



Spruce Hill Community Association
257 South 45th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

SHCA Board Meeting Minutes March 8, 2022

Attendees: Sylvia Hamerman-Brown, Al Suh, Anne Thomford Thomas, Becca, Christopher Bole, Jenine Sanzari, Julie Bush, Laura Line, Sugirtha Stahis, Theresa Mond, Vicki McGarvey, Richard Guffanti, Richard Moore, Evan Johnstone, Craig Santoro, Alexa Bosse, Andrew Richman, Barry Grossbach, Monica Calkins

Guests: George Poulin, Paul Steinke, Kaitlyn Dhanaliwala, Mary Goldman

Meeting Site: Chapter House of Woodland Presbyterian Church (401 S. 42nd St., SE corner of 42nd & Pine) and VIA ZOOM

Welcome and Introductions (Richard Moore)

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes (February 2022) - skipped

Guest Speakers:

Paul Steinke, Executive Director, Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia
George Poulin, President, University City Historical Society

- Introductions and background to their two organizations and partnerships
- Nominations
 - Two blocks nominated thus far 4200-30 Chester District and 3900 block of Baltimore Drexel Covett (see Appendix)
 - Meeting on March 16th at 9:30AM – can advocate for preservation of these buildings
 - almost exclusively landlord owned blocks, UCHS views them as threatened and they meet preservation criteria
- Unique collection of historic architecture – why the idea of a historic district is even on the table
- Lots of demolitions of historic sites (see Appendix) – demolition permits are easy to get
- High threat of demolition
 - 4000 Ludlow – zoned CMX-4
 - 4000 Sansom – CMX-3 - especially vulnerable due to the fact that nearly all owned by one entity
 - 4200 Sansom – zoned RM-1 – high threat of demolition
- We do have properties that are at low threat due to zoning – the twins and others zoned RTA-1 (see Appendix)
- What is a historic district?
 - See definition (Appendix)
 - Other neighborhoods are doing/have done this
 - Art Museum area – Spring Garden – local historic district
 - Roxborough – another also being considered there – 330 residential properties.
 - Powelton Village – only a few weeks from being final, with high community approval
 - SHCA been at it since 1987

- Nomination process involves documenting all the features of the property – is it significant, contributing, non-contributing. To be contributing, needs to be built in the period of significance and consistent with the story that they are trying to tell with the nomination. Several criteria can be selected (e.g., architectural character, archaeological, someone famous lived there) - make case through research. Then an inventory which includes detailing each house and its features. They have photos for Spruce Hill from 2002, would have to update those if we did this.
- Properties can be nominated individually to create a district - had to do this pre-1985. Then were able to together then create districts.
- Practically – for property owners – implications (see Appendix)
 - Impacts you only if you are already making repairs (not forced to replace or repair anything). Also, if you already have vinyl window replacements, and want to replace them, then historical commission will consider that v. replacing with something like the original windows
 - If you have significant details (like leaded glass), then if you replace them, historic commission would want the replacements to be something that maintains the significance
 - Replacing original fabric (e.g., slate roof, original porch woodwork), then yes, that work is overseen by the staff of historic commission
 - Painting not regulated – can paint it whatever you want, don't need permit for this. Caveat is that unpainted brick and stone should not be painted.
 - Maintenance not overseen by historic commission
 - George Poulin - Speaking as homeowner – simple process
 - Interior work is not regulated
 - One of the powers of the historic district is to force landlords to do the right thing by their properties
 - SHCA would need to understand that the replacement materials (e.g., slate roofs) will be more expensive.
 - No tax credits for individually owned residents (there are for businesses).
 - This is often one of the downsides that people perceive. Yet, there are low income neighborhoods (Diamond, and another) that are historic districts.
 - They do advocate for resources to offset the costs, but being frank there is no magical bucket of money
 - Jenny – historical commission really only concerned with the primary façade of the residence, and any façade that can be easily seen by a public right of way (and not those that are not visible). This is also why Spruce Hill is a little more complicated than rowhome neighborhoods.
- Powelton Village process (see slide)
 - 1) education, research and stakeholder engagement
 - 2) neighborhood discussion and vote
 - 3) fundraising – to hire a consultant – they were amazed how passionate and giving people were, very generous in supporting
 - 4) nomination writing – RFP to engage a consultant to prepare and understand the costs – this is their current stage – it has been a 9 month process for them
 - 5) submission to Historical Commission and Implementation – they will do in a few weeks – then a series of public meetings. Needs to be at least one within the neighborhood, then other meetings, then approval
- UCHS can and wants to be a partner to spruce hill to help prepare (they can't do all of it of course, but can be a resource).
- Preservation Alliance also has resources. They just posted a guide for how to nominate a district. Preservationalliance.com.
- Historical commission also has a lot of info on their website <https://www.phila.gov/departments/philadelphia-historical-commission/>
 - there are currently between 12-13k properties designated, 13 historic districts, other mini districts.
 - They are encouraging mini-districts.

