

Neighborhood Preservation

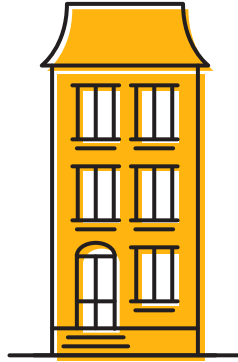
# TOOLKIT

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**DRAFT**





# Neighborhood Preservation T O O L K I T

— 2018 —

***This toolkit is a resource for individuals and organizations throughout Philadelphia.***

*It recognizes the importance of sustaining the city's older buildings and sites — with a broad definition of what makes something “historic.” From grassroots to the government, community members have the power to preserve and revitalize the older places that matter in the city of neighborhoods.*

Built by Philadelphians

Built for Philadelphians



# INTRODUCTION

## What is this?

This is a free toolkit for Philadelphians who care about their neighborhoods and this city. It was designed and built by people from PennPraxis who care about their neighborhoods and this city.

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This toolkit is based on the knowledge and input of community members from across Philadelphia, inspired by conversations held in 20 neighborhoods in the spring of 2018. In those conversations, community liaisons gathered 8 to 12 of their neighbors for a candid discussion about what makes their neighborhood special and significant, what legacies and histories they would like to sustain and revitalize, and how current public policies affect or harm the character of their neighborhood. Over and over again, those advocates and leaders expressed a need for a resource that would bring neighbors together to learn more about, care more about, and advocate more for the places that matter in their neighborhood.

## Who is this for?

This toolkit can be used by anyone in your community: homeowners, renters, business owners, developers, and neighbors of all ages and education levels.



# I want to...

1. Care for an older home (PAGE 9)
2. Improve and maintain my neighborhood's design quality and character (PAGE 29)
3. Strengthen and sustain my neighborhood's small businesses & commercial corridors (PAGE 47)
4. Learn and share my neighborhood's history (PAGE 63)
5. Create change and influence policy (PAGE 77)

# in my neighborhood.

## Where do I begin?

If any of these goals apply to you, then this toolkit is for you. Use the sections of this toolkit to guide you through the steps that will help you accomplish them.

(check out the  
"Who's Who" section (PAGE 94)  
& Glossary, too (PAGE 104))



Within each section, this toolkit offers...

- » Some **background** on the topic. For example, if you're not sure what we mean when we say "commercial corridor," the intro in that perspective will help you out.
- » An **ask and answer** section of frequently asked questions and/or common misconceptions
- » An activity to **try it out**, either as an individual or with a few friends or neighbors. For example, you could use a "Try It Out" activity at a community meeting to learn more from each other about what local places matter and why. The conversations inspired by these activities may inform your efforts to take action.
- » Some **"take action"** steps that you and your community can work on together
- » Resources to **learn more**, including both print and web publications related to each perspective\*
- » Stories of **preservation wins** that demonstrate where these strategies have worked in Philadelphia

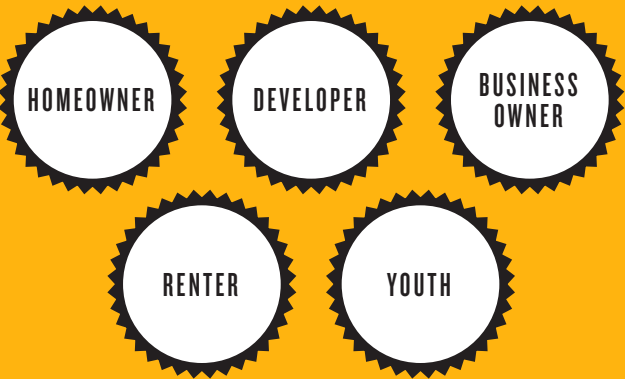
Even if you find yourself drawn to one perspective in particular, it is worth exploring all five (and the extra resources at the back of this guide) because they overlap and complement each other. After all, you may be interested in both caring for your older home and learning more about your neighborhood's history!

*\*Although the website links in this toolkit are up-to-date as of summer 2018, we recognize that the internet is always changing, and these links may not work down the road. In that case, we suggest a simple web search for the title and publisher of the resource.*

# COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Throughout the toolkit, certain areas will be highlighted as particularly useful for all neighbors that have interest in working to maintain their home, block, street, or neighborhood. Or perhaps you don't know yet! This guide will help you figure out the right path.

Look for these badges throughout this toolkit for ideas and resources that may be of particular interest to different community members.



Also included in this toolkit...

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## A guide to who's who, and who you can talk to.

This includes local community groups, city/state/federal agencies, and nonprofits at all scales. While we may have missed some useful names in this list, we hope it's a helpful starting point as you take action on behalf of your community.

Finally, at the back of this guide, you'll find a glossary to explain any unfamiliar words or expressions, including architectural vocabulary and historic preservation terms. This glossary was adapted from the glossary available on [www.phlpreservation.org](http://www.phlpreservation.org), which (incidentally) is a great place to check for any updates to relevant local policies and/or the resources mentioned in this guide.

Our hope is that this toolkit is a useful foot-in-the-door as you think about your neighborhood and care for the older places in your community. Beyond this guide, there are many people working hard to preserve and enhance Philadelphia's older buildings and landscapes, motivated by the architectural, cultural, environmental, economic, and social importance of these sites.

As you familiarize yourself with all the ways that Philadelphia's history is important, we hope that you will consider yourself a part of the community of advocates working to sustain and revitalize the places that matter.

There are many people  
working hard to preserve and  
enhance Philadelphia's older  
buildings and landscapes.



Different materials

Different styles

Different construction methods

SECTION ONE



**I want to**  
**CARE FOR AN OLDER HOME**  

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**in my neighborhood.**

# BACKGROUND

In 2016, the National Trust for Historic Preservation estimated that roughly 92.3% of all the buildings in Philadelphia were constructed before 1967...

Which means that the odds are high that your house is at least 50 years old!<sup>1</sup> The age of our city’s housing stock makes Philadelphia distinctive, but it can also be a challenge to care for all of these older houses and make sure they live to see another 50 years. There are plenty of reasons to maintain and sustain these homes though...

Perhaps you plan to leave the house to your children or grandchildren, or simply ensure that it stays standing and intact for someone else’s children and grandchildren. Even if your family is outgrowing your older home, there are usually ways to expand the building without losing its charm or tearing it down!

Or maybe you’re committed to keeping the culture and character of your neighborhood intact, one house at a time.

Perhaps your house is interesting architecturally, or has a fascinating history (that you may wish to learn more about).

Maybe you value the quality of the materials and construction methods that have lasted for so many years.

There are also environmental reasons to maintain and repair older homes, rather than demolishing them to build new: a huge amount of the debris from construction and demolition ends up in landfills, and every demolished building takes with it all the energy that went into its construction and its demolition. (Research shows that salvaging materials alone does not counteract this environmental impact.)

For all of these reasons and more, this section includes a lot of questions you may have about caring for an older house, and resources to help you do so. Ultimately, decisions about the care of one’s older home often come down to one thing: money. Unfortunately, there are limited direct incentives for individual homeowners of older homes, although that could always change based on the budget decisions of policy-makers. (In fact, one of the action steps below is advocating for just that kind of incentive!) In the meantime, the other tools in this toolkit include information about systems repair and bricks-and-mortar maintenance workshops, some resources for researching your house history, as well as some questions/answers/myth-busters about designating your home or neighborhood as historic at the local or national level. (There are a lot of misconceptions about this!) Hopefully this toolkit can clear up some confusion and point you in the right direction for any or all of the above.

1. National Trust for Historic Preservation, *Atlas of ReUrbanism Fact Sheet: Philadelphia, PA* (2016), <https://forum.savingplaces.org/act/research-policy-lab/atlas/atlas-factsheet>

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## ASK & ANSWER

These questions are adapted from the Philadelphia Historical Commission's frequently asked questions. Additional questions and answers are available below.

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### Philadelphia Historical Commission

[phila.gov/historical/designation/Pages/FAQ.aspx](http://phila.gov/historical/designation/Pages/FAQ.aspx)

### What is a historic register?

A historic register is an official inventory of significant older places. It can be used either for symbolic reasons (to simply recognize and celebrate older buildings/sites) or for regulatory purposes (to protect a historic place from destruction).

The definition of what is “significant” and what is “old” varies based on the historic register, but properties are generally listed on the register (also called “designated”) after an official nomination process. The federal government maintains the National Register of Historic Places, and here in Philadelphia, the city maintains its own Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Both of these registers generally define “historic” as at least 50 years old (with some exceptions).

### What is the difference between the National Register of Historic Places and the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places is a nationwide list of historically significant properties; the list is maintained and administered by the National Park Service. The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) in Harrisburg acts as the National Park Service's agent for properties on the National Register in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia Register is unrelated to the National Register; however, properties may be listed on both Registers. The Philadelphia Historical Commission maintains and administers the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

### Why would I want my property designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places?

Designation provides some benefits. In addition to the satisfaction that comes with owning a historic landmark, and the community pride fostered by the recognition of a historic district, the Historical Commission provides free historical and technical assistance to the owners of designated properties.



## Does designation lower my property value?

Recent studies in Philadelphia have actually shown that property values in historic districts fluctuate less and increase more than those of comparable properties outside historic districts. This is partly because historic districts ensure that every property is protected from the impact of inappropriate alterations on neighboring properties.

## Would I be forced to restore my property if it is designated?

No. The Historical Commission cannot unilaterally force a property owner to undertake work, except in the very rare case that neglect threatens the survival of the historic building or structure. The Historical Commission's review authority only kicks in based on the work that you, the property owner, want to do and need a permit to do. For example, if you decide to replace the windows on your designated home, the Philadelphia Historical Commission would have a say in the type of replacement windows you could install. But the Commission cannot force you to make upgrades just because your property is designated. The Commission does not have any say in the alterations you make on the interior of your home, unless they affect the exterior.

## Does historic designation affect my property tax assessment?

No. Historic designation is not a factor in the assessment of property by the City of Philadelphia, and will not result in higher property taxes.

The Historical Commission provides free historical and technical assistance to the owners of designated properties.

More information on page 91.





## TRY IT OUT

### *How much do you know about your house's history?*

A house built in the mid-nineteenth century is often constructed differently than one built in the mid-twentieth century: different materials, different style, different construction methods, etc.—all of which can affect what you would find if you opened up the walls and floors of the house, and how you can repair it in a way that helps, not hurts, the building. If the house has been altered since its original construction—for instance, if vinyl siding has been added or stucco has been applied—it is important to understand how and when these changes were made, not simply as anecdotes, but in order to understand the ways that these alterations may be affecting the structure and character of your house.

Compiling a simple house history can also help you learn from the other houses on your block or in your neighborhood, as you compare and contrast house histories. For instance, if your house was built in the mid-nineteenth century by the same builder who constructed all of the houses on your block, what can you learn from other homeowners or renters about the structural issues that they've encountered, and how they've fixed them? Or, as another example, if you all share similar tiled foyers that are distinctive to your area, what can you learn from each other about the artisans who designed those tiles? Can you compare notes about the best ways to repair those foyers?



## ALL ABOUT YOUR HOUSE'S HISTORY

Record your  
answers here



- 1 How much do you know about your house's history?
- 2 Do you know what was there before your house was constructed?
- 3 Do you know when it was built? (Note: Official property records are not always the most reliable source for this information.)
- 4 Who built it? What was their job?
- 5 Do you know who has lived where you now live? (If your family has lived in the house for multiple generations, then you're off to a great start!)
- 5 What makes your house distinctive in your community...or what makes it fit right in with its neighbors?

Information is power, and a house history can be a powerful tool. So try it out, either on your own or with a friend or family member (young or old) to see what you each notice. Bring a notebook and camera to take note.

1

## WHAT OTHER TYPES OF BUILDINGS ARE ON YOUR BLOCK?

Start on the outside of your house, looking up and down your block. What other types of buildings are on your block? Are they all houses? Is it a mix of residential and commercial buildings? Is there a distinctive building on your block or nearby, like a church or synagogue or factory?

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If yes... This could say something about who lived in your house originally. For example, if there are clusters of similar-looking houses near an old factory building, maybe your house was built as worker housing for that particular factory? (In which case, who worked in the factory? Native-born Philadelphians? Immigrants from a particular country or era? If so, did they build or alter their houses at all to reflect their own traditions?)

Make a quick sketch of your house. Don't forget to highlight your favorite parts!



2

## HOW DOES YOUR HOUSE RELATE TO THE STREET?

Is it in the middle of a large lot? is it set back with a yard? Does it come right up to the sidewalk?

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This may say something about when your house or neighborhood was built, and by whom: were they building in a rapidly-growing neighborhood, where competition for land was steep? Were they intentionally building outside the contemporary city limits, in order to have green space? Did the area become denser over time?

3

## HOW DOES YOUR HOUSE COMPARE TO THE OTHER HOUSES ON THE BLOCK AND/OR NEARBY?

Is it built using the same material? How is your house similar to the other houses?

\_\_\_\_\_

Houses that look similar—whether rowhouses, twins, or stand-alone houses—may indicate that they were constructed by the same builder, or selected from similar patternbooks (a kind of catalogue for houses that was popular in the 19th century), or designed by architects around the same time.

Look in the Glossary to learn architectural terms

4

## HOW DOES YOUR HOME DIFFER FROM THE OTHER HOUSES?

Look closely. Are the rooflines/decoration different? Are the doors or windows designed differently? What details make your house, or your block, distinctive?

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You can compare these details against some of the resources listed in the “Learn more” section to learn about different architectural styles—everything from very simple facades to elaborate exterior details can tell you something about when and how and by whom and for whom a house was constructed.

*How does your house blend into your block?*

5

## ON THE INSIDE OF YOUR HOUSE, GO THROUGH THE HOUSE ROOM BY ROOM.

Do you have a mental or physical list of the changes that you’ve made while living in the house? For example, have you changed any doors, windows, or walls? Have you ripped out any features like fixtures or wall finishes? Do you know what changes previous owners made?

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Houses become a blend of multiple owners over time; their different styles, priorities, family sizes, and investments. It is important to clarify these changes and understand how they have affected the original building, since these alterations may affect the quality or structural integrity of the house over time.

With this informal house history in hand, you can ask and answer the questions that arise, move forward to take action, explore more of the resources to learn more, and ultimately, care for your older house.



