read from the nomination, quoting that while the building's architecture is "illustrative of the style's effectiveness in lending symbolic gravity to an otherwise prosaic building program," there are "other examples of Colonial Revival design from the 1920s [that] are no doubt more notable in terms of architectural pedigree or prominence." The nomination, Mr. Wamsley continued, also concedes that the use of the Colonial Revival style is "unsurprising" and had become universal, precisely because of its popularity. He urged the Commission not to designate the structure, because there has been no justification that the parish house stands out from the myriad other buildings of the same style. He added that, when compared to the historic church building, which is exemplary, it is difficult to understand why an unremarkable building would be preserved at the peril of an exemplary building. He referred to the preservation recommendations contained within the Lower Northeast Planning District report and other reports, noting that those reports offer no commentary on how remarkable the parish house's architecture is. Mr. Wamsley then quoted from the report prepared by Mr. Farnham in June 2012:

Old Trinity Church, Oxford (6900 Oxford Avenue), which was constructed in 1711 and is the second oldest church in Philadelphia, should be included as a centerpiece in the district. In addition to Old Trinity, three nearby structures at the northwest corner of Oxford Township should be considered for the thematic district: 6920 Oxford Avenue, house; 7032 and 7034 Oxford Avenue, houses; and 6700 Rising Sun Avenue, house or tavern.

Mr. Wamsley noted that the parish house complex at 6901 Rising Sun Avenue rests among the addresses mentioned, and that special note is given to the exceptional historical value of Trinity Church; yet, no mention of any significance or noteworthiness is assigned to the parish house 6901 Rising Sun Avenue. He contended that the lack of mention is consistent through all submitted exhibits and that no historical significance for the work of outstanding architects has been assigned to the parish house. He read another statement from the nomination, calling it a further concession: "Though not particularly prolific or prominent in their day, Mayo and Moses were capable architects." While they were capable architects, Mr. Wamsley suggested, these are not the kinds of accolades that are received, for instance, by the firm of Furness & Hewitt, who did do work on the 1711 church and who also supplied some of the sacred furniture within the building. He acknowledged the congregation's long history of serving the community through the shared use of its own space, but argued that while the recent partnership shared by the congregation and community is fresh in everyone's minds and dear to their hearts, those partnerships are attributable to the relationships within the community and to the congregation that finds its home in the sacred church and not the parish house. As the congregation seeks to develop its non-sacred asset, he continued, it seeks to ensure that the community continues to enjoy the presence of the congregation through its service to all and through access to its open

spaces. He stated that the congregation is an enduring presence in the community and makes the open space available, because it is able to protect the grounds for those who enjoy it. On a regular basis, he continued, members of the congregation sweep the graveyard and open spaces, clean up used needles, used and discarded condoms, and other trash that is a possible danger to those who use the property. Those members, he argued, seek to secure their financial security through the development of part of the property in order to ensure the enjoyment of the rest of the property for the community. He reiterated that if the Commission designates the parish house, the real historic asset would be placed in peril, as would the community's enjoyment of the green space. If the real sacred historic asset is placed in jeopardy through designation, he asserted, the Vestry would be forced to disband, the congregation would disperse, and the church would close. He asserted that in this unthinkable scenario, the property would come under the direct care and responsibility of the Diocese of Pennsylvania and that in such cases, it is the duty of the Diocese to secure the property, restricting access to the campus in order to ensure upkeep, reduce risk to the community, and mitigate liability. He further argued that sacred historic items would have to be removed from the premises for their protection from theft, the church would need to be shuttered to protect it from vandalism, and the property would need to be secured to protect against undesirable outcomes that the congregation currently and diligently safeguards the community against.

Ms. Furlong, a 40-year member of Trinity Church Oxford, explained her personal affiliation to the church, noting that she is a Vestry member and had been part of the redevelopment committee formed over five years ago. She added that she continues to serve as part of the committee to find solutions to save the historic church and that Trinity Church initiated a redevelopment effort for a portion of the property five years ago in order to save the historic church. She mentioned that Trinity Church, Oxford was one of the first properties to be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The congregation, she continued, have taken great care to protect the assets and help the community for over 300 years, but, because of increased costs in maintaining the property, the aging of the buildings, and a declining congregation, it was evident that the church needed to leverage its assets to ensure the financial health of the church. She argued that, as a result of those issues, the church made the difficult decision to redevelop the community building on Rising Sun Avenue. She contended that while the designated historical church building has been actively serving the community for over 300 years, the usefulness of the nominated parish house building diminished within only a few short decades. She explained that that building, located at the far end of the property along a commercial corridor, was originally built to serve as a community building for the church school and for church suppers. After time, she continued, the church was unable to maintain the building and sought tenants to rent the space. To defray the cost, she explained that the church leased the space to community organizations, such as the Police Athletic League and a local daycare. Ms. Furlong commented that the groups relied heavily on city and state funding to pay rent and that the combined rent did not cover the monthly heating and electric bills and that the church supplemented the operating and maintenance costs of the building. She suggested that the church spent more of its operating budget on maintaining the community building than it did on its historic church, which also requires significant investment due to crumbling exterior walls related to age and deterioration. She remarked that the church spent over \$200,000 from 2008 to 2013 alone on the community building's repairs and maintenance and that money was taken from the general funds intended to support the church. She asserted that, owing to ongoing maintenance costs, inconsistent receipt of rent by tenants, and a declining congregation, it became impossible for Trinity Church to maintain the building. As a result, she continued, the building has deteriorated to a point that is no longer safe for tenants and the church found it necessary to terminate existing leases. She stated that the building now sits unoccupied along

the commercial corridor and no longer serves the community or the church. The additional land surrounding the church building, she explained, was meant to support the church, but the inability to use the land to generate a consistent stream of income will result in the closure of the historic church. She claimed that the church has been very transparent with the community and political leaders during the process and has held multiple community meetings between 2013 and 2016, in coordination with City Councilwomen Marian Tasco and Cherelle Parker, who attended meetings to inform the community of the church's intentions with the property. She explained that the church explored many redevelopment options beginning in 2013, when it first approached its existing tenants, the Police Athletic League and daycare, to determine if they could take over the lease and maintain the building to continue their missions. That option was not feasible, she added, because they were unable to secure funding. She then described how the church reached out to the Philadelphia Protestant Home, a local elderly facility, that same year to potentially leverage the building for community purposes, though that organization also lacked funds to make it a viable use. She stated that the church reached out to neighbors and community and political leaders for a solution and fundraising, but no sustainable options resulted. She discussed meetings held between July and October 2013 with Penrose Management Corporation, a developer of elderly residential living, but after tours and interviews with the organization and several months of evaluation, the necessary funding could not be secured. She noted that the church was referred to then-State Representative Mark Cohen, whom she contacted, because the church believed there was potential to leverage the building for a state representative's offices. After contacting individuals at the state, she continued, the church was informed that the state did not have any interest in having commercial or office space in that area. She remarked that, owing to the building's poor condition and the church's lack of funds, it is imperative to find a tenant able to take on the responsibility to bring the building up to code, fix the required items, renovate the building for their own needs, and take full responsibility for the property.