- UCHS – re: mini districts – will take decades (they are in red on the map) – their position is that need larger districts, otherwise will take too long.
- Jenny – why do this again? We spent a lot of money before.
- Barry – we have very powerful developers here, the historical commission decision was political, they were clear on that, and we know where that came from. The developers do not want to see this happen. Killed a 2 year effort to re-zone properties as single family. They want no restrictions on what they can do. If we are going to do this, we need to take this into account – that we are in battle with the developers.
- Historic districts becoming more popular across the city- Historical Commission (HC) gaining more capacity slowly – that will increase their ability to administer historic districts. Preservation Alliance pushing on both – the workload and the capacity. We are the most historic city in the U.S. but we have only half the rate of historic designation. We are playing a game of catch up.
- Q’s Craig:
 - new construction – any restrictions? If vacant at the time the district is confirmed, then HC can only review and make suggestions.
 - we hear from developers that they want to tear down the old because they are beyond repair – how does this fit? There are provisions, like a property can be demolished for sake of “public interest”, e.g. need to demolish to build a hospital (rarely used). Another is due to hardship – this is rare also. Also, low income homeowners can appeal for relief, and this does happen somewhat more often.
 - what about effects on affordability? Single family zoning can have negative effects on affordable. George – historic districts tend to stabilize property values, they don’t go down, but they don’t shoot up. To the question of affordability, there is nothing that says you can’t take your property and make it affordable housing, and in fact, there are incentives to do that. There are several affordable housing projects that are located in historically designated properties (e.g., Parkside). There are some good articles/white papers out there. Don’t link it to gentrification. This is somewhat of a myth or misnomer. Other factors are likely contributing to property values/affordability here. Paul – the operation of the real estate market is much more determinative of value. Think about what has already happened with our property values without any historic district –rather there is a lot of demand. Whether historic has virtually no impact on that.
- Q- audience member: How would this be done in Spruce Hill? A: that is up to us! They did a lot of outreach in powelton village via facebook, website, etc. Recommend that for a large community like ours, need to build momentum and support. PVCA spending 45K, their circumstances are different than spruce hill. Barry – we have 18K (? Check this) already in the SHCA Trust. PVCA process was to move quickly – about 900 properties. Here we were 1400 minus the ones that have been subtracted. Authority rests solely with the Historic Commission – City Council does not oversee. They don’t need a certain percentage of the community to agree. Overbrook Farms – 2011 – was opposed by city council member (Curtis Jones), but then he had a change of heart, then supported and in 2019 it was approved.
- Q – Leslie: in your multi- step process in Powelton – included vote? A: yes, but not legally required. PVCA specific steps based on their own considerations.
- Concluding comments: Richard M: reached out to Justin McDaniel – may take up as chair. Next steps are for that committee to convene, review the 2002 proposal, address questions like whether we will need a consultant, consider impediments to moving forward. Barry: very important that the SHCA committee work collaboratively with the Preservation Alliance and UCHS – coordinate with them. We can’t do it on our own, has to be a collaborative effort.
 - Q Craig: if we are taking this seriously – then we should discuss a year long demolition moratorium with the council person. A: Did raise, reaction was we are not ready for that. But we could go to her and say that we have a plan, and we hope she would be open to it [moratorium] in the same way that other council people have been.
 - Julie offered to help with maps/graphs.

Committee Updates

Historical Preservation Committee (Chair TBD)

- see above

Executive Committee (Richard Moore)

- no update

Education (Rebecca Geller-Puchalsky) – hasn't met since last update, so nothing to report

Operations (Chris Bole) – we are in pretty good shape, fire extinguishers being worked on. He has a list of when the two tenant leases are coming up, in the spring. Within the next month or two, he will get in touch with the real estate agent and get things started.

Community Engagement (Vicki McGarvey/Alexa Bosse) – list of things, anyone interested in helping get word out about new things. Still trying to decide what “engagement” means (is it a communication strategy or event planning group). Lots of ideas, little capacity.