## DEED RESEARCH

Another way to learn about your house (and neighborhood) history is by doing deed research on your home, learning more about when and how the property has changed hands over time. You can start by visiting the City of Philadelphia's Atlas website (see below) for recent information about property ownership and some building permits. There are other ways to do deed research online, including:

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### City of Philadelphia's Atlas

[atlas.phila.gov](http://atlas.phila.gov)

### Philadelphia Deeds, 1974 to present (PhilaDox)

[library.upenn.edu/cgi-bin/res/fullview.cgi?resID=104381](http://library.upenn.edu/cgi-bin/res/fullview.cgi?resID=104381)

### Philadelphia Deed Indices, 1682-1979

[philadox.phila.gov/phillyhistoricalindex/index.html](http://philadox.phila.gov/phillyhistoricalindex/index.html)

Deeper information requires a visit to the Philadelphia City Archives, located at 456 N. 5th Street starting in September 2018. Archivists there can help you find older deeds for your property/tax parcel. If you're interested in digging deep, here's a helpful and thorough guide about researching Philadelphia deeds dated between 1669 to 1974.

### Philadelphia City Archives

[phila-records.com/historic-records/eagleweb/docs/Tracing%20Philadelphia%20Property%20Deeds.pdf](http://phila-records.com/historic-records/eagleweb/docs/Tracing%20Philadelphia%20Property%20Deeds.pdf)





## TAKE ACTION

### Reduce, Reuse, and Repair

Save and reuse building materials whenever possible, and repair/replace with compatible older materials rather than starting new. In addition to aesthetic reasons for selecting compatible materials, using salvaged materials can be good for the environment (diverting more debris from landfills) and for your wallet. For example, many windows can be repaired/re-sealed rather than replaced, saving materials from the landfill and making sure your house stays intact. For compatible materials for your repair or rehab project, check out architectural salvage stores in the Philadelphia area.

### Attend a Workshop

Attend a Hands-On Workshop hosted by the Fairmount Park Conservancy. Workshops are led by the Conservancy's conservators and typically include a brief history of the topic; information relating to historic building material technology, terminology, and construction techniques; and hands-on demonstrations. You can keep an eye out for upcoming workshops by checking the Fairmount Park Conservancy's website.

#### **Fairmount Park Conservancy**

[myphillypark.org/what-we-do/architectural-conservation/workshops](http://myphillypark.org/what-we-do/architectural-conservation/workshops)

### Hire Experienced Professionals

When hiring professionals to do work on your house, make sure to select someone with experience specific to older and historic houses; everything from electrical systems to masonry to structural systems to wall finishes can differ between older and new construction, and your professionals should know what to expect and how to respond. Ask about the other older houses that have worked on and the unique challenges they encountered on those projects; and make sure to check references from those homeowners. If you're looking for names of professionals who have worked on older properties, you can talk to the staff at the Philadelphia Historical Commission and check out the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia's Marketplace Directory (see below.)

#### **Philadelphia Historical Commission**

[phila.gov/historical/Pages/default.aspx](http://phila.gov/historical/Pages/default.aspx)

#### **Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia's Marketplace Directory**

[preservationalliance.com/marketplace-directory](http://preservationalliance.com/marketplace-directory)

### Apply for Homeowner Assistance Programs

If you meet the eligibility requirements, apply to be part of the City of Philadelphia's Basic Systems Repair program (BSRP), Habitat for Humanity's Home Repair Program, or Rebuilding Together Philadelphia's repairs program. The BSRP provides free repairs to correct electrical, plumbing, heating, structural, and roofing emergencies in eligible owner-occupied homes in Philadelphia. Habitat for Humanity's Home Repair



Program builds on Habitat’s traditional homeownership model using affordable payment options, sweat equity, and volunteer labor to serve current low-income homeowners. Rebuilding Together Philadelphia works with organized blocks that have at least 10 homeowners who all need repairs. (The organization no longer accepts applications for the repair of individual homes.)

More information is available at these resources:

**The Division of Housing and Community Development (for BSRP)**

[ohcdphila.org/home-repair/bsrp](http://ohcdphila.org/home-repair/bsrp)

**Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia**

[habitatphiladelphia.org/home-repair-program](http://habitatphiladelphia.org/home-repair-program)

**Rebuilding Together Philadelphia**

[rebuildingphilly.org/eligibility](http://rebuildingphilly.org/eligibility)

## Check the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

If you don’t already know, check to see whether your home is included on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, which generally ensures that it remains standing long into the future. The Philadelphia Register of Historic Places is the comprehensive inventory of buildings, structures, sites, objects (e.g. significant public art), interiors, and districts that the Philadelphia Historical Commission has designated as historic. You can look up your property on the map via the Philadelphia Historical Commission website.

**The Philadelphia Historical Commission**

[phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/default.aspx](http://phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/default.aspx)

## Apply for a Neighborhood-Level Designation

If you feel that other properties in your neighborhood deserve designation, consider joining with neighbors to apply for a neighborhood-level designation as a historic district. Find more information about designation (as either an individual property or as a historic district) on pages 12-13.

## Donate an Easement

Donate a historic easement to the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia or another holding entity, to ensure that your house stays protected for future generations. Historic easements are a voluntary legal agreement (usually via deed) to permanently protect a significant historic property. In exchange, easements generally (but not always) qualify as charitable contributions. Additional general information about easements is available from the National Park Service.

**National Park Service (Easements)**

[nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/taxdocs/easements-historic-properties.pdf](http://nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/taxdocs/easements-historic-properties.pdf)



## LEARN MORE

### For researching your house history, and care and maintenance

If you live in a rowhouse, then the Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual (2003, National Trust for Historic Preservation/Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development/Philadelphia City Planning Commission) is a great place to start. This practical guide can help you learn more about your house's architecture (for that house history!), and learn the basics of interior and exterior care and maintenance. The manual is available online.

#### **The Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual**

[phila.gov/CityPlanning/resources/Publications/RowhouseManual\\_Final.pdf](http://phila.gov/CityPlanning/resources/Publications/RowhouseManual_Final.pdf)

### For researching your house history

Philadelphia is lucky to have many great places and websites to research the history of old buildings, including the Free Library of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania's Architectural Archives, [PhilaGeoHistory.org](http://PhilaGeoHistory.org), [PhillyHistory.org](http://PhillyHistory.org), [PhiladelphiaBuildings.org](http://PhiladelphiaBuildings.org), and more. These research opportunities and many more are listed on the PHL Preservation website and in the "Who's Who" section at the end of this toolkit.

#### **Philadelphia Preservation**

[phlpreservation.org/copy-of-resources](http://phlpreservation.org/copy-of-resources)

### For care and maintenance

The National Park Service has published 50 Technical Preservation Briefs to provide guidance on preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring older buildings—offering guidance on everything from repointing mortar joints to improving energy efficiency to repairing historic wood windows. The briefs are free and available online.

#### **National Park Service Technical Preservation Briefs**

[nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm](http://nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm)

### For submitting a nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

In addition to the information available on the Philadelphia Historical Commission's website, you can learn more by reading the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia's guide, *How to Nominate an Individual Building, Structure, Site, or Object to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places*. The guide is available online.

#### **Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia's Nomination Guide**

[preservationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/PA\\_Nominations\\_Online.pdf](http://preservationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/PA_Nominations_Online.pdf)

### For owners of a property that is listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

The Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia published a booklet called *How to Navigate the Historical Review Process in Philadelphia*. The guide is a useful resource for property owners whose house (or other property) is listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, explaining how that designation

affects construction and alterations on their property. The guide is available online.

### **How to Navigate the Historical Review Process in Philadelphia**

[preservationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CitizensGuide\\_updated.pdf](https://preservationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CitizensGuide_updated.pdf)

## **For related job opportunities**

If you're interested in learning more about the job opportunities of architectural salvage, check out Philadelphia Community Corps, which offers job training and career development opportunities for entry-level and re-entry job candidates who face barriers to employment. The Corps' trainees learn about sustainable maintenance, reclamation, and up-cycling of architectural salvage. Information about the training program is available online.

### **Philadelphia Community Corps Training & Career Development**

[philadelphiacommunitycorps.org/job-training-and-career-development-in-construction-trades](https://philadelphiacommunitycorps.org/job-training-and-career-development-in-construction-trades)

## **For research and advocacy about the relationship between public health and rowhouses**

Check out the work of the Healthy Rowhouse Project, an initiative of the Center for Architecture and Design. The Project is dedicated to improving substandard conditions and health in rowhouses occupied by low- and moderate-income Philadelphians. You can read more about the organization online.

### **Healthy Rowhouse Project**

[healthyrowhouse.org](https://healthyrowhouse.org)

## **For technical information and policy research**

If you're interested in the benefits of saving older homes (and other historic buildings), you can read up on the findings of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Research and Policy Lab. For the past several years, the lab has researched the environmental sustainability of reusing older buildings, and they've also investigated the economic and social benefits of saving these places. The lab is headquartered online.

### **National Trust for Historic Preservation's Research and Policy Lab**

<https://bit.ly/2MQ7x50>

## **For information about Philadelphia tax-aid programs for homeowners**

PlanPhilly recently did a helpful review of the the city's tax-aid programs for homeowners, including

- » Longtime Owner-Occupants Program
- » Owner Occupied Payment Agreement
- » Homestead Exemption
- » Low-Income Senior Citizen Tax Freeze
- » Real Estate Tax Deferral
- » Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program

### **You can read PlanPhilly's rundown online.**

[planphilly.com/articles/2018/07/26/a-fresh-look-at-the-city-s-tax-aid-programs-for-its-many-homeowners](https://planphilly.com/articles/2018/07/26/a-fresh-look-at-the-city-s-tax-aid-programs-for-its-many-homeowners)



## VIOLA STREET, EAST PARKSIDE

**J**UST BEHIND PARKSIDE AVENUE, running along the southern end of West Fairmount Park and widely recognized for its stately late-nineteenth century ornate twin rowhomes facing the park, is Viola Street, a slightly lower-scale street lined with rowhomes from the same time period. The street is home to a welcoming and active group of residents, and the Viola Street Residents Association (VSRA) is led by neighbors that live on the street. VSRA has been active in everything from creating a community garden, to initiating a neighborhood plan, to organizing events to activate the street and alley in order to build community bonds and pride.

VSRA recognized long ago that keeping the neighborhood stable and thriving, and curbing the vacancy and blight from previous decades, would enable residents to stay in their homes. The group realized the importance of finding resources for home repair to achieve this, as many homes were older and required a significant amount of upkeep. So VSRA connected with Habitat for Humanity, which needed a neighborhood partner for one of its volunteer programs. The work required a lot of outreach, as residents had to prove their long-term residency and/or ownership in order to participate. As the committed neighborhood organization,



VSRA was able to connect with its neighbors, and build relationships along the way. Habitat in turn repaired 15 homes during the summer of 2014, focusing primarily on exterior elements such as windows, banisters, and porches. Because some properties were designated as historic on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, the project's partners got advice from the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and a local preservationist to make sure that repairs were done according to appropriate historic standards. Simple repairs were free for residents, while others were done at highly discounted rates, or with a reasonable payment plan.



A map of a neighborhood in Philadelphia, overlaid with a yellow grid. The map shows a street grid with several streets labeled. A dashed line outlines a specific area. Arrows point from text labels to specific locations on the map. The Schuylkill River is visible in the top right corner.

THE  
SCHUYLKILL  
RIVER

CENTENNIAL  
COMMONS

PARKSIDE  
AVENUE

VIOLA  
STREET

TO CENTER CITY  
PHILADELPHIA



## SECTION TWO



**I want to**

**IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN THE  
DESIGN QUALITY AND CHARACTER**

**in my neighborhood.**

# BACKGROUND

One of the most common things voiced during community conversations was that people care about the “character” of their neighborhood. These are the things that distinguish one neighborhood from another, whether it’s the types of buildings you see when you’re there, the places where people gather, or the trees and streets and sidewalks that knit those places together.

In Strawberry Mansion, community members praised the rows of beautiful old mansions, right across from Fairmount Park; in Powelton Village, a common theme was the walkability of the area and the approachable scale of the older homes; in Chinatown, people mentioned the cultural landmarks that distinguish their neighborhood from others. In some communities, there was a sense that something from earlier eras has been lost—whether it’s a prominent building, or entire blocks of 19th-century homes, or a sense of civic pride—but in just about every neighborhood, people agreed that there was something distinctive about where they live,

and that their community’s older buildings and parks in particular help to define their neighborhood. Where the first perspective in this toolkit—caring for your older home—looks at one building at a time, this perspective challenges us to think about how all of the pieces of a neighborhood fit together, and to balance competing interests in a way that strengthens the community’s overall character.

In technical terms, this perspective involves things like design guidelines, zoning ordinances, historic preservation policies, tax credits, and city plans—and for each of those topics, there are plenty of resources. But ultimately, this perspective focuses on the ways in which community members, as individuals or as a team, can identify the things that make their neighborhood special and the ways that they can help to maintain and improve those qualities.

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## ASK AND ANSWER

### Who determines what a new building/development looks like?

Ultimately, the zoning code sets the guidelines for the shape and size of buildings in Philadelphia (and most cities). Zoning also determines what type of uses (for example, homes, stores, offices, or parks) are allowed on each property (known as a “parcel”). Every parcel in the city has an owner, and the owner chooses how to maintain or develop that piece of land. Ownership changes every day across the city, but these changes are not always obvious unless the owner chooses to change the site’s buildings or use, in which case zoning comes into play.

Philadelphia’s first zoning code was written in 1933. (It is worth noting that much of Philadelphia was constructed before zoning codes existed, which explains why different parts of the city have different scales of buildings and development.) After many years in need of an update, the City’s Planning Commission updated the zoning code in 2012, with extensive input from neighborhood, government, business, professional, and civic leaders. The zoning designations that exist now are the result of this rewrite. They are designed to encourage development that complements its context, all while meeting Philadelphia’s housing and commercial development goals. The zoning changes also established the Registered Community

Organization (RCO) process, which ensures that communities are involved in determining how future development happens in their neighborhood. (You can learn more about how to join or become involved in your neighborhood RCO below on page 36.)

### I’m worried about the future of a building in my neighborhood. What can I do?

It’s never a bad time to advocate for neighborhood preservation, but too often, neighbors only find out that a building is threatened when the notices are posted. Unfortunately, once a demolition permit application has been filed, there are limited options to change course, beyond persuading the property owner to change his or her plans or filing an appeal to the demolition permit. That’s why it’s important to stay in touch with your community organizations! It’s an important and valuable way to share information and keep an eye out for the signs of risk for a property. Although your local community organization may not have the power or legal standing to alter the plans, it is still worth communicating with them. Together, for example, you could reach out to City Council to advocate for a more sensitive plan.