Ms. Furlong continued that in addition to exploring alternative uses, in 2013 the church engaged Colliers International, a professional real estate agent, to place the property on the market; however, she contended that there was very little interest in the location or space, though the church marketed the property for over four years. The only other lease offer, she added, was received from McDonald's in 2015. She stated that in July 2017, the church signed a contract with the current lease tenant and suggested that the nomination before the Commission is a political attempt to stop those efforts. She explained that the Preservation Alliance, along with Representative Jared Solomon, submitted the nomination in April 2017, but that the church was never informed of the nomination until two to three weeks prior to the Committee on Historic Designation meeting, when Representative Solomon's office and the Preservation Alliance reached out to request a meeting. She stated that they apologized for not reaching out sooner, but their concern was that the church would sign a lease and commence demolition, and that they needed to manage this accordingly. She acknowledged that Representative Solomon and the Preservation Alliance offered their assistance to provide alternative uses, but she contended that the church is out of time and have signed a lease with a tenant; however, she let them know that if they had potential tenants and opportunities to leverage the space to let the church know. She commented that the church received one potential tenant, again the Philadelphia Protestant Home, though the church's realtor reached out to the organization on several occasions in the last several weeks without obtaining a response.

Ms. Furlong explained that from the materials that were provided to the Commission, the church is currently operating at a deficit and the pattern will continue until all of funds are exhausted in less than three years, which she described as the best case scenario, assuming no major

repairs or unforeseen expenses are required. She reiterated that the church has sought a tenant for five long years and no longer has time to explore options that may never materialize, since it has approximately three years before it will need to close the church. She claimed that it is imperative that the church move forward with the legal agreement to ensure its financial security. She added that the church is working very hard not to have to come back before the Commission in three years when the church is crumbling and that this is the opportunity to continue to sustain the congregation. She argued that the parish house may tick some boxes for its Colonial Revival style, but it has no real architectural or historical significance. That significance, she contended, lies one city block away with the 300-year-old church and surrounding cemetery, and the church that has been building its mission since before the Declaration of Independence was conceived. She described historic members of the church who were key leaders in various fields and who have shaped the city and nation. She then noted that Trinity Church, Oxford has survived wars, financial depressions, and social revolutions, and concluded that allowing an unremarkable building with no value to be designated at the fate of a truly significant structure is an injustice and that the congregation has a duty to its forefathers and future generations to secure its sacred space.

Lorie Henry, Rector's Warden at Trinity Church Oxford, stated that the church does not have an installed Rector, so the Vestry is the governing body of the church, and Ms. Henry heads that body. She reiterated several earlier points about designation compromising the church's survival and the congregation's five-year efforts to pursue redevelopment. She added that the process of discerning the redevelopment option began several years prior and that the church was faced with major work to the aging building. The parish, she continued, agreed that it could not maintain the pace of spending with its maintenance needs and made the difficult decision to redevelop the parish house in order to save the church, which is the cornerstone of the parish's worship and mission. She argued that though Trinity privately owns the parish house, the church felt it would be important to meet with the community and be transparent about its plans and understands the building's sentimental value to the community. She described the first meeting with various community leaders, held in August 2013, in which City Council representatives and local leaders attended. She mentioned successive community meetings in 2014, 2015, and 2016, where redevelopment options were explored. Some of those meetings, she continued, included the current lease tenant's representatives who shared their plans for the site, including renderings of the building. She argued that neither the community nor leaders can claim not to be fully aware of the church's efforts. She further explained that the church conducted a telephone poll of neighbors residing within a mile of the church, and 49% of those surveyed support the lease in order to prevent the church from closing and allowing the green space to remain available to the community. Likewise, she added, the church did a direct-mail of the same area, surveying 2,500 homes and requesting opinions on what neighbors would like to see in the green space. Of the responses received, she continued, 10 times more people supported the lease efforts as well as the recommendation for the remaining green space. She reiterated that the church will close within two to three years if redevelopment fails, because the church's finances will not sustain its existence. She further described the services the church offers, which include Sunday services, community outreach to the needy, partnerships with Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous, meal services, transportation costs, gifts to children through Episcopal Community Services, and a partnership with the Philadelphia Protestant Home. Closing Trinity Church, she asserted, would close relationships that have developed over generations, including multigenerational relationships of members within the church. She noted that individuals criticize members for not living in the community and only attending Sunday services, but she argued that the statement is not true. She recounted her own personal history with the church, adding that the church is a spiritual home and place of comfort. On the archway

to the church the verse “Lord, thou has been our refuge for one generation to another” is written, and Ms. Henry contended that the verse embodies Trinity to its parishioners and to the community.