Neighborhood Beautification (Laura Line) – would love the community engagement people to help them. AI is planning for us to join the community cleanup city wide. Want to partner to get more people engaged in this. There is a meeting for organizers or helping day up. April 22nd. Block improvement – met with Kiasha Huling from UC Green. Planning re-configuration of the grants. Julie trying to find some volunteers to help with bird sanctuary – Julie will transition from leadership role. A couple of neighbors have stepped up – Julie will meet with them. Asking them to attend the beautification meeting. Committee would like to put resource page on the SHCA website. Who to talk to about the website? Laura will get in touch with Rich G. Developing list of things that people can engage with. They also need to think about what their budget is - don't know what latitude is for the budget. Exec will meet. But committees should tell Exec what they need budget wise and Andrew will send out budgeting sheets.

Safe Streets & Commercial Corridors (Eric Santoro/Evan Johnstone) – Evan – trolley portal corridor safety– some promising developments, there is a meeting. Richard M – someone from DP reached out to him for SHCA comment on the Chestnut street corridor, and he will refer them to this committee – Monica recommend providing them written statement via email.

May Fair (Monica Calkins/Evan Johnstone) – Evan - we are pushing full steam ahead. Eric has some rental activities reserved – open air stuff. Vendor solicitations are underway. Terry has been working on reaching out to food trucks. **Day of Fair help is needed.** Raffle proposal – do it differently than in prior years- essentially will purchase gift cards and use those to build some baskets that we can raffle off. This will support our businesses who have endured hardship during pandemic (rather than ask them to donate. Need someone to do this. Music – working on this. Stage as well. Evan reached out to a band. Eric will help with that. **We need all hands on deck. Please sign up for the pre-fair (see link) and the day of Fair (link forthcoming).**

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KMSOCcgy8HIGlpfZIEb6y5mufOH3MuhJ1kXsB527Lj4/edit?usp=sharing>

Crosstown Coalition (Barry/Eric/Monica) – there is a zoning meeting Barry will participate in, and their regular meeting will be in April

Zoning (Barry Grossbach) – there are 4 cases, see Barry's notice

All Other Business

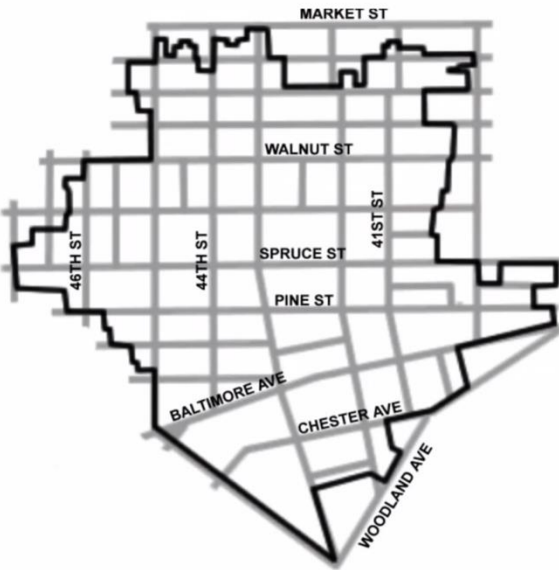
- **Mary Goldman** – chess club for kids at Walnut West library – can now have 25 people in the room. Looking for coaches and someone to take her place as coordinator. Co-op, parents take turns helping, but someone needs to coordinate, and they always need coaches. People ready to teach. Weds 5:30. If interested, contact Marylgoldman@gmail.com
- **Barry** – encourages us to attend in person. Richard took an informal vote – try to set up again next time. Richard thanks Unite Philadelphia for providing the space.

Meeting Adjourned 9:04PM

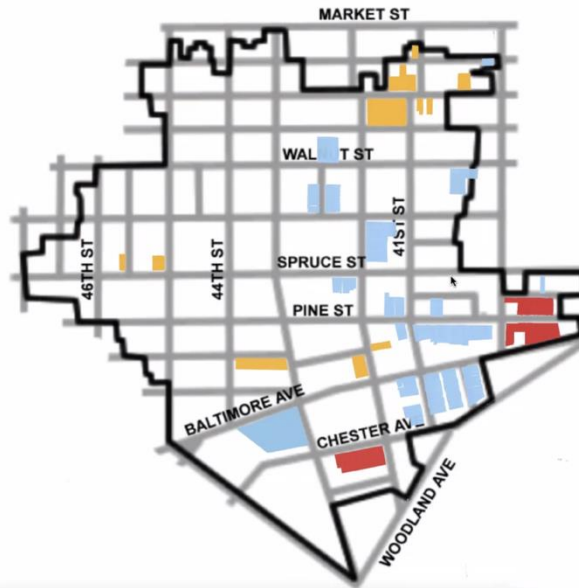
Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 12, 2022