If a demolition permit application has not yet been filed, however, one option for community advocates is to submit a nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Designation on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (as well as a pending nomination for designation) can slow down the process, as the Philadelphia Historical Commission determines whether it should have some role in reviewing the demolition permits for the building. For more information about designation, see pages 12-13.

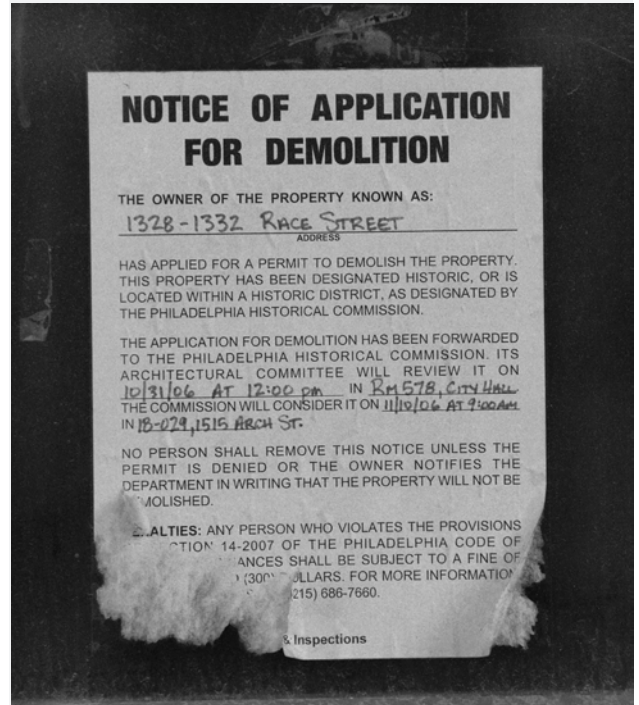
If your neighborhood doesn't have experience in this area, it may be worth hiring an architectural historian to prepare the nomination. (Anyone can submit a nomination, but an architectural historian may be able to determine the strongest case for significance.) The staff of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, Preservation Pennsylvania, and/or the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission may be able to direct you to a reliable architectural historian. Talk to the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and the staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission to determine if they are aware of any other pending nominations for that property, to coordinate efforts.

Once the nomination is submitted, staff from the Philadelphia Historical Commission will review the draft for its accuracy and completeness—they may ask for clarifications or edits. Once the staff member signs off on this first step, the nomination then progresses to a review by the Designation Committee. The Designation Committee reviews nominations periodically and offers a recommendation (nothing more, nothing less) in favor or against designation to the full Philadelphia Historical Commission. The Commission then reviews the nomination at one of its monthly meetings; the members of the Commission are not required to follow the recommendation of the Designation Committee, so they may overrule the Designation Committee at times, in favor of or against designation.

Throughout this process, show up! Rally your neighbors to show up to the meetings of the Designation Committee and Philadelphia Historical Commission—these hearings are public, and you are the public. You can find out about upcoming meetings and agendas by signing up for the Philadelphia Historical Commission's email list on the agency's website. Show

up and show your support for the designation of the property. (Depending on how contentious a situation it is, the property owner may bring his or her own team to argue against designation. As neighbors of a nominated property, you can offer an important voice in support of designation.)

It is important to note that in certain cases, the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L & I) may determine that a property is imminently dangerous—this decision takes over the authority of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, as it means that L & I has determined that the threat to public safety should be the primary factor in the future of the building. In these cases, a land-use lawyer can file an appeal to object to L & I's determination.



## What is the best way to ensure that my neighborhood retains its historic fabric?

Most advocates would agree that the strongest way to protect a community's significant older buildings is to designate a piece of the neighborhood as a historic district. However, community members sometimes feel this type of designation might bring with it some unwanted or unintended consequences. Some of the benefits and other information about designation are listed on the next page.

## Other than designation as a historic district, what are some other ways to ensure the quality of my neighborhood's architecture?

NOTE: The Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation is considering additions to, or revisions of, these options, so stay tuned to their recommendations! They may ultimately recommend even more alternatives than the options below.

The goal of designating a property or historic district on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places is to preserve the historic fabric (buildings, sites, etc.) that make up that property or district. Designating a property in this way means that the Philadelphia Historical Commission will review any work that requires a building permit and affects the exterior of a property. (This does not affect any work on the interior of a building.) Designation as a historic district can ensure that the block or neighborhood keeps its quality as a whole and still feels like an older place that has history.

If you're less concerned about regulating the buildings that are already standing, and more concerned about new construction specifically, then your neighborhood could consider creating a conservation district. (Since conservation districts were introduced in Philadelphia in 2004, two have been created; Queen Village and Overbrook Farms.) Conservation districts offer an opportunity for a neighborhood to evaluate new development and new construction, yet they do not forbid the demolition of existing buildings. In this way, conservation districts are more flexible regarding the treatment of older buildings, but they also mean that the community has less power to intervene in the demolition of an older building. The overall goal of a conservation district is to make sure that a neighborhood keeps its overall visual character, with both old and new construction. You can read more about historic districts versus conservation districts at the website below.

**Philadelphia City Planning Conservation Districts**  
[phila.gov/CityPlanning/resources/Publications/Conservation%20districts%20fact%20sheet.pdf](http://phila.gov/CityPlanning/resources/Publications/Conservation%20districts%20fact%20sheet.pdf)

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One other path you might consider as a community is the creation of design guidelines. For an example of this, look to the guidelines published by Old City District and the City of Baltimore. See the Preservation Win on page 43 for more on Old City's design guidelines.

**Old City District Design Guidelines**  
[oldcitydistrict.org/oldcitydesignguide](http://oldcitydistrict.org/oldcitydesignguide)

**City of Baltimore Historic Preservation Design Guidelines**  
<http://chap.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/07.18.2017%20-%20CHAP%20Design%20Guidelines.pdf>

Design guidelines are generally not regulatory, meaning there might not be any authority to enforce them, but they can be a useful tool in encouraging developers, architects, property owners, and others to create designs that complement, rather than contradict, what already exists in a neighborhood. They can also be a useful resource for RCOs when they hear presentations about new developments; design guidelines could be a helpful rubric to evaluate these proposed projects whenever developers seek support for their designs.

## What are the benefits of being a local historic district?

Designation provides some benefits. In addition to the satisfaction that comes with owning a historic landmark, and the community pride fostered by the recognition of a historic district, recent studies in Philadelphia have shown that property values in historic districts fluctuate less and increase more than those of comparable properties outside districts, in part because every property is protected from the effects of inappropriate alterations at neighboring properties. Also, the Historical Commission provides free historical and technical assistance to the owners of designated properties.

## What is the difference between the National Register of Historic Places and the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places?

For more information about designation, see pages 12-13.

## Would my neighbors be forced to restore their property if it is designated?

No. The Historical Commission cannot unilaterally force a property owner to undertake work, except in the very rare case that neglect threatens the survival of the historic resource. For more information about designation, see pages 12-13.

## Does historic designation affect my neighborhood's property tax assessments?

No. Historic designation is not a factor in the assessment of property by the City of Philadelphia, and will not result in higher property taxes. (Recent property tax increases are based on the city's Actual Value Initiative reappraisals. These reappraisals take into account the market trends of property values, as well as exterior inspections of a property's size, condition, improvements, and new construction.)



## What financial incentives are available for my neighborhood to rehab its older buildings?

Although these three programs do not represent all of the potential incentives for small businesses, a few programs that may be available to owners of older commercial properties include...

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### **The Storefront Improvement Program**

This program is local to Philadelphia and administered by the city's Department of Commerce. See the Take Action steps on page 54 for more information.

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### **The Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program**

The program is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). This competitive tax credit program is awarded based on various eligibility criteria, and credits are awarded equitably for projects in each region of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

[dced.pa.gov/programs/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc](http://dced.pa.gov/programs/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc)

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### **The Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit**

The program is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and the National Park Service. This program provides

a 20% income tax credit to developers of “income-producing” properties, including office buildings, retail establishments, rental apartments, and more. It does not apply to private owner-occupied homes. More information on the eligibility requirements and process is available on the PHMC website.

[phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Federal-Tax-Credits.aspx](http://phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Federal-Tax-Credits.aspx)

## What is the 10-year tax abatement?

The 10-year abatement of Real Estate Taxes was enacted in 1997. For residential and commercial properties, it exempts from tax the added value from new construction or rehabilitation—the improvements of a property, based on an assessment. This exemption allows the property owner to pay no tax on the improvements for the full 10-year period. Those receiving abatements do continue to pay taxes on the value of the land.

In 2017, over half of the uses of the abatement was for new construction; the remaining uses of the abatement were for existing housing stock that was upgraded or stabilized. Still, many advocates feel that the abatement works in opposition to preservation goals, since since the economic incentives of new construction outweigh those of rehabbing older buildings—at least in the short term. Many of these older buildings are in zoning districts that allow for greater height and density, and yet they are not designated to delay or prevent demolition. As a result, Philadelphia's older, undesignated building stock is often prone to demolition in favor of new construction that will make use of the tax abatement.

Many projects have successfully combined preservation and the abatement, so it is possible for the program to serve as a complement to older homes. The City continues to consider adjustments to the abatement, but the future of the abatement remains uncertain. The best way to advocate for a change in this policy is to work with your local civic association, registered community organization, and council person.



*I'm more concerned about affordable housing than historic preservation in my neighborhood. How does this toolkit help with that issue?*

Historic preservation and affordable housing are not competing issues: in fact, they can be very useful to think about together. It is often less expensive to repair older buildings than to demolish and build new construction, which means that investing in older buildings can be the most affordable type of housing. (From a financial perspective, rehabbing an older building to serve as affordable housing may also offer twice the opportunity for financial incentives, as developers may be able to use both affordable housing and historic rehabilitation tax credits to offset the

costs of the project.) For more about the link between affordable housing and historic preservation, you can read articles like this one by economist Donovan Rypkema, and another by advocate Stephanie Meeks.

**Donovan Rypkema**

[placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/placeeconomics-pub2003b.pdf](http://placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/placeeconomics-pub2003b.pdf)

**Stephanie Meeks**

[citylab.com/equity/2017/06/historic-preservation-density-demolition/529821](http://citylab.com/equity/2017/06/historic-preservation-density-demolition/529821)

Beyond these economic reasons to reconsider the connections between affordable housing and historic preservation, there are also environmental, social, architectural, and cultural justifications to embrace investing in Philadelphia's older buildings to achieve affordability—the same motivations discussed throughout this toolkit. So if you consider yourself an advocate for affordable housing, there are lots of reasons to consider yourself an advocate for neighborhood preservation as well.



# TRY IT OUT

Look up your house or neighborhood’s zoning on the City’s Atlas website.

Go to the City’s Atlas website to see a whole lot of information about Philadelphia’s buildings and infrastructure. Each zoning type has a full description of its appearance and allowable uses on this site.

Enter in your home address and you can see the deeds, past zoning permits, and the the zoning classification for your property. For example, many rowhomes are considered RSA-5, which stands for “Residential Single Family Attached – 5”.

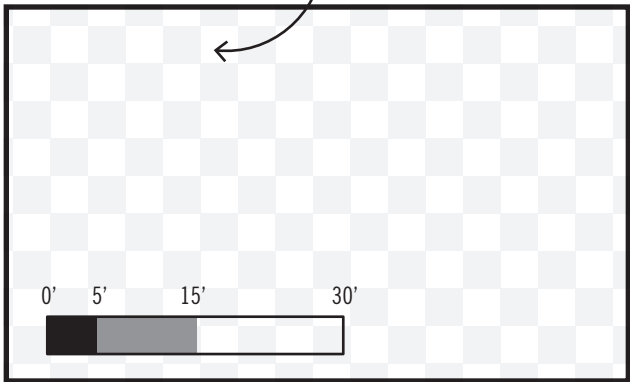
## Philadelphia Zoning

[phillyzoning.com](http://phillyzoning.com)

## Philadelphia Atlas

[atlas.phila.gov](http://atlas.phila.gov)

*sketch a floor plan of your house here if it helps!*



1

## YOUR HOME

Take some time to fill in some basic information by responding to the questions below. This will give you a much better sense of your home.

1

Lot Width

2

Lot Area

3

Open Area

4

Front Setback

5

Rear Yard Depth

6

Height (Maximum)

2

## TAKE A WALK AROUND YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

Document or take photos of things you think look complementary, or out of place.

Mark down the “out of place” properties and look them up on Atlas. This can help you learn about how these came to be and help you learn how to prevent development like this from happening in the future, if that is your goal.

3

## LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

Visit *PhilaGeoHistory.org* to look at historic maps to learn more about what your neighborhood used to be like and who used to live there.



## TAKE ACTION

### Attend meetings of your neighborhood's civic association or Registered Community Organization (RCO).

Developers are often required to present their proposed projects at public RCO meetings, so these meetings are a key opportunity to voice your opinion on projects that might affect the character of your neighborhood. You can also join your RCO's zoning committee to have more of a stake in the organization's decisions. If you don't know your local RCO, you can find a list and map on the Philadelphia City Planning Commission's website.

#### **The Philadelphia City Planning Commission's RCO Map**

[phila.gov/CityPlanning/projectreviews/Pages/RegisteredCommunityOrganizations.aspx](http://phila.gov/CityPlanning/projectreviews/Pages/RegisteredCommunityOrganizations.aspx)

### Read up on the district plan for your neighborhood that was created by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission for their Philadelphia2035 plan.

This plan sets a vision and goals for managing growth and development in the City of Philadelphia. The

overall Philadelphia2035 plan was adopted in 2011, and in the years since, the Planning Commission has been working on 18 strategic "District Plans," which break down the overall plan into more detail for each district. These district plans guide the priorities for citizens, community leaders, and elected officials, and have an effect on the quality and character of each neighborhood. The final district plan, for the Upper Northwest, is in the final stages as of 2018. Find all the other plans below.

#### **The Philadelphia City Planning Commission's Philadelphia2035 Plan**

[phila2035.org/plan](http://phila2035.org/plan)

### See if your neighborhood has a local historical society to support or join.

Neighborhoods all over the city feature these organizations, which range from informal networks to official nonprofit groups—they may be useful teammates as you think about improving and maintaining the character of your neighborhood.

### Apply to participate in the Citizens Planning Institute (CPI)

CPI is a seven-week course (offered twice a year) that offers an introduction to city planning, zoning, the development process, and special topics. This course is offered by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, with a mission to empower citizens to take a more effective and active role in shaping the future of their neighborhoods and the city.