Peter Angelides stated that he is offering a presentation on the church’s financial issues, but is not presenting a full hardship analysis, though it does follow the basic pattern and approach of a hardship analysis. He explained that in completing his work, he spoke with a number of individuals, including a realtor, accountant, and Vestrymen; read documents; conducted his own independent research about area market rates; and toured the building. Mr. Angelides asked to discuss the building’s practical issues and began by describing it in plan as being U-shaped, and containing an auditorium, gym, and classrooms for Sunday school. He added that the rooms are not contained on one floor but that the site slopes slightly and, therefore, steps were installed between each part of the building, creating multiple levels and preventing it from being handicap accessible. There is no air conditioning or elevator, he added, and the building shows normal signs of wear and tear, though it has clearly been maintained in the sense that there are no signs of demolition by neglect and there has been substantial investment in the building over the years. However, he continued, its maintenance does not negate the fact that the building is old and deteriorating or that it was built for a specific purpose. With two very large assembly spaces, the auditorium and gymnasium, Mr. Angelides questioned what the building could be used for, indicating that the standard uses would be residential, office, or retail space. He concluded that those uses do not work in this building, though he acknowledged that a use like apartments could be incorporated. As a practical matter, he continued, any residential units installed in the building would be extremely awkward, because to fill the gym or auditorium, a second level would need to be installed and heating costs would be significant. He suggested that the standard uses are a bad match for the building. He argued that the building is in no way configured for retail, because it is split on many levels, wraps around, is set far back from the street, and does not provide an appropriate condition for retail. He also asserted that there is plenty of inexpensive modern retail space nearby and that a potential retailer would not place this property high on its list of potential rentals. He observed that the building would be great for a daycare and athletic league, as in the past, and could certainly be adapted to other uses, but he stated he was not aware of any that would generate significant rent. He noted that not much of an office market exists in that part of the city, though there is a residential market. That market, he added, is not particularly strong, with one bedroom units leasing for \$700 to \$800, which would not be enough to support construction of the new building. He indicated that the former daycare tenant paid approximately \$2,000 to \$3,000 per month, which equals less than \$30,000 per year. The costs to operate the building provided by the church’s accountant, he added, total approximately \$30,000 to \$36,000 per year when the building is a vacant, unoccupied space heated just enough to keep the pipes from freezing with minimal electricity and no use-related maintenance. If the building were to be occupied, he continued, the cost to operate the building would be higher, because the building would be heated more and maintenance would need to increase substantially. An example of those maintenance costs, he offered, included weekly plumbing to address issues when the property housed the daycare. He noted that those maintenance issues are not incurred now with the building vacant, but they would have to be incurred with an occupant. Mr. Angelides further explained that as a church property, the church does not currently pay property taxes, but that it recently received a proposed property tax bill on the order of \$19,000, assuming the property would hold a commercial use. He also indicated that the property tax could substantially increase in the future. He reiterated that the property generates \$2,000 to \$3,000 per month when occupied, which is less than the current operating budget of the vacant structure. The only type of suitable tenant, he argued, does not pay enough for the building to remain open, let alone contribute to

the long-term maintenance of the structure. He noted that the income would not allow the church to perform necessary long-term repairs in the future, such as installing a new roof, completing foundation work, or repairing the heating system. In order to maintain the building for the long term, as designation requires, he stated that substantial investment would be required but that there is no indication of a use that would provide that type of investment. He reiterated that the congregation is dwindling, comparing it to the 1960s when more parishioners existed. He called it a standard story endemic to churches, commenting that many churches, not just parish houses, have closed throughout the cities, because their congregations have moved elsewhere. He referred to Trinity Church's congregation as dwindling but devoted and present, though he stated that the dwindling congregation explains the diminished revenue and why the issue with the parish house exists. He remarked that the church built the parish house to serve a much larger congregation in the past and that the building is no longer needed, though the expenses are not eliminated simply because people no longer use it. He asserted that the building is causing the church to lose money and that the figures provided by the accountant show that the congregation will lose approximately \$140,000 next year, though maybe less in future years once legal costs are eliminated. He called the math compelling, adding that in a few years, the church's funds will be exhausted. The parish house, he continued, poses a significant expense to the church, and designating the building would force the church to maintain that expense. On the other hand, he contended, if there were a lease, that lease would go a long way in securing the church's financial future, though not with this building.

Mr. Sklaroff added that the church is eating away at its unrestricted endowment, of which approximately \$480,000 remains. After three years, he argued, that will be exhausted, and that is why the church is here. He claimed that if the Commission found that the building has Colonial Revival aspects warranting protection, the church could not afford to return with a financial hardship application. He stated that the church has presented its information in the manner of a financial hardship application and that Mr. Angelides has concluded that no reasonable return on any use for the building exists, and certainly not one that will afford more than \$100,000 of income to support the truly important church and surroundings.

One Commissioner asked whether the owner presently has a lease for the property. Mr. Sklaroff answered that there is a lease agreement, but it requires the demolition of the building to allow the lessee to construct a Royal Farms. He noted some details are partly dependent on zoning, which will be worked out by the lessee, but contended that the church sought to keep the property as a lease to ensure that the development is done properly with a landscaping buffer to the church properties and appropriately designed and landscaped spaces along the two residential streets.

Mr. Thomas opined that the owners of an Episcopal Cathedral came before the Commission and an arrangement was worked out whereby they were permitted to take down properties. A tower, he added, was constructed, with some investment, in such a manner that guaranteed through a complex agreement that the money or proceeds from that source of income would be provided to the church. Mr. Sklaroff responded that the example was very similar in that the key was to protect the sacred asset, which was the cathedral, though the two parish houses were also on the Register. He further noted that he was involved in the analysis in that particular case, which was extraordinarily expensive. This Commission, he continued, agreed that the buildings could be taken down, and the owner entered into an agreement to invest approximately \$2 million into the cathedral immediately, in addition to funds that would benefit the congregation. He maintained that the case was very similar, except that the Rising Sun Avenue building does not have anywhere near the heritage that the two parish houses did and

is not nearly as old as those two. The conclusion was the same, he noted. Those buildings, he argued, were inappropriately laid out, the mechanical systems could not support any use; there was no interest in office space of that kind. Consequently, Mr. Sklaroff explained, his team was able to persuade the Commission that the buildings should be demolished in order to preserve the cathedral. He indicated that the work has been concluded and the cathedral has been preserved and enhanced. He asserted that the funds in this case will be used similarly, all for the operation expenses. He referenced the information the property owner distributed to the Commission prior to the meeting, and stated that the congregation has a lot of expenses outside of maintenance, with \$72,000 per year as their budget, which might increase slightly if they get a full-time rector. He explained that the church is investing \$150,000 almost every year from its unrestricted funds, and that amount nearly equals the lease. He called it a triple net lease, so the church will no longer have to support the non-sacred and obsolete building.

Attorney Leonard Reuter clarified that the 38th and Chestnut Street case was a necessary in the public interest case. Mr. Sklaroff agreed. Mr. Reuter added that a settlement agreement was ultimately worked out between the Preservation Alliance and the church. He noted that he was not working for the Historical Commission at the time and was instead representing the Preservation Alliance.

Mr. Mattioni further clarified that, with that particular case, the properties were already designated as historic. Here, he continued, the Commission is reviewing a nomination for designation. Before the Commission delves into the extensive presentation that has been made, which deals almost exclusively with financial hardship, the Commission should confront more directly the question of designation, or at least whether the property meets the Criteria for Designation.

Mr. Sklaroff stated that he understands Mr. Mattioni's request, but added that he did not think that this building or its characteristics were so remarkable. He contended that, if he were to ask Mr. Angelides whether the history of the building or character-defining features increase the value of the property, Mr. Angelides would answer no. Mr. Angelides affirmed. Mr. Sklaroff indicated that the building's merits were discussed in the reports and that there are ameliorating comments even within the nomination. He commented that he provided three reports, including one by Ms. Cooperman, one by Mr. Farnham, and one prepared by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, all of which fail to mention this property, though they mention others.