Appendix: Slides from Guest Speakers

2002 Proposed Spruce Hill Historic District Boundaries:



Protected as of 2022:



What we've lost



Coming up at the Historical Commission Committee for Historic Designation (March 16th, 9:30am):

Drexel-Govett District:

4200-30 Chester District:



Risk Assessment

4000 Block of Ludlow Street
Zoned CMX-4 (High Threat of Demolition)



Risk Assessment

4000 Block of Sansom
Zoned CMX-3 (High Threat of Demolition)



Risk Assessment

4400 Pine
Zoned RTA-1 (Low Threat of Demolition due to Zoning)



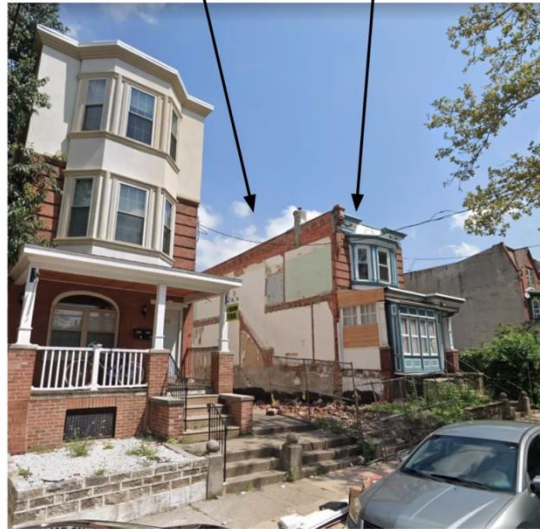
Risk Assessment

4200 Block of Sansom
Zoned RM-1 (High Threat of Demolition)

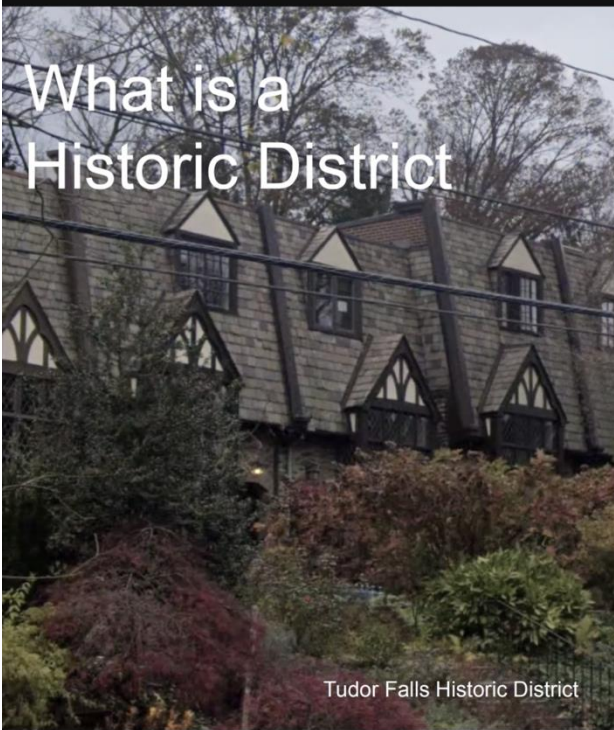


Recently
Demolished

Demolition
permit pulled



What is a Historic District



Tudor Falls Historic District

A historic district is a collection of historic resources linked by a location or theme. Local historic districts recognize the historic, cultural and architectural importance of a neighborhood or area with the goal to preserve the historic fabric of that place.

The definition listed in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance is as follows: "A geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of buildings, structures, sites, or objects united by past events, plan, or physical development. A district may comprise an individual site or individual elements separated geographically but linked by association, plan, design, or history."

4519 Regent Street (Style D):
 Built: 1889-90
 Architect: Willis G. Hale
 Classification: Contributing
 NRHP: 2/5/1998, WPSSHD, contributing

Alterations: replacement windows, front door; asphalt roof



4521 Regent Street (Style D):
 Built: 1889-90
 Architect: Willis G. Hale
 Classification: Contributing
 NRHP: 2/5/1998, WPSSHD, contributing

Alterations: replacement windows; replacement porch railing and posts; asphalt roof



4523 Regent Street (Style D):
 Built: 1889-90
 Architect: Willis G. Hale
 Classification: Contributing
 NRHP: 2/5/1998, WPSSHD, contributing

Alterations: replacement windows, door; asphalt roof



4525 Regent Street (Style D):
 Built: 1889-90
 Architect: Willis G. Hale
 Classification: Contributing
 NRHP: 2/5/1998, WPSSHD, contributing

Alterations: replacement porch railing, 2nd fl windows; storm windows; asphalt roof



What does a Nomination Look Like?