#### **The Citizens Planning Institute**

[citizensplanninginstitute.org](http://citizensplanninginstitute.org)



## Join a Friends group. Many neighborhoods have “Friends” groups to support everything from parks, to schools, to libraries.

There is a Friends group for almost every park in the city, and many have cropped up for schools and libraries too. Getting involved with these organizations may seem specific to the place, but advocating for better parks, schools, recreation centers, and libraries will help improve and maintain the neighborhood bit by bit.

## Be a public correspondent for your community.

Attend the public meetings and/or join the listservs of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Stay tuned to any agenda items that may affect your community—and report back! These city agencies play significant roles in how our neighborhoods grow and change over time, so if you are interested in improving and maintaining the character of your own neighborhood, these are important agencies to pay attention to. The Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) is responsible for properties that are on or nominated to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission

(PCPC) creates plans for neighborhoods and sections of the city. The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) hears and decides appeals in zoning matters, considers special exceptions, and grants variances. (See the Learn More pages in this section for some press outlets that report on, and can help explain, the work of these agencies.)

## Be a part of the Jumpstart Training Program.

If you want to have a direct role in redeveloping the distinctive older places in your neighborhood, apply to be a part of the Jumpstart Training Program, an initiative spearheaded by Philly Office Retail. The program trains novice developers and connects them with more experienced real estate professionals to help them revitalize their neighborhoods. Jumpstart began in Germantown, and has now expanded to include four additional neighborhoods: Southwest Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, North Philly West, and Kensington.

### Jumpstart Training Program

[gojumpstart.org](http://gojumpstart.org)

## Organize a neighborhood cleanup.

One of the greatest contributors to neighborhood quality is the upkeep of public space: streets, sidewalks, parks, etc. Grab a group of neighbors and friends to pick up trash and sweep sidewalks on a weekday evening or a Saturday morning and feel good about contributing to your neighborhood’s appearance. Try to make this a weekly or biweekly meet up if you can. If your neighborhood has a local institution with a large property to maintain—including a school, library, or house of worship—see if you can include them in your cleanup day.



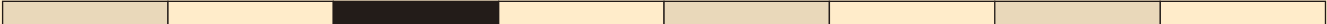
If there is an important building or place in your neighborhood, check to see whether that local landmark is included on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, which generally ensures that it remains standing long into the future.

The Philadelphia Register of Historic Places is the comprehensive inventory of buildings, structures, sites, objects (e.g. significant public art), interiors, and districts that the Philadelphia Historical Commission has designated as historic. You can look up the property on the map via the Philadelphia Historical Commission website.

**The Philadelphia Register of Historic Places**

[phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/default.aspx](http://phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/default.aspx)

If you feel that other properties in your neighborhood deserve designation, consider joining with neighbors to apply for a neighborhood-level designation as a historic district. For more information about designation (as either an individual property or as a historic district), see pages 12-13 and 30-31.





## LEARN MORE

**For anyone interested in keeping up with planning and development news in Philadelphia:**

Follow PlanPhilly, Hidden City, and Curbed Philly, three of the best websites to keep up with planning, zoning, development, design, and preservation news in Philadelphia. The reporters for these websites keep up with all the complicated public policies and important community-based issues, and they are good at explaining these stories to the general public.

### **PlanPhilly**

[planphilly.com](http://planphilly.com)

### **Hidden City**

[HiddenCityPhila.org](http://HiddenCityPhila.org)

### **Curbed Philly**

[philly.curbed.com](http://philly.curbed.com)

**For community advocates to learn from each other**

The Local Preservation School is an online “open learning environment” where preservation advocates and volunteers share how they have saved and sustained historic places in their communities.

### **The Local Preservation School**

[localpreservation.github.io/about](http://localpreservation.github.io/about)



**For understanding the difference among the various agencies in the City of Philadelphia**

Read the *Philadelphia Zoning Code Quick Reference Manual*, and check out the *Who's Who, and Who Do I Talk To?* section at the back of this toolkit. The *Zoning Code Quick Reference Manual* contains examples of what zoning “looks like” and all of the various agencies and technical terms involved in the process. The short version: the Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) is responsible for properties that are on or nominated to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) creates plans for neighborhoods and sections of the city. The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) hears and decides appeals in zoning matters, considers special exceptions, and grants variances.

### **Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Zoning Code Manual**

[phila.gov/CityPlanning/resources/Publications/Philadelphia%20Zoning%20Code\\_Quick%20Reference%20Manual.pdf](http://phila.gov/CityPlanning/resources/Publications/Philadelphia%20Zoning%20Code_Quick%20Reference%20Manual.pdf)

# For submitting a nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

In addition to the information available on the Philadelphia Historical Commission’s website, you can learn more by reading the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia’s guide to *How to Nominate an Individual Building, Structure, Site, or Object to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places*.

## Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia’s Guide to How to Nominate

[preservationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/PA\\_Nominations\\_Online.pdf](http://preservationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/PA_Nominations_Online.pdf)

# For related job opportunities

If you’re interested in learning more and supporting the job opportunities of architectural salvage, check out Philadelphia Community Corps, which offers job training and career development opportunities for entry-level and re-entry job candidates who face barriers to employment. The Corps’ trainees learn about sustainable maintenance, reclamation, and up-cycling of architectural salvage.

## Philadelphia Community Corps

[philadelphiacommunitycorps.org/job-training-and-career-development-in-construction-trades](http://philadelphiacommunitycorps.org/job-training-and-career-development-in-construction-trades)

# For a building that has been abandoned by its owner

If there is a particular building in your neighborhood that has deteriorated significantly and appears to have been abandoned, it may be worth exploring your options under Pennsylvania’s Act 135, the Blighted and Abandoned Property Conservatorship law. This law (which passed in 2008) aims to restore neglected properties to productive use. It allows a petitioner to ask a judge for conservatorship over an abandoned property. Because this is a legal tool to address neighborhood quality, you should consult a lawyer to learn more.

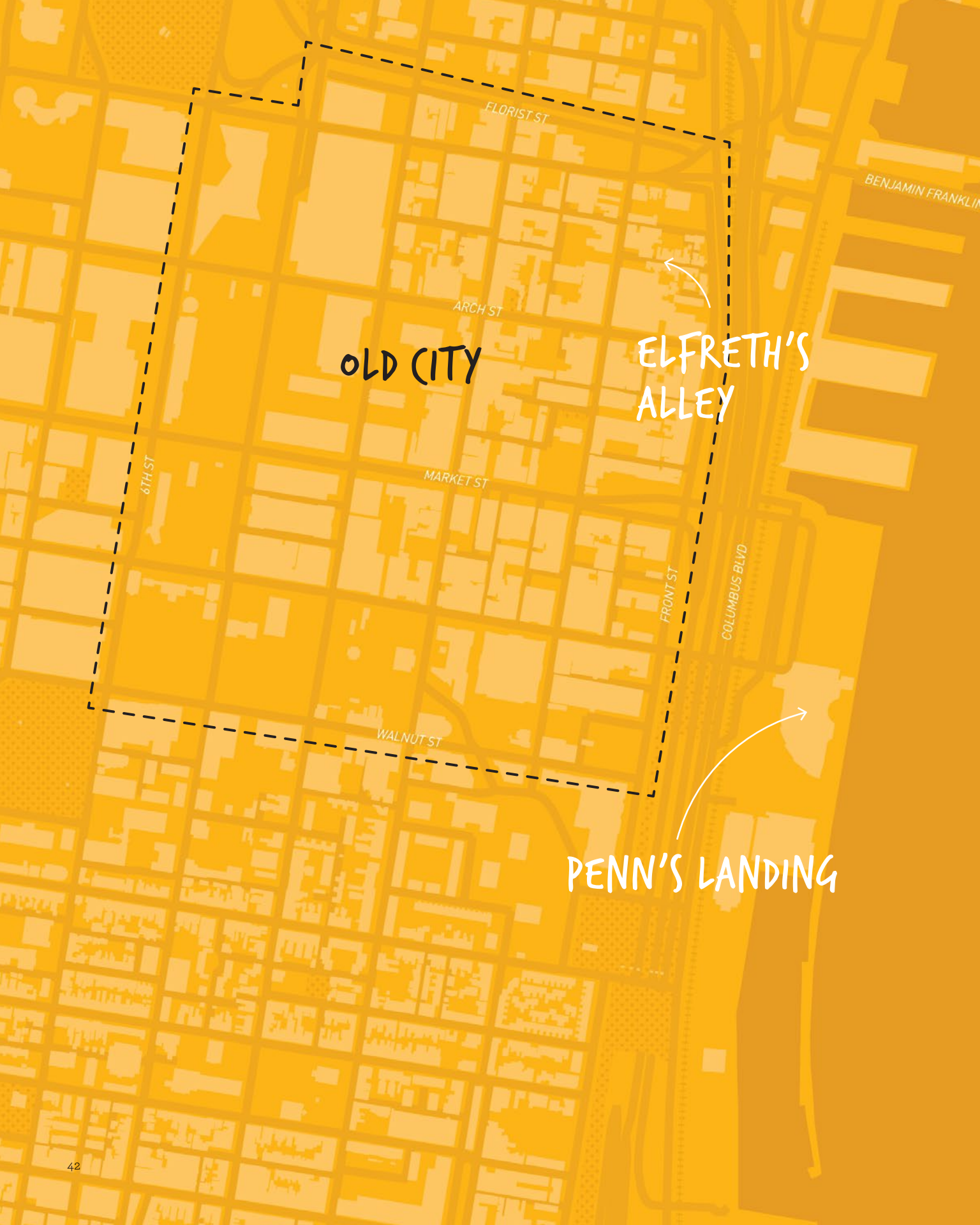
# For properties that are vacant and abandoned

The Philadelphia Land Bank was established in 2013 in an effort to “return land in public ownership to private reuse.” (The first properties were added to the Land Bank in 2015.) In practical terms, land banking requires a lot of property title administration for vacant and tax-delinquent properties—a process that takes a while, especially since there are an estimated 43,000 vacant lots and unoccupied properties in Philadelphia. For this reason, the Land Bank has faced challenges in ramping up the pace of acquiring and reselling vacant properties. But in the long term, community advocates still hope that the Philadelphia Land Bank can be a useful tool in their efforts to revitalize neighborhoods.

## Philadelphia Land Bank

[philadelphialandbank.org](http://philadelphialandbank.org)





OLD CITY

ELFRETH'S  
ALLEY

PENN'S LANDING



## OLD CITY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDE

**A**S ITS NAME CAN ATTEST, the neighborhood of Old City has a lot of old buildings—residential, industrial, institutional, etc. In recent decades, the neighborhood has also seen a wave of redevelopment in the form of adaptive reuse (reusing old buildings for new purposes) and new construction.

In response to all of this construction and its impact on the neighborhood's character, the Old City District (a registered community organization and special services district) published the Old City Design Guide in 2017. The guide is a resource, rather than a regulatory tool, for developers, architects, and property owners. As such, it does not dictate any specific building styles or types, but it does emphasize some general principles to encourage designs that complement—rather than compete with—the historic fabric of the neighborhood. The guide is part of Old City District's overall "Vision2026" strategic plan, with the overall goal of ensuring that "the whole of Old City is greater than the sum of its parts."

The design guide begins with four imperatives for building: build for 100 years; build harmonious variety; build a street, not only a building; and



build for people. It then offers recommendations for new buildings, shopfront designs, and curbside options. It highlights examples of good (and less-than-good) projects in the neighborhood, and demonstrates how both old and new buildings can contribute to the design quality and character of a neighborhood.

### The Old City Design Guide

[oldcitydistrict.org/oldcitydesignguide](http://oldcitydistrict.org/oldcitydesignguide)





## SPRING GARDEN HISTORIC DISTRICT

**W**ONDER WHAT IT'S LIKE to live in a local historic district? The Spring Garden neighborhood offers a good example of a typical Philadelphia rowhouse neighborhood that retains its character and design quality, thanks in part to the designation of the Spring Garden Historic District on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Here are some examples of buildings within the district where property owners have worked with the Philadelphia Historical Commission during their rehabilitation projects. (A reminder: the Philadelphia Historical Commission [PHC] cannot force property owners to make renovations; they get involved when a property owner gets building permits for a project within the historic district boundaries.)

### 2001 Spring Garden Street

#### **Adaptive Reuse**

When this former church was converted to apartments, PHC approved the removal of the stained glass windows. They were replaced with clear glass for the new apartments. Thanks to this project, this striking building on a prominent corner continues to give character to the Spring Garden neighborhood.

### 1711-1713 Mount Vernon Street

#### **Rehabilitation**

When the owner planned renovations to these buildings, PHC oversaw the removal of paint from the masonry walls, as well as the restoration of window and door openings and the installation of new windows and doors.

### 1603-1607 Mount Vernon Street

#### **New Construction**

Who said that new construction couldn't happen in historic districts? In this case, PHC had partial or full oversight for the design of these new buildings. (Their level of input is based on the status of the properties when the district was nominated.)

### 2034 Fairmount Avenue

#### **Reconstruction and rehabilitation**

The property owner worked with PHC to reconstruct the front façade with salvaged brick and replace the windows. The Historical Commission also reviewed the plans for the new storefront, which was replaced in partnership with the local community development corporation (Fairmount CDC) and with support from the Department of Commerce's Storefront Improvement Program.





2001 Spring Garden Street



1711-1713 Mount Vernon Street



1603-1607 Mount Vernon Street



2034 Fairmount Avenue



PHILADELPHIA  
MUSEUM OF ART

SECTION THREE



**I want to**  
**STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN SMALL**  
**BUSINESSES & COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS**  
**in my neighborhood.**



## BACKGROUND

Small businesses are often the lifeblood of a community, and when clustered together on a street or avenue, they can be one of the most distinctive parts of a neighborhood. The way that we shop may have changed in the last several decades, but small businesses and commercial corridors—and the business owners that inhabit them—still represent an important and valuable part of our neighborhoods, and can be a boost to the local economy and community ties.

The link between older buildings and small businesses or commercial corridors may not be obvious at first, but they are actually a great match: older buildings don't have to pass the costs of brand new construction onto commercial tenants, and they often include smaller, subdivided spaces that may be well suited for small business storefronts. Clustered together on prominent roads, these older buildings can make a commercial street into a shopping destination that is more interesting than any shopping center or mall. Think Germantown Avenue, or the Italian Market on S. 9th Street, or Walnut Street, or Baltimore Avenue, or Ridge Avenue: all are distinctive shopping districts, and all have lots of older buildings that help make them special and can make the area more interesting for pedestrians and passersby. For this reason, it is important to think about the ways in which local economic development and good preservation planning can and should go together.