Mr. Mattioni responded that the comment is somewhat unfair in assuming that every property in the area that may qualify for designation was listed in the reports. Mr. Sklaroff countered that the authors of those reports attempted to list all qualified properties. Mr. Mattioni replied that he doubts that was the intention, since it is a very tall order. He added that he read Mr. Farnham's report and understands that it was an effort to present a summary of the main properties he found at the time that might meet the Criteria for Designation. He argued that it was a prioritizing effort as well, and that if it was intended to be all-inclusive, there would be no room for the designation process.

Mr. Sklaroff agreed, but added that the reports were an attempt by three different authors to identify those properties that are prominent, and certainly no one was hiding the parish house. Mr. Mattioni countered that no one suggested that anyone was hiding the property.

Mr. Thomas suggested that the Commission could consider a motion to determine whether the nomination satisfies at least one Criteria for Designation, then it could establish how to proceed.

If the property does not satisfy any Criteria, he continued, this discussion is moot and the church can move ahead with its plans. He stated that if the Commission finds that the property meets the Criteria for Designation, then it needs to identify how to move forward.

Mr. Mattioni stated that, at this point, it is important to hear from the nominator and others who are in support of designation, so the Commission gets a balanced view and more perspectives in its consideration and decision on designation.

Mona Cohen shared several letters, including one from former Philadelphia Mayor Wilson Goode, who wrote in support of the nomination. She added that Congressman Brendan Boyle and the Burholme Civic Association, which is the local RCO also provided a document. She summarized Mayor Goode's letter, quoting that:

We are fighting to preserve both the religious and architectural heritage of the Burholme community as well to preserve green-space and recreational space. The Parish House which we seek to preserve, has since 1928, been used for religious and recreational purposes. It is adjacent to an athletic field which in turn is the gateway to a cemetery. In the cemetery are buried church members of prominence for whom streets in Northeast Philadelphia were named and many slaves who were baptized at the church. . . . The planned destruction of this Parish House and land in favor of a gas station flies in the face of history and would be detrimental to the unique character that the Colonial Church property exudes.

Ms. Cohen then stated that a neighbor will read a document provided by the RCO and continued to read a passage from a letter provided by Congressman Boyle:

I stand alongside those opposing the demolition of the property that includes Trinity Church, Oxford at 6901 Rising Sun Avenue, the Philadelphia location that dates back to the year 1698. This property has a rare, historical significance that should be preserved, not eliminated by a wrecking ball. My staff and I are working closely with the neighbors and opposition groups. I will assist when and where we can to aid in any Federal tax credits that would assist in preserving this irreplaceable historical property.

Ann McCall, a Lawndale resident for nearly 25 years, stated that her family attended the daycare at Oxford. She commented on her use of the building and added that many residents believed the building was already designated as historic and were surprised to find out it was not. She asserted that the building retains much of its original materials. Ms. McCall contended that she and others were further surprised to learn that the church intended to demolish the building, which served as a daycare and Police Athletic League and is a part of the community and the individuals who used it. To have it gone is heartbreaking, she remarked. She read a letter from the Burholme Community Town Watch:

We the board of directors and members of the Burholme Civic Association are writing you with the utmost sense of urgency regarding the fate of the parish house. The Colonial Revival style building that stands alongside the Trinity Oxford Church, which already enjoys historic designation. The site occupies the intersection of Rising Sun and Longshore Avenues in Northeast Philadelphia. Trinity Oxford Church dates back to 1711, making it one of the oldest churches in the history of the country. The parish house dates to 1928 and is also deserving of historic significance. The properties are an integral part of the very fabric of the tight-knit and proud community. The buildings and

site also provide the community with great usage, natural beauty, green space, and a great gathering place for our residents. We beseech the Commission to designate the entire property as historically significant. This beloved property is a significant part of our history. If we lose these properties, we will lose a huge part of the very identity of our community.

Ms. McCall added that the letter is signed by every member of the community and noted that a petition containing over 3,000 names has been circulated. Every person in the neighborhood, she claimed, opposes the building's demolition. At all the meetings the community has attended, she continued, it has adamantly opposed demolition every step of the way. The community, she added, wants to save the building in order to save its own history and its own community. She opposed the church's argument that the parish house is not an integral part of the church, claiming that it is all one property to the community. She questioned why the parish house property was not already designated as historic, citing a potential fluke in paperwork. She claimed that the parish house should be designated, as the building and church comprises one property. She asked to preserve the parish house and the integrity of the gravestones and everything behind it. The plans the church formulated, she contended, present a huge risk and is not one that anyone living in the community is willing to set aside. She contended that she understands the church's hardship, but argued that it had two tenants in the building, which were evicted. She exclaimed that the church created the hardship for itself and the community must now pay for it. The tenants, she asserted, wanted to remain. She called the situation unfair and asked the Commission to take into account the community, its beliefs and what it wants to preserve. She insisted that she understands that the congregation wants to preserve its church, but argued that the community lives in the surrounding neighborhood and that the congregants do not. She suggested the building can be used and that there have been offers.

Community member Matt Jackson stated that he, his brothers, and his friends benefited from the services provided by the Police Athletic League as children. As an adult, he continued, he has grown to revere the great amount of history that surrounds not only the church but also the parish house. He added that he is a producer of the King's Highway film and that he worked to try to bring together the film's director with the church, so that it could be included in the film to showcase the importance of Trinity Church, Oxford's property from Rising Sun Avenue to Oxford Avenue. He explained that he offered testimony to the Committee on Historic Designation at its September meeting where he highlighted historic facts and summarized a letter from archivist Jack Newman, who explained that the Burlington Historical Society became involved in several major digs at the Doane Academy in Burlington, New Jersey and discovered artifacts with Revolutionary War ties and a wealth of pre-European artifacts. An example, he continued, was a cannonball likely fired from a ship on the Delaware River during the Revolutionary War. The parish house was constructed in 1928 at a cost of approximately \$80,000, he explained, and those costs were partly defrayed by the legacy of Louis Hellerman, who owned a nearby farm. He further contended that construction was seen as a great achievement during a period of growth for the parish, which was especially remarkable, he argued, since the growth occurred on the heels of the Great Depression. During a recent visit to the Philadelphia City Archives, he stated he was able to view the building permit for the 1963 addition to the parish house, where he discovered the estimated cost of construction was \$58,000. A lot of money was spent to build the parish house, he noted, and money was put aside in an account by the church, given by a member of the community and church member Louis Hellerman. He contended that Hellerman is a familiar name in Northeast Philadelphia with the presence of Hellerman Street and others and that the names in the cemetery virtually provide a geography of the northeast section of the city. He recalled his previous remarks about