1. Defines the Boundaries
2. Includes Period of Significance
3. Identifies Criteria for Designation
4. Quantifies significant, contributing, and non-contributing properties
5. Makes the case through research, writing, and historic imagery
6. Includes Inventory of Buildings
7. Appendix and Bibliography

Impact to Homeowners



Example of replacement unlikely to be approved



Example of replacement likely to be approved

Note: you can always keep what you have

Window Replacements

- Replacement windows have to be approved by the staff of the Commission, with priority given to windows visible from the public right of way.

Roofing

- Replacement of mansard roofing (slate) is overseen by the staff of the Commission

Painting

- Painting of trim/woodwork is not regulated by the Commission.

Repairs

- General maintenance and repairs are not regulated by the Commission, unless they remove or alter historic fabric. Interior work is not regulated by the Commission.

UCHS supports new legislation which would create a preservation fund for low income property owners who reside in historic homes to be able to make repairs.

Process

- 01 Education, Research & Stakeholder Engagement
- 02 Neighborhood Discussion & Vote
- 03 Fundraising
- 04 Nomination Writing
- 05 Submission to Philadelphia Historical Commission & Implementation

We're here to help

Conservation Districts or Historic Districts: Which one to use? Fact Sheet

Introduction

The role and the nature of city planning as an activity of local government continue to evolve. Physical development as a result of environmental concerns is increasing in complexity and magnitude of development proposals. Urbanizing the scale of the City through urban design.

As you evolved, becoming more knowledgeable and involved in your neighborhood, you should consider two important tools which the Philadelphia Historical Commission can help you use:

- Conservation Districts
- Historic Districts

So You Live in a Historic District ...

Leanne DiPasquale, preservation planner for the Philadelphia Historical Commission, answers some frequently asked questions and clears up some misconceptions about the benefits, the regulations and the potential challenges of living in a historic district.

What are the benefits of a historic district designation?

Studies demonstrate that local historic districts contribute to the stabilization of property values, the retention of an area's fabric and the fostering of community pride.

What is the Philadelphia Historical Commission's role?

In addition to identifying, researching, and nominating properties and districts that are significant to Philadelphia's history, our office reviews work to preserve and enhance the character of those properties and districts as a whole. The historical commission's staff provides free advice on appropriate preservation techniques and helps property owners research the histories of their buildings. Our staff approves approximately 85 percent of building permit applications that we receive, most within five days, and we conduct many reviews by email. If an owner/applicant proposes work that our staff cannot approve, we forward those projects to the historical commission and its advisory architectural committee for review at monthly public meetings.

What role do neighbors play in maintaining historic character in a district?

Property owners and residents of historic districts help keep their properties and neighborhoods in good shape. They're the eyes on the street. If any significant changes are proposed to properties within a district, designation provides a public forum for neighbors to weigh in on those changes.

What happens if my house needs repair?

It depends on the nature and complexity of the project. Give our staff a call, and we can talk about what types of repairs you need to make and what our staff can approve. While we do review work such as window and roof replacement, masonry cleaning and paving, and site improvements, such as fences and trim, cleaning gutters, or replacing clear window glass. We do not regulate paint colors of wood and metal trim, such as doors, windows, shutters and cornices. The historical commission's jurisdiction extends over the entire exterior envelope of buildings, but the commission is most concerned with protecting public views of historic properties.

When do I contact the historical commission?

As early in the planning stage of any construction or rehab project as you can, especially if the project walk-ins from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and is also available by phone and email. If

Historic District Q&A

Historic Districts: The Basics

What is a historic district?

A historic district is a collection of historic resources linked by a location or theme. Local historic districts recognize the historic, cultural and architectural importance of a neighborhood or area with the goal to preserve the historic fabric of that place. The definition listed in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance is as follows: "A geographically definable area possessing a significant event, plan, or physical development, or objects united by common historical or architectural elements separated by geographical but linked by association, plan, design, or history."

What is the difference between the local (City of Philadelphia) and national historic registers in terms of how well they protect historic architecture?

POWELTON VILLAGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION

HOME PVCA NEIGHBORHOOD MEMBERSHIP REPORT A PROBLEM

NOTICE

Until public health regulations permit large in-person gatherings, all PVCA meetings will be conducted through Zoom. Links will be circulated via the neighborhood mailing list prior to each meeting.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- General membership meeting
October 18, 2020 at 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
- General membership meeting
November 16, 2020 at 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
- Holiday party (tentative)