Philadelphia has a lot of resources for commercial corridors, and the small businesses that comprise them. Many of these are through the City's Commerce and Business Services Departments, and through local partners such as LISC and the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDCs).





## ASK & ANSWER

### What resources exist to support small businesses?

The City of Philadelphia Business Services is a useful clearinghouse of all the resources that can help businesses, big and small, set up shop in Philadelphia. The website breaks down all of the steps to start and manage a business, and also offers place-specific guidelines about zoning, incentives, and agencies like the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

#### **The City of Philadelphia Business Services**

[business.phila.gov](http://business.phila.gov)

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The Chamber of Commerce has been around since Philadelphia's founding and supports programs and policies for business of all sizes. The Chamber includes programs for small businesses and also works toward policies that support small business development, including wage and business tax policies, permitting, and work with commercial corridors.

#### **Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia**

[chamberphl.com](http://chamberphl.com)

The Pennsylvania Small Business Development Center (SBDC), provides free consulting and low-cost training to help current and future small business owners successfully operate. The SBDC offers an array of seminars through their local partners. In Philadelphia, SBDC works with the Wharton Small Business Development Center (WSBDC) at Penn and the Temple Small Business Development Center, with have both been active since the early 1980s. Their course offerings and trainings are found on their websites.

#### **University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business**

[whartonsbdc.wharton.upenn.edu](http://whartonsbdc.wharton.upenn.edu)

#### **Temple University's Fox School of Business**

[fox.temple.edu/institutes-and-centers/small-business-development-center](http://fox.temple.edu/institutes-and-centers/small-business-development-center)

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The African American Chamber of Commerce mirrors much of the work of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia, but with a focus on supporting the economic empowerment and growth of African-American business in the region. They offer a large selection of programs, speaker series and resources.

#### **The African American Chamber of Commerce**

[aachamber.com](http://aachamber.com)

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Founded in 2001, the Sustainable Business Network (SBN) is a membership network of local Philadelphia businesses that serve community needs, share wealth, and protect the environment.

#### **The Sustainable Business Network**

[sbnphiladelphia.org](http://sbnphiladelphia.org)

The Free Library of Philadelphia offers online resources for small businesses. They also offer the Business Resources and Innovation Center with one-on-one consulting and special resources.

**Free Library of Philadelphia**

[freelibrary.org/programs](http://freelibrary.org/programs)

**Free Library of Philadelphia Business Resources and Innovation Center**

[freelibrary.org/programs/bric](http://freelibrary.org/programs/bric)

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The Community College of Philadelphia offers a free program for small business owners in Philadelphia, with education, counseling, and training for business owners.

**The Community College of Philadelphia**

[ccp.edu/business-and-industry/power-your-business](http://ccp.edu/business-and-industry/power-your-business)

## What organizations work to improve and maintain commercial corridors?

LISC Philadelphia is the local office of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a national community development corporation (CDC) and CDFI (community development financial institution). LISC’s programs include a full range of initiatives that support local communities and work towards empowerment. They have invested \$435 million and leveraged much more since their foundation in 1980. LISC-Philadelphia’s focus areas include commercial corridors, which are combined with an overall economic development and community engagement approach.

LISC works with community partners to implement corridor plans, support small businesses and train business leaders, and provide technical assistance and financing to yield thriving commercial environments. They have worked with commercial corridors across the city, partnering with the local community development corporations on the ground.

[lisc.org/philly/our-priorities/economic-development/commercial-corridors/](http://lisc.org/philly/our-priorities/economic-development/commercial-corridors/)

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Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC) works across Philadelphia with the neighborhood-based community development corporations (CDCs). CDCs work on a variety of programs, working closely with residents in specifically-defined parts of the city. Programs may include improvements to the physical environment, small business development, housing, capacity building, events, and skills training/workforce development. The work of CDCs has contributed to some of the most significant improvements in Philadelphia’s neighborhoods.

**Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations**

[pacdc.org/members/member-list](http://pacdc.org/members/member-list)



## What financial incentives are available for small businesses to rehab their older buildings?

Although these three programs do not represent all of the potential incentives for small businesses, a few programs that may be available to owners of older commercial properties include:

The Storefront Improvement Program, which is local to Philadelphia. The program reimburses owners of commercial buildings and businesses within designated commercial corridors who make storefront improvements. Examples of eligible improvements include masonry/brick pointing, cornices, exterior painting, windows/glazing, exterior doors, exterior façade lighting, see-through security grills, signage and awnings. More information about the program is available on the Department of Commerce website.

### **The Storefront Improvement Program**

[business.phila.gov/storefront-improvement-program](http://business.phila.gov/storefront-improvement-program)

The Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) is available for income-producing properties (e.g. businesses!). This competitive tax credit program is awarded based on various eligibility criteria, and credits are awarded equitably for projects in each region of the Commonwealth. More information is available on the DCED website.

### **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development**

[dcled.pa.gov/programs/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc](http://dcled.pa.gov/programs/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc)

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The Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (Historic Tax Credit), administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and the National Park Service. This program provides a 20% income tax credit to developers of “income-producing” properties, including office buildings, retail establishments, rental apartments, and more. It does not apply to private owner-occupied homes. More information on the eligibility requirements and process is available on the PHMC website and the National Park Service website.

### **The Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit**

[nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm](http://nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm)

### **National Park Service Federal Tax Credits**

[phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Federal-Tax-Credits.aspx](http://phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Federal-Tax-Credits.aspx)

JEWEL  
ROW



PRESERVE  
ME!

LOVE

I  
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PLACE

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JAWN  
MATTERS

SAVE  
JEWELER'S  
ROW!

THEY DON'T  
MAKE THEM LIKE  
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ANYMORE!

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ARCHITECTURE

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## TRY IT OUT

1

### MEET A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

Ask them about their story, challenges, and how they found their way into business. Are they located within a historic building or a building with special character or architectural traces of past businesses that were located here? Ask them if locating in a building of this type was a factor in their location and their experiences operating out of an older building.

2

## MAKE A LIST OF LOCAL BUSINESSES THAT HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR DECADES

Businesses that stay open in their neighborhood for decades can play a significant part in the identity of their community. They are often stewards of an older building, and they are important partners in sustaining and revitalizing communities.

\_\_\_\_\_

Jot down the small businesses (family-owned or otherwise) that you know have been around for decades.

(chat with your neighbors and local community organization about how you can recognize and support these businesses)



## TAKE ACTION

### Buy and hire local!

It may be obvious, but buy and hire local! Support your neighborhood's local restaurants and businesses by spending your money there. This applies to any rehab projects for your own home, too: economic studies show that skilled rehab/adaptive reuse construction supports local economies more than new construction, since project costs usually skew toward locally-hired labor more than mass-produced materials.

### Apply for a Storefront Improvement Grant

If you are a business owner, apply for a Storefront Improvement Grant, if your business is located on an eligible corridor. Check out whether you are eligible at the Department of Commerce's website. If you're not a small business owner, but do live in an eligible area, make sure your local businesses know about it!

#### **Storefront Improvement Grant Program**

[business.phila.gov/storefront-improvement-program](https://business.phila.gov/storefront-improvement-program)

### Nominate a special façade for the Community Design Collaborative's Storefront Challenge

This program celebrates the successful improvement or maintenance of commercial facades around the city. The more these are celebrated, the more that business owners will be inspired to occupy and sensitively maintain historic buildings. Individual neighborhoods might have their own similar programs: for instance, the Kensington Storefront Challenge offers up to 1 year of free rent for businesses, as well as other funding opportunities and technical assistance. If your neighborhood doesn't have its own challenge, see if you can partner with your local community organization or community development corporation to start one!

#### **Community Design Collaborative's Storefront Challenge**

[cdesignc.org/storefront2018](https://cdesignc.org/storefront2018)

#### **Kensington Storefront Challenge**

[kavechallenge.com](https://kavechallenge.com)

### Connect with your local CDC

If your neighborhood has a community development corporation (CDC), connect with your local CDC and attend their programs and events. You may be able to find a local CDC on the website for the PACDC (although this list may not be comprehensive).

#### **Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations**

[pacdc.org/members/member-list](https://pacdc.org/members/member-list)



## Stay involved with your neighborhood Civic Association

Stay involved with your neighborhood civic association or registered community organization (RCO) to ensure that commercial corridors remain commercial in use! If commercial areas experience a zoning change through a variance, this will slowly degrade the fabric of these key areas in the city's neighborhoods.

## Organize to create a Business Association, Business Improvement district (BID) or Neighborhood Improvement District

Organize to create a business association, business improvement district (BID) or neighborhood improvement district (NID) within your neighborhood, if it doesn't already exist. Center City District (CCD) is the largest in the city, but 11 additional BIDs exist in other neighborhoods, including South Street/Headhouse, East Passyunk, Aramingo, Mount Airy, Roxborough, Germantown, and others. BIDs are unique in that they collect a special tax or fee to fund supplemental services or improvements within the district's boundaries, including street sweeping and other services that benefit the district. Cousins of the BID are the NID (Neighborhood Service District) and SSD (Special Services District). Business associations are groups of businesses that are formed around geographic boundaries and common interests, but do not levy the additional tax.

### Commerce Department Revitalizing Corridors Program

[phila.gov/commerce/neighborhoods/Pages/RevitalizingCorridors.aspx](http://phila.gov/commerce/neighborhoods/Pages/RevitalizingCorridors.aspx)



## Apply to be a part of the Jumpstart Training Program

If you want to have a direct role in redeveloping the distinctive older places in your neighborhood, including commercial spaces, apply to be a part of the Jumpstart Training Program, an initiative spearheaded by Philly Office Retail. The program trains novice developers and connects them with more experienced real estate professionals to help them revitalize their neighborhoods. Jumpstart began in Germantown, and has now expanded to include four additional neighborhoods: Southwest Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, North Philly West, and Kensington.

### The Jumpstart Training Program

[gojumpstart.org](http://gojumpstart.org)





## LEARN MORE

### For community advocates interested in economic development

The Main Street Program is a comprehensive, community-based approach to revitalizing business corridors that has been applied in cities across the U.S. since the 1980s. In Pennsylvania, the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) oversees this program. The program is housed under the umbrella of Keystone Communities, which includes Keystone Main Streets and Keystone Elm Streets. Funding is available from the state and is administered by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center. In Philadelphia, 52<sup>nd</sup> Street in West Philadelphia is an example of a Keystone Main Street. Funding may be applied towards planning activities, the establishment of business improvement districts or neighborhood improvement districts, façade improvement grants (which can be applied to both commercial and non-commercial properties), or other development projects, such as building rehabilitation or public infrastructure improvements. Nonprofits, CDCs and similar organizations are eligible for applications on an annual basis.

#### **Pennsylvania Downtown Center**

[padowntown.org](http://padowntown.org)

### For information about Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

You can read more about BIDs in the guide published by the City of Philadelphia Department of Commerce and Drexel University's Center for Public Policy. The resource is called "Starting a Business Improvement District in Philadelphia" and is available below.

#### **Business Improvement Districts**

[business.phila.gov/media/Starting-A-BID-in-Philadelphia-FINAL.pdf](http://business.phila.gov/media/Starting-A-BID-in-Philadelphia-FINAL.pdf)

### For information about policies that affect local commercial corridors

PACDC released the Commercial Corridor Policy Agenda in 2017. This report resulted from a convening of 37 commercial corridor managers and community development corporations, and it calls upon City Council and the Mayor to boost investment in programs that aid commercial corridors and small businesses.

#### **Commercial Corridor Policy Agenda in 2017**

[pacdcorg.pairserver.com/2017/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/PACDC-Corridor-Policy-Agenda-FINAL-.pdf](http://pacdcorg.pairserver.com/2017/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/PACDC-Corridor-Policy-Agenda-FINAL-.pdf)

## For information about state and federal rehabilitation tax credits

Program info for the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program is available on the Department of Community and Economic Development website. Program info for the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (Historic Tax Credit) is available on the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission website below.

### **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development: Rehab Tax Credit**

[dced.pa.gov/programs/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc](http://dced.pa.gov/programs/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc)

### **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission: Rehab Tax Credit**

[phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Federal-Tax-Credits.aspx](http://phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Federal-Tax-Credits.aspx)

### **The Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit**

[nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm](http://nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm)

## For commercial property owners

If you're looking to start or sustain a small business located in a rowhouse, then the Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual (2003, National Trust for Historic Preservation/Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development/Philadelphia City Planning Commission) is a great place to start. This practical guide can help you learn more about the building's architecture and learn the basics of interior and exterior care and maintenance. The manual is available online.

### **The Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual**

[phila.gov/CityPlanning/resources/Publications/RowhouseManual\\_Final.pdf](http://phila.gov/CityPlanning/resources/Publications/RowhouseManual_Final.pdf)

## For technical assistance on maintenance of older commercial buildings

The National Park Service has published 50 Technical Preservation Briefs to provide guidance on preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring older buildings—offering guidance on everything from repointing mortar joints to improving energy efficiency to repairing historic wood windows. The briefs are free and available online.

### **National Park Service Preservation Briefs**

[nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm](http://nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm)

## For community advocates to learn from each other

The Local Preservation School is an online “open learning environment” where preservation advocates and volunteers share with people how to save and sustain historic places in their communities.

### **The Local Preservation School**

[localpreservation.github.io/about](http://localpreservation.github.io/about)

FISHER PARK

FERN ROCK  
TRANSPORTATION  
CENTER

OLNEY AVE.

NORTH 5TH  
STREET

ROOSEVELT  
BOULEVARD

W SPENCER ST

W OLNEY AVE

W TABOR RD

W FISHER AVE

ROOSEVELT BL VD





## NORTH 5TH STREET REVITALIZATION PROJECT

**L**OCATED A FEW MILES NORTH OF Center City is Philadelphia's Olney neighborhood, one of the city's most diverse, where old and new residents, housing types, and several distinct ethnicities overlap. The heart of Olney is the North 5th Street commercial corridor, which today is home to over 300 businesses, serving and representing people from all corners of the world.

This bustling corridor is supported and maintained through the work of the North 5th Street Revitalization Project (N5SRP), which was founded in 2007 as a project of the Korean Community Development Services Center (KCDSC), a long-standing community development organization working in the neighborhood since the 1980s.