the 1700 deed, in which he stated that the deed, dated 30 December 1700 by Thomas Graves to Joshua Carpenter and John Moore of Philadelphia, was for “the three acres now embraced in the graveyard, and the lot adjoining, were to be for the use and service of those of the Communion of Our Holy Mother, the Church of England and to no other use or uses whatsoever.” That deed, he continued, is still in the possession of the Vestry. After further research, he discovered that it suggests an actual intent in 1700 for the parish house land, which is referenced in Trinity Oxford’s 1930 parish directory that notes “some land adjoining was given by a person well-affected to the church for the use of the minister, who should reside there for a house, garden, and small orchard.” He asserted that it further indicates that the person “well-affected to the church” was no doubt a member and that it was in fact Thomas Graves. All of this, he continued, can explain the parish’s passion in 1952 when church leadership and parishioners protested a gas station that was built across the street from this parish house. He stated that later, in 1964, that same moxie was echoed when the Reverend Noble Smith boasted in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that: “This property has been the saving grace of this neighborhood,” and that the church had received a number of attractive offers for the ground by developers. Mr. Jackson noted that Reverend Smith went on to state that “there is no chance of this historic site being given up.” Mr. Jackson claimed demolition of the parish house would be a huge loss to this community. He concluded that it is his belief that the five and a half acres of Trinity Church’s land is a time capsule that should be left undisturbed.

Neighbor Heather Miller provided photographs from the community’s use of the Police Athletic League, as well as Google Earth images and a bulletin from the parish house’s dedication to Waldemar Jansen. The parish house, she stated, is the crown jewel of the community and a place that has served the community since its inception in 1928. She explained the dedication of the parish house addition to Jansen and the history of the Police Athletic League’s use. She called the parish house a community hug that lasted until 2015 when the tenants were forced to vacate the property. The open green space, she continued, has provided a sense of serenity and feeling of being transported back in time for the entire community. The community stands firmly, she argued, as evidenced in the 3,000 signatures, for the preservation and reuse of our at-risk anchor, the parish house. She stated that Trinity’s representatives claim they are under financial hardship, which she called a false claim. She argued that the church hired one of the most prominent attorneys in the country to represent them, paid him a significant amount of money, sent out a misleading flier to the community in regard to the signed tentative lease for the destruction of the parish house and construction of a Royal Farms. She countered Mr. Angelides’ assessment, contending that the church made significant improvements to the building, including new roofs, a new heater, new air conditioning, and a renovation of old offices. She claimed the church holds stocks in high-performing companies, which was clearly listed in their report. She stated that the stock market is now at a record-breaking all-time high and that the church is very well off. She questioned whether the congregation’s claims of hardship were genuine.

Former state legislator Mark Cohen stated that the Religious Land Use Act referred to by Mr. Sklaroff does not really affect this piece of property, because the property is not used for active worship nor has it been used for church practices, such as a Sunday school, in many years. He clarified that the community opposition is not targeted toward religious use but rather the non-religious use of the building. He added that he had previously noted that the representatives of Trinity Church, Oxford indicated that the state is not interested in using the church. Mr. Cohen indicated that he had worked with Secretary Curt Topper of the Department of General Services, who was very interested in the possibility of using the building. He then rebutted the argument that the state was uninterested in using the building, adding that the state official in

charge of office locations was very actively pursuing the parish house with him. He claimed that the church made the decision that it was not interested, citing that the state's financial stability was not great enough for the church to engage in a plan. He argued that the church has provided no statement that it has actively sought to improve membership and that he read the materials it submitted on its history with great interest. He summarized some of those points, including that the church had on multiple occasions declined in membership and rebounded. He commented that it is a common theme that all churches and houses of worship are currently losing members, while it used to be that people were born into religion and remained with that religion throughout their lives. He observed that it seems unlikely that a church with 60 members would remain in existence much longer unless they grow and accept new members, which he noted was the church's prerogative. The parish house building, he continued, is a matter of public importance, because it is located in an area with high potential growth and appeal to millennials and other individuals. To have a beautiful church building replaced by Royal Farms with a 24-hour drive-thru, he argued, would not help the community and will reinforce a message that everything is deteriorating and nothing can be done. He claimed the church made less-than-vigorous efforts to improve membership or sell the property by not placing it on the open market. He stated that there is no sign the church ever attempted either and suggested those lackluster efforts led to its financial problems. He asked that the church address its financial problems without downgrading the neighborhood, adding that the neighborhood would be interested in helping to find solutions. He recounted that he personally reached out to the church but that they had rules for redevelopment and that they were unwilling to sell the property or find another religious institution to purchase the property or engage in a long-term lease. He argued that those options should be pursued, since several religious institutions are interested in leasing the property. He then urged the Commission to designate the property.

Ben Leech, who authored the nomination on behalf of the Preservation Alliance, addressed the question of significance raised by the property owner. He stated that the building merits designation and noted that the Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the property satisfies the Criteria outlined in the nomination. He stated that he became involved in the nomination with an open mind, adding that there was a question of whether the designation of the historic church building included this parcel. He remarked that he ultimately determined that it did not and that the question then shifted to whether designation should include the parish house. He asked whether, if the church were under consideration for designation today, everything on the parcel would be included. He also asked whether the entire parcel tells the history of the church and stated that he was convinced, through his research, that the history of the church was one of continual evolution and growth. The oldest part, constructed in 1711, he continued, was followed 50 years later by another part, then another, then another, continuously through 1928. He noted that this building is just the last of many additions and evolutions that tells the church's story and that, in the context of Burholme, it tells a very important story. He acknowledged that this building is much younger than the church, but contended that it is one of the oldest in the neighborhood, aside from the church. He argued that the story of the surrounding development of this northeastern neighborhood could not be told without telling the story of the civic infrastructure that went along with the neighborhoods. He found it interesting that churches played that role almost before the City did and that the parish house was constructed before a recreation center, though it contributed the same to the neighborhood. He asserted that the history of the community cannot be told without acknowledging that institutions like Trinity Church played a major role and built buildings that play that role. Those buildings, he continued, are the physical examples of development patterns that the preservation ordinance is designed to recognize. He remarked that he tried to match the history to the Criteria. He stated that the building is not the most important Colonial Revival building in the city but that it is a

building in the Colonial Revival style. He explained that it followed on the heels of the Sesquicentennial, when that style was symbolically weighted and that the church was trying to express itself and the community by choosing that style. Many churches, he added, built parish houses during this time and most were a much different style, such as English Revival or another style that was not so overtly embracing of the colonial heritage. Mr. Leech argued that that fact is significant to the city but not nearly as significant as it is to the neighborhood. He concluded that there is a place for recognizing that significance in the ordinance and this building satisfies it.