The group, and Olney residents, knew that a key ingredient in promoting economic stability and neighborhood cohesion was investing in the commercial corridor—which would serve as a gathering hub and build a sense of community pride for surrounding residents. The following year, in 2008, N5SRP began receiving funding from the Philadelphia Commerce Department and since then, it has continued to grow and expand its services, always working in tandem with the community. Acting as a convener and facilitator, N5SRP revived the old Olney Business



Association. The group has also worked to create new businesses and work with existing ones to share resources, demystify application processes, and organize events such as corridor clean-ups and festivals. They have helped leverage small business loans and façade improvement grants for small businesses, which is a great help for small businesses that may find these processes cumbersome or overwhelming. N5SRP has also contributed greatly to neighborhood beautification, including overseeing the installation of murals, benches, and street trees. As a part of KCDSC, the organization is also linked to complementary programs for housing services, educational programs, and immigration/citizen services, which provide wrap-around support for the community as a whole. North 5th Street is now seen as a citywide attraction for events, known for its multitude of food choices, and as a place where neighborhood residents, local businesses, and occasional visitors are given a warm welcome and an environment that is a direct reflection of the community's hard work and input.

SECTION FOUR



**I want to**  
**LEARN AND SHARE THE HISTORY**  
**of my neighborhood.**

## BACKGROUND

Every neighborhood has a history. It may not seem like it if your community was built more recently—even in the last 50 years!—but the wonderful thing about history is that it gets embedded in everything. There are many stories to tell about every place, old or new(er), different perspectives to each story, and various ways to share those stories. If you believe that we can learn a lot from how we tell our history, and what it means to have inherited a place, then this section of the toolkit will help to identify different ways to learn and share your neighborhood's history.

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One definitive way to preserve history is to designate a building (or buildings) as historic—nominating them to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and/or the National Register of Historic Places. This toolkit includes information about that approach and what it means for building owners and community members. But designation is not the only way to reveal and share a neighborhood's history (or, more accurately, histories), and this section explores additional ways to do so, bridging ages and audiences alike.







## ASK AND ANSWER

*What do you mean when you say “historic”?*

### **That depends!**

If you’re wondering about the legal definition of “historic”—in other words, how old does something have to be in order to be designated—then the general guideline (with some exceptions) is 50 years old. That means that, as this toolkit is being prepared in 2018, buildings that were constructed in 1968 or earlier are considered eligible for the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. That may seem recent, but when you think about all the significant things that happened in our country in 1968, it’s an important reminder that the 50-year threshold allows us to commemorate our recent history, too, and the places where that history happens.

That said, history is obviously not just an official legal definition. So when we say “older” or “historic” in this toolkit, we are referring to any of the places in your community that matter to you and have value in your neighborhood.

*Who puts up those blue markers that I see on the sidewalk?*

The blue markers with yellow text are part of the Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program, which is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), a state agency. (There are many imitations of these plaques around the city using other colors, but the blue and yellow ones are the official state markers.) More than 2,000 of these aluminum signs are posted around the state to commemorate people, places, events, and innovations that have affected the lives of Pennsylvanians. Anyone can nominate a marker to be part of the program (although you may choose to hire a professional historian), and PHMC will review the nomination. The individual or community organization that submits the nomination must pay for the cost of installation, but PHMC then maintains the sign once it is installed. You can find out more about the program on PHMC’s website.

### **Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program**

[phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Historical-Markers/Pages/default.aspx](http://phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Historical-Markers/Pages/default.aspx)

*As of today, buildings that were constructed in 1968 or earlier are considered eligible for historic designation!*

## Who puts up the plaques on certain buildings that says they are historic?

If the plaque is oval in shape and says “Certified – Philadelphia Historical Commission,” then it indicates that the property has been officially designated on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Owners of buildings or sites listed on the Philadelphia Register can commemorate the significance of their property by purchasing a cast metal plaque from the Philadelphia Historical Commission. More information about the plaque program is available on the Philadelphia Historical Commission’s website.

### Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Plaque Program

[phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/plaqueprogram.aspx](http://phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/plaqueprogram.aspx)





## TRY IT OUT

Two activity options for all community members, young and old(er)

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YOUTH

1

### INTERVIEW A LONG-TIME NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENT.

1

Ask them how long they lived there?

2

How has the neighborhood changed over time?

3

What are some positive or challenging elements to share?

2

## CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD WALKING TOUR OR SCAVENGER HUNT.

Map out a path through your neighborhood that hits all your favorite local places. If a newcomer visited your community, what should they make sure to see? Local food spots? A favorite local building? The best gardens or window boxes in the area? A place someone famous once visited?

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Once you have an idea for your route, grab some neighbors (young and old) and take them on a walk! (What places matter to them along the route?) Or keep the route a secret! Hide clues, and take them on a history mystery.

## VISIT SOME OF THE CITY'S ONLINE VAULTS OF HISTORIC IMAGES AND DOCUMENTS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD AND VISUALIZE ITS HISTORY

### **PhillyHistory.com**

PhillyHistory.com catalogues the photographs of the Department of Records. Images can be searched by location and/or keyword.

[phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Home.aspx](http://phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Home.aspx)

### **The Temple Urban Archives**

The Temple Urban Archives contain media collections and oral histories on a variety of topics. Are there any that are related to your neighborhood?

[library.temple.edu/scrc/urban-archives](http://library.temple.edu/scrc/urban-archives)

### **The Free Library of Philadelphia**

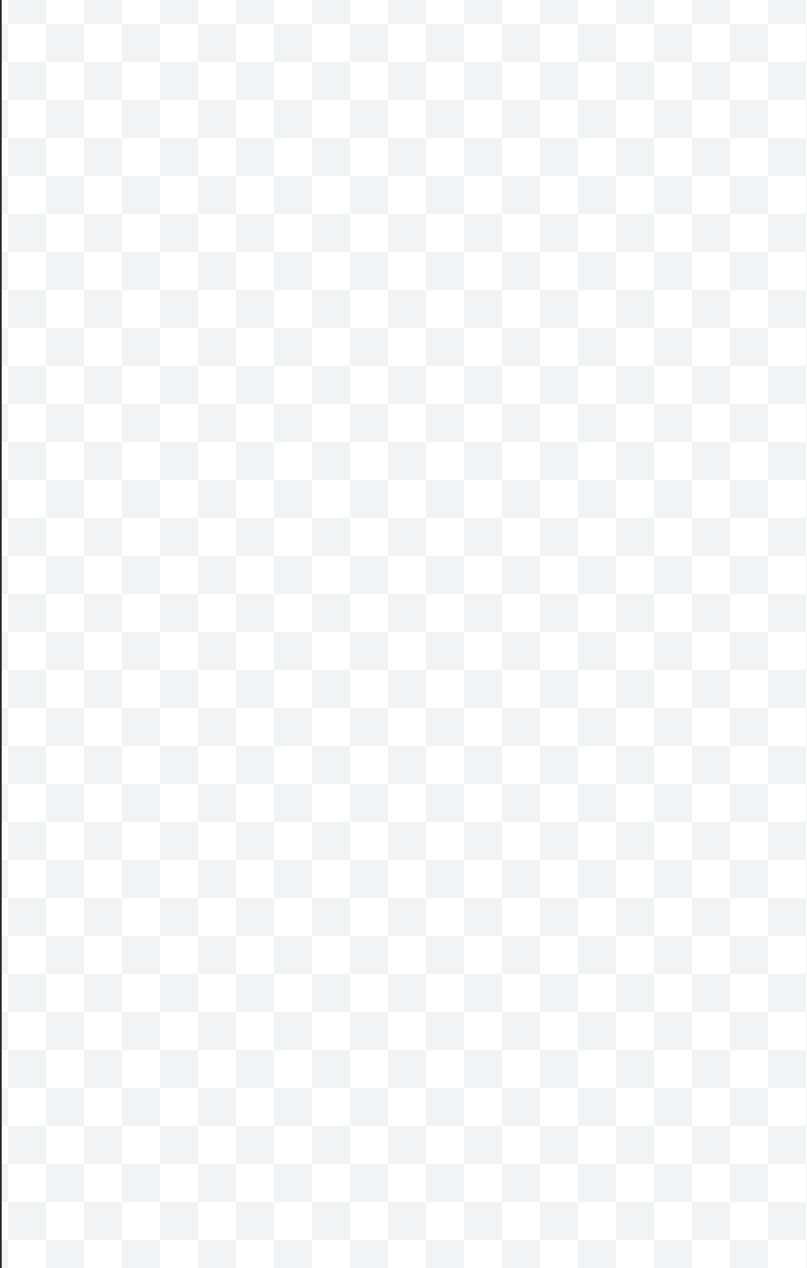
The Free Library of Philadelphia has a collection of historical images of all themes and time periods.

[freelibrary.org/digital/collection/historical-images-of-philadelphia](http://freelibrary.org/digital/collection/historical-images-of-philadelphia)

### **PhilaGeoHistory**

PhilaGeoHistory features thousands of old maps, property atlases, city directories, and other resources. You can browse within resources, or search by address.

[PhilaGeoHistory.org](http://PhilaGeoHistory.org)







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## TAKE ACTION

### Ask the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia to lead a workshop during a community meeting.

Since 2005, the Preservation Alliance's Neighborhood Preservation program has been helping Philadelphia residents and community leaders discover and promote their neighborhood history by identifying landmarks and architectural characteristics that give their neighborhood its own unique sense of place.

#### Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

[preservationalliance.com/explore-philadelphia/philadelphia-neighborhoods](http://preservationalliance.com/explore-philadelphia/philadelphia-neighborhoods)

### Lead a Jane's Walk

Jane's Walks (named for the famous writer, urbanist, and activist Jane Jacobs) are free walking tours held around the world each May. Jane's Walks are volunteer, citizen-led walking tours that encourage people to observe, reflect, share, question, and re-imagine the places in which they live, work, and play. Organize a Jane's Walk in your own neighborhood, and promote it via Jane's Walk Philadelphia.

#### Jane's Walk Philadelphia

[janeswalk.org/united-states/philadelphia-pa](http://janeswalk.org/united-states/philadelphia-pa)

Another option is to lead a walk at any time!

### Nominate a place in your neighborhood for a Pennsylvania Historical Marker.

Have you ever noticed a blue sign with yellow lettering and, in reading it, learned something new about a site? Those markers are part of the Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program, which is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). Read more about the program in the "Ask and Answer" part of this section, then do some research and apply for a marker yourself! (If you're not comfortable preparing the application on your own, you can hire a local historian to write and submit it.)

#### Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

##### Pennsylvania Historical Marker Nominations

[phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Historical-Markers/Pages/Nominate.aspx](http://phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Historical-Markers/Pages/Nominate.aspx)



## Sign up for the class “Building Philadelphia: Architecture, History, and Politics,” hosted by the Center for Architecture and Design.

This 10-part series explores how Philadelphia became the city it is today. It is presented each spring and is led by local architects, urban planners, archaeologists, and historians, who lead classes about the political, economic, and design trends that drove Philadelphia’s development. Dive deep with fellow interested historians, and learn more about how your neighborhood fits into the overall story of Philadelphia’s evolution.

**The Center for Architecture and Design’s Building Philadelphia: Architecture, History, and Politics**  
[philadelphiacfa.org/building-philadelphia-architecture-history-politics](http://philadelphiacfa.org/building-philadelphia-architecture-history-politics)



## Request a Mural

Talk to Mural Arts about creating a mural in your neighborhood to depict your community’s defining characteristics or stories of the past to share.

### Mural Arts

[muralarts.org](http://muralarts.org)

**Hire an artist or videographer to create a collection of neighborhood histories, speaking with residents (long-time and new, young and old!) about their experiences.**

Collections can take the shape of videos, drawings done by adults or kids, or art installations. Funding may be found for such storytelling projects by working with partners like the Knight Foundation and arts collectives like Mural Arts, Amber Arts, Asian Arts Initiative and Green Street Artists Cooperative (GSAC).



## LEARN MORE

### For local historians

Scribe Video Center's Precious Places Community History Project is an oral history project that invites Philadelphians from across neighborhoods to document the buildings, public spaces, parks, landmarks, and other sites that hold important memories for communities. The project also teaches video production, so that the resulting work both depicts and was created by community members.

#### **Scribe Video Center's Precious Places Community History Project**

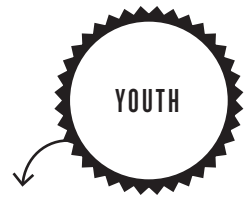
[scribe.org/precious-places-community-history-project-2018](https://scribe.org/precious-places-community-history-project-2018)

### For an example of a public history project

Although it is no longer active, the Philadelphia Public History Truck is a prime example of how to share community-driven hidden histories on a hyper-local basis. The mobile museum—based out of a truck!—traveled from neighborhood to neighborhood, creating exhibitions and collecting oral histories. These oral histories are archived online.

#### **Philadelphia Public History Truck**

[phillyhistorytruck.wordpress.com](http://phillyhistorytruck.wordpress.com)



### For an example of a youth history program

Check out History Hunters Youth Reporter Program, a fully-subsidized field trip program for Philadelphia School District 4th and 5th graders. The program is based at Stenton, with several other historic sites and partners involved. The literacy-based program allows students to “hunt” for history by taking part in a variety of hands-on activities and experiences that bring history to life. As “investigative reporters” on assignment, students gather facts and sketches from their visits for follow-up writing in the classroom.

#### **History Hunters Youth Reporter Program**

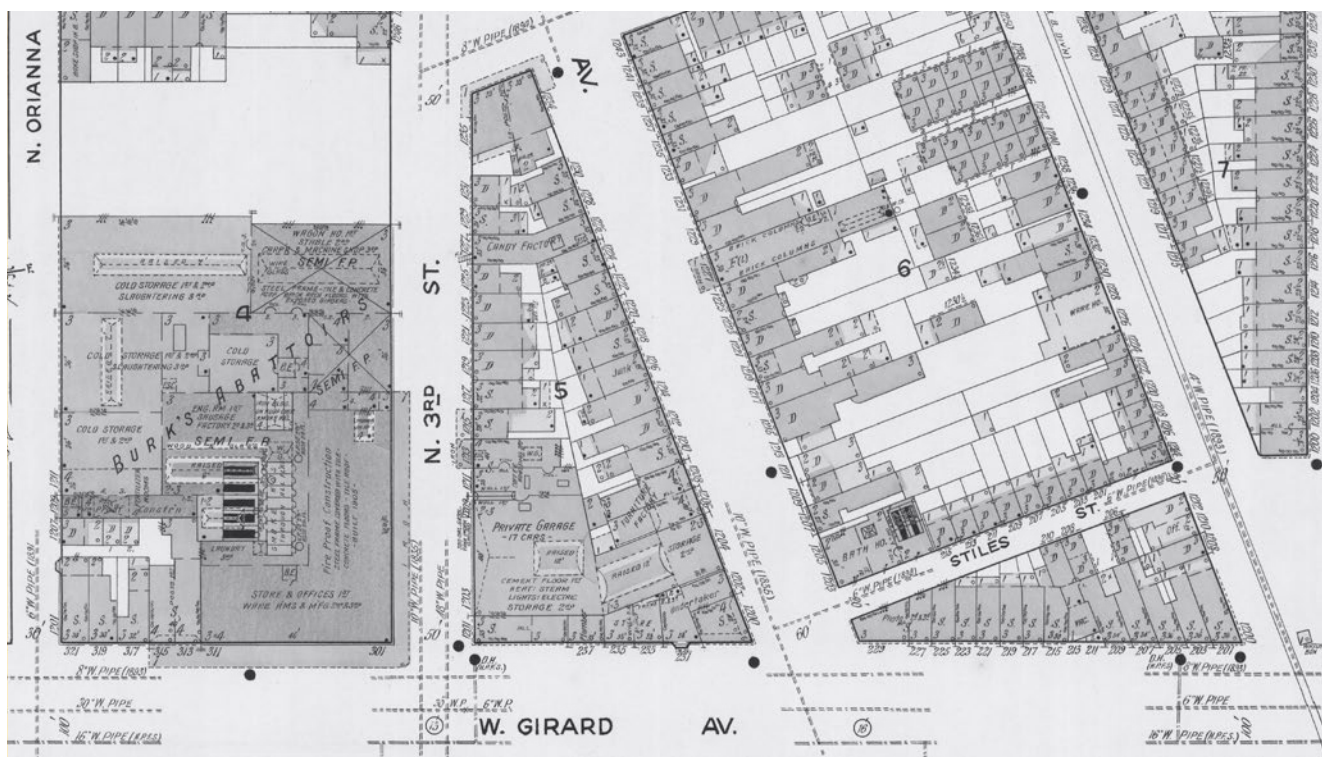
[historyhunters.org](http://historyhunters.org)

### For an example of a neighborhood-based history/resources website

Check out PoweltonVillage.org, which compiles research on the history of the Powelton Village neighborhood, as well as resources for current residents and businesses. If you or a neighbor feel comfortable building a website (there are lots of platforms that keep things simple!), this website could offer a useful model for learning about and sharing about your neighborhood's history.

#### **Powelton Village**

[poweltownvillage.org](http://poweltownvillage.org)



## For submitting a nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

In addition to the information available on the Philadelphia Historical Commission's website, you can learn more by reading the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia's guide to *How to Nominate an Individual Building, Structure, Site, or Object to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places*.

### Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia Guide

[preservationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/](http://preservationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/)

PA\_Nominations\_Online.pdf

## For community organizations

Check out the resources published by the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia.

### How to Look at Your Neighborhood:

#### A Guide for Community Organizations

[preservationalliance.com/files/HowToLook\\_Final2011.pdf](http://preservationalliance.com/files/HowToLook_Final2011.pdf)

## For further research

See the full list of research facilities and resources in the Who's Who, and Who Do I Talk To? section at the back of this toolkit.





## “THE KING’S HIGHWAY”

**F**AR FROM THE USUAL Philadelphia tourist hotspots like the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, the King’s Highway runs through Northeast Philadelphia and is a historic place in its own right. The road is part of a 1,300-mile stretch of highway that extends from Boston, Massachusetts to Charleston, South Carolina, and in Philadelphia, it takes the form of Frankford Avenue. The road has links to centuries of pre-Colonial and Colonial history, and in 2017, documentarian Jason Sherman made a film about the history of the highway.

In making the film and interviewing historians about the significant sites along Frankford Avenue that have been lost, Sherman increasingly came to use the film as a tool for learning and sharing the history of Frankford Avenue’s many neighborhoods. He teamed up with other advocates to host film screenings and tours (both self-guided and by bus), generating broader interest in the surviving history of the thoroughfare. These community leaders have also founded The King’s Highway Trust Foundation, a nonprofit with the mission to educate the public on the history of Northeast Philadelphia, preserve historic buildings, and spread awareness by engaging the community.



If you’re interested in viewing the film or learning more about the project’s advocacy, check out the film’s website.

### **The Kings Highway**

[kingshighwayfilm.com](http://kingshighwayfilm.com)



PENNYPACK PARK

FRANKFORD AVE.  
BRIDGE

KING'S HIGHWAY

FRANKFORD AVE

TORRESDALE AVE

I-95

SECTION FIVE



**I want to**

**CREATE CHANGE AND INFLUENCE POLICY**

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**in my neighborhood.**



# BACKGROUND

This section is for all the people who are passionate about the value of the city’s neighborhood fabric, the importance of maintaining neighborhood character, the significance of keeping commercial corridors and businesses active, and the importance of sharing history, but feel that accomplishing these goals is challenging without broader support across the neighborhood. In Philadelphia, change happens when public support—across a range of citizens—can turn the tide of the status quo. This section of the toolkit includes resources to get even more involved, and information about fellow advocates who may join your cause.

As with all of the contents of this toolkit, this section may change over time as different policies change—in fact, this section of the toolkit may be revised in the future to reflect the policies that you changed. But there is always a starting point, and hopefully this can be yours.





## ASK AND ANSWER

### *How do I get involved in my neighborhood?*

There are so many ways to be involved in the City of Philadelphia. The most direct way is to become involved in the local civic association, also known as neighborhood associations and/or residents' associations. These organizations, which include mostly volunteers and folks that live in the neighborhood, work on an array of programs to support neighborhoods. They often focus on public events, cleanliness and beautification, and public safety. Many of these organizations are also the Registered Community Organization (RCO) for their neighborhood, but not always. Also, nearly every neighborhood has one or more "Friends" groups to support, provide services for, and advocate for neighborhood parks, schools, libraries, and other neighborhood assets.

Many parts of Philadelphia are served by an organization that is part of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)'s Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) program. These organizations, many of which are also community development corporations (CDCs), offer incredible resources for learning about the neighborhood and are great places to start. See more information on the website.

**Department of Housing and Community Development**  
[ohcdphila.org/neighborhood-resources/neighborhood-advisory-committees](http://ohcdphila.org/neighborhood-resources/neighborhood-advisory-committees)

### *I'm already involved – how do I recruit more advocates?*

Finding more allies to support neighborhood issues may be as simple as rallying your neighbors and sharing some of the things you have learned. Whether you are a long-standing or new resident, something as simple as knocking on doors, putting up flyers to raise awareness for an issue, hosting a block party/open house, or starting a Facebook group or NextDoor group can go a long way. Ask around to see if any networks already exist; if they don't, you can start your own. People are busy, but a simple knock and a smile from you can help build connections and trust, which can come in handy when a need arises. Sharing historical images or stories about the neighborhood is a great way to bring people in. For more insight into how to build support in your community, check out the Citizens Toolkit, written by graduates of the Citizens Planning Institute. This guide was created by neighbors, for neighbors, with advice about how to get things done in your own neighborhood.

#### **Citizens Toolkit**

[citizensplanninginstitute.org/citizens-toolkit](http://citizensplanninginstitute.org/citizens-toolkit)





## I want to know more about how to make things change at the policy level. What should I do?

Protecting our neighborhoods can only go so far with the incentives and regulations that currently exist. Philadelphia needs friendlier policies for keeping neighborhoods intact, such as incentives for affordable housing, reuse of older buildings, and small business development.

The best way to make change happen at the policy level is to contact your elected officials. This includes your committee person, ward leader, council person and at-large council members, state representative, state senator, and of course, your US Senator and Representative. Philadelphia includes three state Congressional districts (the 1st, 2nd, and 13th Districts). The Committee of 70 is a great resource in Philadelphia for finding out more about voting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and how to get involved at the policy level.

### **The Committee of 70**

[seventy.org](http://seventy.org)

## How do we connect with younger generations and youth to engage them in the neighborhood's stability?

Young people—from small children to teens to twenty-somethings—care about where they live, too. Empower them to be advocates in your neighborhood by helping them to learn, interpret, and share their own community histories and values. Consider joining or creating a Friends group for your neighborhood school, recreation center, or library to support their youth programming. Volunteer with local after-school programs to encourage neighborhood storytelling and discoveries of community history and architecture. Most importantly in fostering young advocates: let them advocate! Help them learn the tools of public history and community advocacy, and then stand back and let them try those tools out for themselves.





1

## DRAW A MAP OF YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

### TRY IT OUT

Using different colors or labels, include things like:

\_\_\_\_\_

- » Where you live
- » Where you work and/or go to school (if your workplace or school is outside the neighborhood, draw an arrow or some kind of symbol to show which direction you commute)
- » The places that make your neighborhood unique
- » The streets and intersections that are the most pleasant to travel (to shop, to walk, to see, etc.)
- » The streets and intersections that are the most difficult or dangerous to travel (because of safety, speeding, etc.)
- » Your favorite sights to see
- » Your favorite places to spend time
- » The places you miss that are no longer around
- » The places or areas that need some attention

As you finish and take a step back, what patterns emerge in your map? Are your favorite places also in an area that needs attention? Do you have more “places that you miss” than “favorite sights to see”, or vice versa? What does your map tell you about the places you would like to advocate for in your neighborhood? Does it suggest partners you could advocate with?

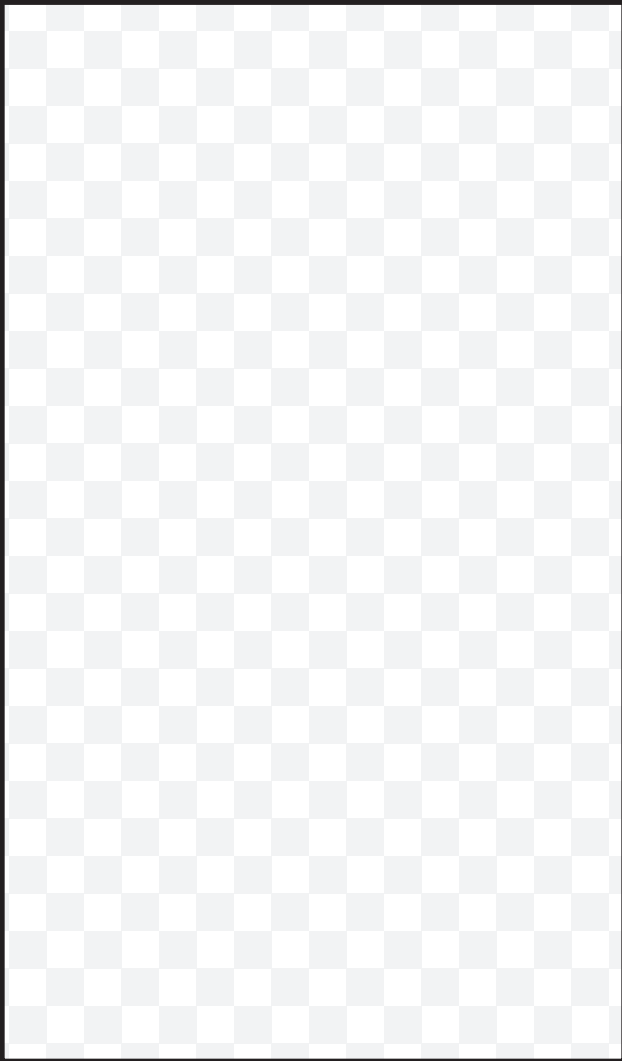


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2

## MAP #2. ENLIST A NEIGHBOR OR FAMILY MEMBER.

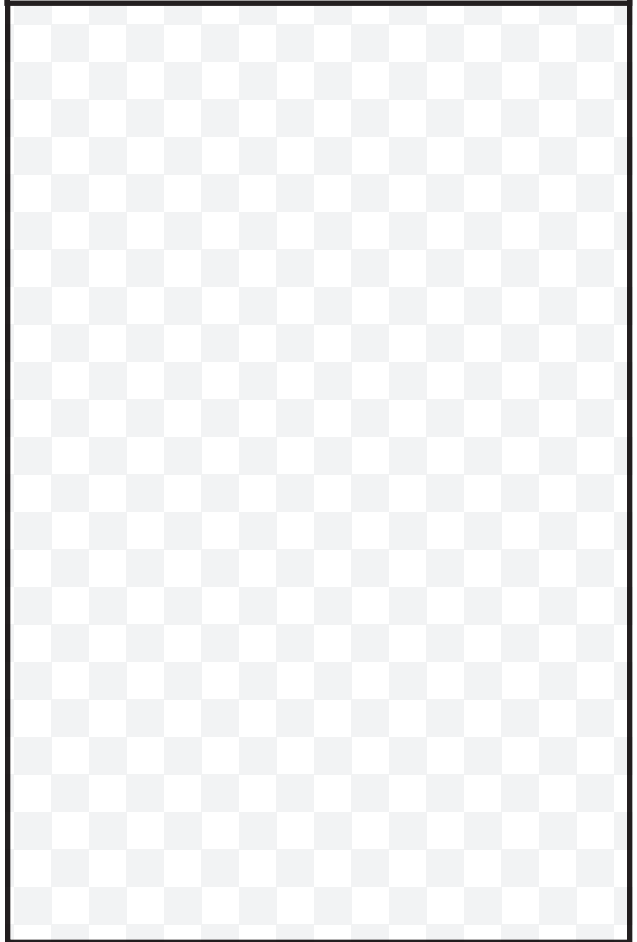
Ask them to draw their own map. See where similarities appear and where they differ. After all, neighborhood perception often can change from person to person.



3

## MAKE A TOP 10 LIST OF YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

List your Top 10 favorite or most valued places in your neighborhood. Why are they important? Ask yourself, who currently works to manage and maintain these places? How are they funded? These questions will help you determine how you can help make sure they are around for the long term.









## TAKE ACTION

### VoTE!

The most important step that you or any other citizen of Philadelphia and the United States can do to influence decision-making is to vote. Local elections are even more important for determining how your neighborhood functions. Pay attention to mid-term and primaries especially. Keep up with local election news by following the Committee of 70.