Mr. Steinke stated that the parish house is not only Colonial Revival, but it was built in respect to the original colonial church building. Many church buildings or parish houses, he added, were typically Gothic Revival, but these architects had an actual colonial building on the other end of the campus in which to reference. He called the parish house a remarkable building for Northeast Philadelphia and noted that he grew up about one mile from the property in Burholme and is very familiar with the campus. He credited the property with sparking his personal interest in historic preservation and referred to the present situation as “sad,” describing it as a large corporation preying on a struggling congregation. If the current lease holds, he continued, the only loser is the surrounding community. He identified the other gas station at Rising Sun and Longshore Avenues, adding that Royal Farms’ strategy is to battle Wawa by preying on a struggling congregation and leaving the surrounding community poor due to the loss of a striking Colonial Revival building and the sense of the campus that serves as a surviving rural outpost in a fully developed city. He described the campus as having a country church on one end built in 1711 and added to in 1875 and a Colonial Revival parish house surrounded by beautiful lawns and mature trees. He opposed the proposal for a gas station, noting that it would not just be a loss of a building but that it would be a loss of a landscape and site to allow gas tanks to be installed in the ground and asphalt to be paved across green space. He contended that he feels for the congregation, calling them “good people” who want what is best for their congregation. He voiced his sympathy and support for them in that goal. After submitting the nomination, Mr. Steinke stated that he requested a tour of the site to allow a preservation architect and adaptive reuse specialists to assist. He claimed that his several requests were all denied and that the church had a deal with Royal Farms “in their back pocket.” He commented that he spoke with the president of the Philadelphia Protestant Home, located one mile from the property, and that the home is seeking a location for an adult daycare. He contended that the nominated property would be ideal owing to its location along a high-traffic street and great access to the community. Mr. Steinke remarked that he relayed the information to the church’s real estate broker, but did not receive a call, because, Mr. Steinke claimed, the real estate broker, Retail Sites, also has a deal with Royal Farms. He questioned how aggressive the broker was in trying to find a compatible reuse for the existing campus under the circumstances. He suggested that the broker merely sought the highest and best use. He offered a different example in which, a few miles from the site in a community with a less robust real estate market, the Episcopal Diocese partnered with a vacated historic church called St. James the Less to create the St. James School in the parish house and retain the church building for daily services. He explained that he toured the property earlier this year and called it a remarkable and inspiring story. The part of Northeast Philadelphia where Trinity Church is located, he continued, is rapidly changing socioeconomically and ethnically with new populations entering the equation, who, if aware of this opportunity, could partner with people like Judge-Elect Mark Cohen and State Representative Jared Solomon. He argued that a solution could be identified in which there is a compatible reuse for this building and this campus that will not only preserve what exists today, but would restore goodwill between the congregation and surrounding neighborhood, which is

now at war with them. He stated that designation today will make that outcome possible and asked that the Commission take action.

Neighbor Joe Bozzelli remarked that he has lived near the property since 1983 and that he loves looking out his front door and seeing the parish house building. He called it remarkable. He noted that he and his sons used the Police Athletic League when it was a tenant in the building. He contended that the property had a profound impact on his family and others in the neighborhood through trips and sports events. He noted that he and his now-deceased wife attended parties at the building. He argued that the building was inviting and brought together the entire community, as did the baseball games on the fields at night. He expressed opposition to the construction of a Royal Farms gas station and convenience store, noting that it would disrupt his life to no end and would negatively impact his property value. He expressed sympathy to the congregation, adding that it is awful to face hardship, but he focused on his own hardship that he would assume should the church's plans be implemented, since his property stands 22 feet from the parish house. He implored the Commission to designate the property as historic to protect his property and his quality of life.

Oscar Beisert voiced his support for the nomination, adding that he became familiar with the area of the past year and that much of Rising Sun Avenue contains insensitive development. Gas stations, he continued, are built in such a way that is very insensitive to neighborhoods. He compared the way in which historic gas stations were constructed in the past compared to those constructed recently, adding that new gas stations destroy the sense of place. He also suggested that development has destroyed the sense of place in the surrounding area, although this particular area still has a strong feeling of place. He argued that much of the remaining fabric around the church campus was completed in a revival style. Even the modern 1950s houses, he continued, have a sense of the Colonial Revival style, and this is a part of the area that still feels very much like an intact neighborhood at the time it was built. To remove that and install a gas station, he contended, would completely destroy that feeling. He stated that Trinity Church's campus is a historic site and plans should not be approved to allow a gas station to be built next to an eighteenth-century church. He asked the Commission to designate the church to stop the gas station.

David Traub of Save Our Sites also voiced his support for designation of the site. He stated he wanted to focus on the architecture, which had not been a subject of discussion. He argued that the building has a good Georgian Revival façade that should not be denigrated and replaced with a gas station. He acknowledged that it is not the finest Georgian Revival façade. He contended that the L-shaped one-story addition from the 1960s that creates the unique courtyard is a very wonderful aspect to the building, and the fact that the front of the building projects out tends to emphasize the beauty of that façade, which is well-portioned, well-crafted, and well-detailed. The argument that the church cannot afford a financial hardship hearing, he contended, should not be entertained by this Commission. He claimed that the argument renders this meeting a financial hardship hearing, which it is not. Instead, he added, it is a discussion of the merits of the nomination. He then quoted the definition of Criterion H, adding that the parish house is a really characteristic and distinct visual feature of this neighborhood that needs to be saved. Mr. Farnham noted that the nomination does not identify Criterion H as one of the Criteria for Designation. Mr. Traub replied that he understands that it is not identified in the nomination and, suggesting that the nomination could be improved, argued that it should have been.

Diane Vilsmeier commented that she grew up near the building and spent much time at the property and is very personally attached to it. She also identified the nearby gas stations, adding that a train station exists two blocks away. She contended that the area is residential and digressed into the environmental impact of the commercial properties on the neighborhood elementary schools. Mr. Thomas interrupted to explain that the Commission's hearing should remain focused on the nomination of the building to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. He clarified that the Commission does not have authority over zoning or use. He stated that the Commission's first question is whether the nomination is correct. Ms. Vilsmeier replied that the property was designated by the Episcopalians in 1698, which led to the enhancement and education of the community and their specific church. She suggested that the church has a mission and should have an objective. She proffered her perspectives on Christianity and its evolution and role in the community. She remarked that she attended the 2015 meeting with Cherelle Parker and that the neighbors were pleading with the church to help them to connect with the community. She claimed that she could quote Ms. Henry, who stated at the time: "We want to deal with this internally, and we think we found a solution, and we don't want to engage the neighborhood." She stated that if the neighborhood is changing, the church should change with the neighborhood. She again offered her perspective on climate change and a gas station's impact on the neighborhood before noting that the building contains an auditorium, gymnasium, and meeting space. She questioned why the church does not use it as an educational center for solar energy. She stated that the Historical Commission should designate the property to save the environment.

State Representative Jared Solomon, who represents the 202nd Legislative District, thanked the individuals of the Northeast for attending the meeting, adding that he hopes this discussion reignites interest in what is a very interesting, culturally historic area in Northeast Philadelphia. He also described the surrounding context of the parish house, which contains several gas stations. He then contended that there is nothing like this site, calling it a "unique, spectacular property that stands completely apart from every other parcel along Rising Sun Avenue." He recalled when he was first elected, one of his main driving points was to encourage investment into the business corridors to find a way to economically ignite the area. He identified the parish house as an anchor property, which could be transformational in its ability to embrace the great culture of the past and to use it as a basis to chart a new course forward to see a great community partner and developer at the corner of Rising Sun and Longshore Avenues. He also stated his sympathy to the church and its economic situation, but contended that it has presented a false choice in requiring that the Commission choose between the parish house and the historic church. Mr. Solomon suggested that both could be done. He claimed that since the Committee on Historic Designation unanimously decided to recommend that the property meets the Criteria, he has had six developers contact him with interest in that property. Those developers, he added, included senior housing, two charter schools, and several others. He stated that he is ready to harness the great potential of the community and neighborhood, and to work hand-in-hand with Trinity Oxford to make sure the past of this fine property is embraced and to move forward to get great commercial development along Rising Sun Avenue.

Laurie Yuhnke, a Vestry member of Trinity Church Oxford, recounted her long history and personal affiliation to the church. She added that she is currently the Sunday school teacher and was a Sunday school member when the church used the parish house building. Sunday school, she added, consisted of over 100 children, and now those classes consist of four to five children. She contended that the low attendance is not a reflection of Trinity's outreach or lack of trying to recruit new members. There are no hidden pockets of money in the stock market that could be cashed out to save the building, she added. She noted she served on the Vestry

when it voted to move forward with redevelopment and was part of the committee that approached the daycare and Police Athletic League to speak about long-term leasing. She reiterated that the organizations were presented the option to become tenants and take over the building, but neither had the financial resources. She further noted that the church was significantly subsidizing their rent and that the daycare still owes the church money from a previous state budget crisis, because it was so dependent on state funds. Ms. Yuhnke stated that the church met with Representative Solomon, and at the time, he did not disclose to it that he was seeking this path for designation or that he was recruiting other partners. This has been a five-year process for the church, she continued, and it now has a tenant and a way to save the church. She argued that the parish house and church are two different buildings and that she understands the significance. She commented that the redevelopment decision was also difficult for church members and Vestry members and was not taken lightly. She contended that there is no “get rich quick” scheme and that the church is simply attempting to save its important building, increase its ability to expand its mission, continue outreach programs in the neighborhood, and to provide vital community services. She read a letter from the All Saints Church in Frankford:

To the members of the Historical Commission:

We write to oppose the nomination of the parish house of Trinity Church, Oxford. Our interest in Trinity’s future is because our parish, All Saints, was founded by Trinity. We believe that should the nomination be granted, it would have significant, negative impact on the future existence of the ancient parish of 1698 and the extended 1711 building. The parish has limited financial resources to care for their 1711 church building, and is looking to ensure its continued preservation and viability as an ongoing house of worship. Sacrificing the much less historic 1928/1965 building to save the 1711 church building seems prudent. Please consider this as you make your decision on this nomination.

She noted that the letter was signed by Reverend Elizabeth Colton, the interim rector of All Saints Church Torresdale, and Debbie Klak, All Saints Church historian and past president of the Historical Society of Frankford.

Kyle Sammin, a member of Trinity Church Oxford and co-chair of the history committee, stated that he wanted to correct misrepresentations proffered by Mr. Jackson about the church’s history. He clarified that there are two parcels and that the eastern three-fifths of the property, where the church, graveyard, and two smaller buildings are located, are covered by the 1700 deed quoted by Mr. Jackson earlier in the meeting. The western two-fifths of the land, he continued, which is at issue today, was acquired much later and is not bound by anything in that deed. They are two separate properties and were held for different purposes, he added. He stated that the rectory that Mr. Jackson mentioned was not located on the 6901 Rising Sun Avenue property, but was instead stood across the street and no longer exists. He clarified that it was demolished over 100 years ago. He then noted that the three-fifths mentioned in the 1700 deed are already designated as historic and have been since the 1950s, claiming that it was not an accident that the other buildings were not included in that designation. For one thing, he continued, half of the parish house was not even built in the 1950s and that the part that was built was not considered historic by the church, which at the time, pushed for historic preservation of its historic resources. Much of the parish house was constructed in the 1960s, after the Historical Commission designated the church as historic. He contended that, while parts of the church history regarding the parish house endowments were quoted, the history includes another line that in the 1940s suggested that the parish house “has been a heavy

burden to carry.” He argued that the building always cost the church money and that it supported the building, but the building did not support the church. At the time when church membership nationwide was higher, he continued, the church may have been able to support such a building; in the present times of declining church membership, that no longer holds true. He addressed earlier comments about recruiting new members, stating that he and his family joined Trinity Church three years ago and several others have begun attending since then. He explained that the church reaches out to the community and recruits new members, though religion is down everywhere in America. He contended that the church has been maintaining its numbers since before he joined, adding that it is an insult to the church to suggest it has turned its back on recruiting new members.

Ms. Furlong concluded from the church members’ comments that there is much devotion and passion for the church. She observed that the 300-year-old church holds that impact on the community. The church, she continued, has grown and evolved over time and once had more land that has since been converted to help support both the community and church. She contended that it is important to note that none of the stories told about people attending the Police Athletic League or daycare or using the parish house would exist had it not been for the church. She argued that she and others are trying to preserve the historical church to allow it to thrive, not just as a bricks-and-mortar building, but as a vital part of the community. She reiterated that the church came to the difficult decision seven years ago that it could no longer support the daycare or Police Athletic League, nor could it support the building. Ms. Furlong argued that the church needs to survive, which led to the decision to redevelop the land, and expressed disappointment in learning that Representative Solomon has heard from six developers since the last meeting, because no one informed the church. She argued that the church no longer has time to explore potential projects and that it has shared its full financial history. To be required to move forward with financial hardship, she added, would mean the church would close in 18 months rather than three years, because no more funds are available. She reiterated the impending development goal, noting that the church would like to reclaim the land in the future and suggesting that, while it currently needs to cut back its service to the community, it intends to preserve part of the land while the church survives and regrows. Designating this property, she contended, will greatly impact the neighborhood and the church. She reiterated that the parish house has remained empty for two years but that designation would result in two city blocks of unused property. The church, she stated, is pleading for the ability to survive. Ms. Furlong stated: “Maybe having a Royal Farms there isn’t ideal, but it is how we are going to survive for the next 10 years or 20 years so that we can continue to be there.”

Mr. Solomon countered that he was rebuffed by the church and that he personally placed phone calls and sent emails. His chief of staff did the same, he continued, totaling 10 to 15 contacts initially. He noted that there was some initial communication, and then it stopped. He contended he proposed two meetings, including a walk-through with Mr. Steinke and the Preservation Alliance as well as preservation partners to discuss tax credit options. He argued that the second proposed meeting was to be a walk-through with all the developers that had shown an interest in the property. He stated that he is ready and willing to work with the church.

Mr. Jackson stated that former Mayor Goode, former chairman of Partners for Sacred Places, did a lot of good work saving churches with these particular issues. One notable occasion, he continued, was at 47th Street and Kingsessing Avenue, where Mr. Goode worked with Aaron Wunsch to prevent a demolition permit from being pulled. They saved the church, he added, which occurred long after the church congregation left the property. Here, he argued, is an

opportunity to stop that scenario from happening, where the entire property can be saved and designated. He claimed designation will not harm this church. In the economic analysis, he asserted, there is a variable that was missed which involves tax incentives or grants that can benefit the church. He asked whether those options were explored.

Mr. Sklaroff commented that, with all due respect to the representative, he has been working on this nomination since February. These contacts and representations, he argued, came after the church signed the lease. He stated that he did not think Representative Solomon wants to interfere with a contractual relationship, adding that the church may not have a way out of it. He remarked that he doubts the lessee wants to have people trying to interfere with the agreement already in writing. He added that the church's efforts for five years resulted in a lease that will save it. He asked that the Commission not designate the property for the reasons heard today.

John Buffington, chair of the history committee at the Historical Society of Frankford, stated that it is distressing being here today with a group of radical preservationists attacking another group of radical preservationists. He commented that he believes the church itself is so much more important than the building under discussion. He claimed the nomination is a threat to the church itself, adding that Trinity Church, Oxford is one of the jewels in the crown of the whole city, not just in Northeast Philadelphia. In addition to having been built in 1711, he continued, the church has a Frank Furness-designed steeple with a Tiffany window that overlooks Frank Furness-designed furniture, including the deacon's bench and bishop's bench and podium. He commented that it is very unusual for Furness furniture to remain in its original location. When the Committee reviewed the nomination, he added, there were five members present, and he did not hear the members support the claims of the nomination. He claimed Jeff Cohen looked at the photographs in the nomination and saw some detail on the pediment that lends interest to the building. Two of the other five, he contended, found other details in the photographs that persuaded them to find the building acceptable. He argued that no reference to its importance as an example of its category or historical style was made. Mr. Buffington stated that there is no reference to the building's history and that the Police Athletic League references are local sentiment and that, though he understands it, that piece of history is dwarfed by the history of the church. He offered a history of the site and its log cabin predecessor built by Quakers. He called the site an invaluable place related to the history of American religious pluralism. He concluded that the parish house has limited architectural or historical value and should be designated. The truly historic landmark at the opposite end of the block must be preserved.

Mr. Schaaf stated that he was at the Committee on Historic Designation meeting concerning this building, and he asked to correct for the record the comments on the 1928 building. He clarified that he had stated at the time that he thought the building had an inventive design and that the elements are done with authority. He argued that there is not any reticence in the main elevation. In fact, he continued, when he saw the elevation, he thought it was the elevation of the 1711 church. He asserted that Mr. Steinke's comment about the parish house being an evocation of the first church built at the site was interesting, because he can see that building reflected in this design. He described aspects of the building's siting, in which the main door faces west with the opposite side facing east, and he noted that this is how a church is typically sited. He implied that the parish house design and siting is like having a second church on the site. He noted the building's symmetry, handsome Doric portico entrance, double doors, and tabernacle window with segmental arch, which he contended were completed with robustness. He described how the pediment is the lowest chord of the triangle and is broken at the tabernacle window; on top of that window, he continued, is a date stone and then a bull's eye window. He suggested the architects, Mayo & Moses, designed a fine elevation and that the

building is an example of Colonial Revival architecture. The architecture of the remainder of the site, he added, was somewhat less successful and that the 1960s addition does not match the same degree of rigor. Mr. Schaaf commented that the building defines the site and provides a measure of lawn around the building and creates a courtyard as a composition. He called it an ornament to the neighborhood. He asked that his comments, which were stated at the Committee on Historic Designation meeting, be reestablished for the Commission.

Mr. Farnham asked Mr. Schaaf if he was asking that the minute from the Committee on Historic Designation Committee meeting be amended. Mr. Schaaf clarified that he does not want the minute to be amended and stated that he discussed the 1928 elevation at that meeting. He asserted that he was expanding on the issues he discussed at that meeting. Mr. Farnham expressed concern that Mr. Schaaf was implying that the minute from that meeting was insufficient, and stated that he would be happy to amend it if that were the case. Mr. Schaaf stated that was not at all the case.

ACTION: Mr. Schaaf moved to find that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 6901 Rising Sun Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J, and to designate it as historic, listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Messrs. Mattioni and Thomas abstained.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: At 3:54 p.m., Mr. Mattioni moved to adjourn. Ms. Royer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES CITED IN THE MINUTES

Standard 2: The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinct materials or alterations of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Standard 5: Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new works shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

14-1005(6)(d) Restrictions on Demolition.

No building permit shall be issued for the demolition of a historic building, structure, site, or object, or of a building, structure, site, or object located within a historic district that contributes, in the Historical Commission's opinion, to the character of the district, unless the Historical Commission finds that issuance of the building permit is necessary in the public interest, or unless the Historical Commission finds that the building, structure, site, or object cannot be used for any purpose for which it is or may be reasonably adapted.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

§ 14-1004(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.