#### **The Committee of 70**

[www.seventy.org](http://www.seventy.org)

### Get to know your block captain, ward leader, committee persons, and City Council person.

These individuals carry a lot of influence in helping to determine your neighborhood's future. You may find your block captain just by asking your neighbors. Ward Leaders and committee persons are easily found below.

#### **Philadelphia Ward Leaders**

[phillywardleaders.com](http://phillywardleaders.com)

City Council includes members that represent specific districts and members who serve at large. You can find the current roster of city council members below. Find their contact information and write, call, or email

them—whichever you prefer! If you're comfortable speaking in public, you can request to speak for or against a bill at a council meeting by calling the city clerk's office in advance. City Council meetings are also broadcast online and on channel 64.

#### **Philadelphia City Council**

[phlcouncil.com](http://phlcouncil.com)

### Apply to participate in the Citizens Planning Institute (CPI).

This seven-week course (offered twice a year) offers an introduction to city planning, zoning, the development process, and special topics. course is offered by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, with a mission to empower citizens to take a more effective and active role in shaping the future of their neighborhoods and the city. More information about CPI is available below.

#### **Citizens Planning Institute**

[citizensplanninginstitute.org](http://citizensplanninginstitute.org)

### Read the CPI "Citizens Toolkit".

CPI has also developed a guide by neighbors, for neighbors. Read the CPI "Citizens Toolkit" and learn from other neighborhood leaders about how to get things done in your neighborhood!

#### **Citizens Toolkit**

[citizensplanninginstitute.org/citizens-toolkit](http://citizensplanninginstitute.org/citizens-toolkit)

## Attend meetings of your neighborhood's civic association and/or Registered Community Organization (RCO).

Developers are often required to present their proposed projects at public RCO meetings, so these meetings are a key opportunity to voice your opinion on projects that might affect the character of your neighborhood. If you don't know your local RCO, you can find a list and map on the Philadelphia City Planning Commission's website.

**Philadelphia City Planning Commission RCOs**  
[phila.gov/CityPlanning/projectreviews/Pages/RegisteredCommunityOrganizations.aspx](http://phila.gov/CityPlanning/projectreviews/Pages/RegisteredCommunityOrganizations.aspx)

## Join a Friends group. Many neighborhoods have "Friends" groups to support everything from parks, to schools, to libraries.

There is a Friends group for almost every park in the city, and many have cropped up for schools and libraries too. Getting involved with these organizations may seem specific to the place, but advocating for better parks, schools, recreation centers, and libraries will help improve and maintain the neighborhood bit by bit.



## Be a public correspondent for your community.

Attend the public meetings and/or join the listservs of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Stay tuned to any agenda items that may affect your community—and report back! These city agencies play significant roles in how our neighborhoods grow and change over time, so if you are interested in improving and maintaining the character of your own neighborhood, these are important agencies to pay attention to. (See the Learn More section below for some press outlets that report on, and can help explain, the work of these agencies.) The Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) is responsible for properties that are on or nominated to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) creates plans for neighborhoods and sections of the city. The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) hears and decides appeals in zoning matters, considers special exceptions, and grants variances.

## Attend a meeting of the Design Advocacy Group (DAG).

DAG hosts free monthly meetings that are open to the public, featuring presentations, information sharing, and discussion on topics related to planning, architecture, preservation, and the physical development of Philadelphia. You can follow DAG on social media and drop in on any of their monthly gatherings, no advance registration required.

## See if your neighborhood has a local historical society to support or join.

Neighborhoods all over the city feature these organizations, which range from informal networks to official nonprofit groups—they may be useful teammates as you think about improving and maintaining the character of your neighborhood.

## Ask the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia to lead a workshop during a community meeting.

Since 2005, the Preservation Alliance's Neighborhood Preservation program has been helping Philadelphia residents and community leaders discover and promote their neighborhood history by identifying landmarks and architectural characteristics that give their neighborhood its own unique sense of place. The list of neighborhoods can be found below.

### **Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia Neighborhood List**

[preservationalliance.com/explore-philadelphia/philadelphia-neighborhoods](http://preservationalliance.com/explore-philadelphia/philadelphia-neighborhoods)

## Nominate a Place to Save through the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia.

"Places to Save" can become part of the Preservation Alliance's advocacy agenda, but they must be submitted by citizens. Any place that is deserving of attention that you feel is at risk can be nominated below.

### **Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia**

[preservationalliance.com/advocacy-in-action/places-to-save/placestosavenomination](http://preservationalliance.com/advocacy-in-action/places-to-save/placestosavenomination)

## Take a second look at your map from the Try It out activities and check to see whether those places are included on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

The Philadelphia Register of Historic Places is the comprehensive inventory of buildings, structures, sites, objects (e.g. significant public art), interiors, and districts that the Philadelphia Historical Commission has designated as historic. Designation on the Philadelphia Register generally ensures that a building remains standing long into the future. You can look up the places that matter to you on the map via the Philadelphia Historical Commission website.

### **Philadelphia Register of Historic Places**

[phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/default.aspx](http://phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/default.aspx)

If you feel that other properties in your neighborhood deserve designation, consider joining with neighbors to apply for a neighborhood-level designation as a historic district. Find more information about designation (as either an individual property or as a historic district) on pages 12-13.



## LEARN MORE

### For information about current preservation policies and recommendations

The Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation was held from September 2017 to December 2018. The Task Force brought together professionals from a variety of disciplines to create recommendations for new policies to improve how preservation functions in the City. The subcommittees included 1) Outreach and Education; 2) Survey; 3) Incentives; and 4) Regulation. More information and supplementary reports can be found at the website.

Please contact your Council person to advocate for the adoption of policies that promote preservation in Philadelphia!

**Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation**  
[phlpreservation.org](http://phlpreservation.org)

### For an example of a youth history program

Check out History Hunters Youth Reporter Program, a fully-subsidized field trip program for Philadelphia School District 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. The program is based at Stenton, with several other historic sites and partners involved. The literacy-based program allows students to "hunt" for history by taking part in a variety of hands-on activities and experiences that

bring history to life. As "investigative reporters" on assignment, students gather facts and sketches from their visits for follow-up writing in the classroom.

**History Hunters Youth Reporter Program**  
[historyhunters.org](http://historyhunters.org)

### For anyone interested in keeping up with planning and development news in Philadelphia

Follow PlanPhilly, Hidden City, and Curbed Philly, three of the best websites to keep up with planning, zoning, development, design, and preservation news in Philadelphia. The reporters for these websites keep up with all the complicated public policies and important community-based issues, and they are good at explaining these stories to the general public.

**PlanPhilly (a project of WHYY)**  
[planphilly.com](http://planphilly.com)

**Hidden City**  
[HiddenCityPhila.org](http://HiddenCityPhila.org)

**Curbed Philly**  
[philly.curbed.com](http://philly.curbed.com)

### For community advocates to learn from each other

Read the Preservation Pennsylvania publication *How to Protect and Preserve the Historic Places that Matter to You*. This will guide you through the steps and all the potential hurdles you need to know before embarking on a specific project.

**Preservation Pennsylvania Guide**  
[preservationpa.org/page.asp?id=54](http://preservationpa.org/page.asp?id=54)



## PHILLY LOVE NOTES/HEARTBOMBING

**P**hiladelphians tend to wear their hearts on their sleeves—have you seen our sports fanbases?—but we aren’t always as vocal in our love for the city itself. Philly Love Notes and the Young Friends of the Preservation Alliance’s Heartbombing Campaigns offer two examples of ways to express your love for places that matter...and encourage others to love them, too.

Philly Love Notes began as a website in 2012. Created by Emma Fried-Cassorla, the blog collected submissions of love notes—not to a person, but to a million little places. The website published over 300 tributes to Philadelphia submitted from all over the city, highlighting the quirks that make each neighborhood special: favorite views of the skyline, favorite rowhouse combinations, favorite carved doorways, and more. In 2015, Fried-Cassorla retooled the project—she now publishes a periodic email that highlights reasons #WhyILovePhilly—but her website is still a hopeful and helpful reminder of the places that are important to us, and how we can show our love for them. You can find all of the love notes at [www.phillylovenotes.com](http://www.phillylovenotes.com).

Although the Young Friends of the Preservation Alliance (YFPA) didn’t invent the idea of

heartbombing campaigns (they actually started in Pittsburgh), the group has made a Valentine tradition out of the initiative for the past several years. Each February, YFPA decides on a local building or street that needs some love, and volunteers gather to make a flurry of old-fashioned valentines for an old place. They hang them on the local landmark and organize a social media campaign to show the love and build interest in the future of that historic building. Not every heartbombed building has been saved—Jewelers’ Row, for example, was heartbombed in 2017 and still sits in limbo, facing partial demolition. But the annual campaign can engage more public interest in a project, and preservation wins are worth celebrating. YFPA heartbombed the Hale Building (13th Street/Juniper Street) in 2015, just a few weeks before a developer announced plans to bring the building back to life, and in 2018, YFPA returned to share the love again, in advance of the building’s upcoming ribbon-cutting. Read more about organizing your own heartbombing campaign at <https://savingplaces.org/stories/preservation-tips-tools-how-to-host-a-successful-heart-bomb-event>.





DOX THRASH  
HOUSE

W.G. SCHWEIKER  
BUILDING

GEN. JOHN F.  
REYNOLDS SCHOOL

ROBERTS VAUX  
JUNIOR HIGH  
SCHOOL





## STEERING CLEAR OF DEMOLITION

**T**he threat of demolition is not always the final death knell for old buildings. Many times, community advocates and building owners have changed the outcome of a place that mattered in their community, even when it seemed like demolition was inevitable. All of these sites were threatened at some point with long-term vacancy and/or imminent demolition. What may have seemed inevitable was ultimately avoided, though, thanks to vocal community advocates, active community organizations, proactive city officials, sympathetic property owners, or all of the above.

### Ridge Avenue Demolition Moratorium

Roxborough - Ridge Avenue, between Wissahickon Creek and Northwestern Avenue

Concerned about the pace of demolition along their primary commercial corridor, residents in Roxborough pushed their councilperson, Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr., to introduce a bill for a one-year demolition moratorium for Ridge Avenue. The bill, which went into effect in 2018, puts a temporary halt to demolition for a five-mile stretch of the avenue, buying time for the identification and potential designation of significant properties that may be threatened.

### Nugent Home for Baptists

Germantown - 221 W. Johnson Street

After several starts and stops, and more than a decade of vacancy, this large chateau-like building (and its neighbor) was converted to affordable senior housing. A passionate developer spearheaded the project with broad support from neighbors. The project was financed in part with historic rehabilitation tax credits and low-income housing tax credits.

### Lancaster Mews

Powelton Village - 3600-3630 Lancaster Avenue

Located in the heart of Powelton Village, this intact row of 19th century homes and storefronts faced imminent demolition for new construction. The local civic association (Powelton Village Civic Association) and Philadelphia Historical Commission staff moved quickly to designate the block as a historic district, saving the main structures of the row. The developer ultimately revised its plans to build at the rear of the properties, sacrificing some of the rear ends of the buildings but retaining the primary structures that give Lancaster Avenue its character.

## Lower Dublin Academy

Holmesburg - 3322 Willits Road

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The school dates back to 1808 and is located on land granted to Thomas Holme by William Penn. In 2006, an arson fire gutted the building and left it vacant and threatened with demolition. With enthusiastic community activism, though, the property was eventually purchased by the Albanian American Social-Cultural Organization, which plans to restore the site as an educational and cultural center.

## Fifth Reformed Dutch Church

Fishtown - 2345 E. Susquehanna Avenue

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The building that once housed the Fifth Reformed Dutch Church is located amid the booming real estate market of Fishtown, where several older houses of worship have faced the wrecking ball in recent years. This church met a better fate, though, when a new owner stepped in at the last minute to purchase the building and convert it to a live/work space. The project depended on a zoning variance for the change in use, which meant that the local registered community organization (RCO) needed to sign off. When the owner demonstrated a willingness to address the RCO's concerns, the committee voted in support of the project.

## Diamond Street Historic District

North Philadelphia - Diamond Street from Broad Street to Van Pelt Street

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Diamond Street is one of the most intact "grand avenues" of Victorian rowhouses, located in North Philadelphia. The district was designated in 1986, thanks in part to the advocacy of a local community organization (Advocate Community Development Corporation). With the rise in student housing and new construction around Temple University, the historic district designation staves off the loss of character in the neighborhood. Now, many of the Victorian homes have been rehabilitated and converted to apartments.

## Chinese Cultural and Community Center

Chinatown - 125 N. 10th Street

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When this building in the heart of Chinatown sat vacant for several years, neighbors worried that a local landmark would deteriorate past the point of saving. But advocates from the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) enlisted a sympathetic developer to become a state-appointed conservator of the building using Pennsylvania's Act 135, the Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act. With court supervision, the property was rehabilitated and listed for sale, and in May 2018 it was purchased by a new owner, bringing it back to life in Chinatown.

W H O ' S   W H O

**I want to**

**KNOW WHO'S WHO**

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**(AND WHO DO I TALK TO?)**

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**in my neighborhood.**

If you’re looking for someone to talk to about the preservation of your neighborhood, check out the people and resources below. This list is not comprehensive, and inclusion here does not mean endorsement. Additional resources may be listed below.

**Preservation in Philadelphia**

[PHLpreservation.org](http://PHLpreservation.org)

**City Representatives**

Find contact information for your district contact person and the council members at-large below.

[phlcouncil.com](http://phlcouncil.com)

**City agencies and departments involved in these issues**

**Philadelphia Historical Commission**

Administers the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and other associated programs, and offers technical assistance to owners of property on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Philadelphia Historical Commission includes mayor-appointed commission members and civil service staff employees. The Commission’s sub-committees are comprised of volunteers from various professions within the preservation field, including historians, lawyers, etc.

[phila.gov/historical/pages/default.aspx](http://phila.gov/historical/pages/default.aspx)

**Philadelphia City Planning Commission**

Oversees the Philadelphia2035 planning process, including the development of district plans. The Citizens Planning Institute is housed within the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

[phila.gov/cityplanning/pages/default.aspx](http://phila.gov/cityplanning/pages/default.aspx)

**Philadelphia Zoning Board of Adjustment**

Hears and decides appeals in zoning matters, including applications for variances to deviate from the official zoning code. Developers and property owners applying for a zoning variance must meet with Registered Community Organizations (RCOs) or City Council representatives to review their proposed project.

[phila.gov/li/Pages/Appeals.aspx](http://phila.gov/li/Pages/Appeals.aspx)

**Philadelphia Department of Commerce**

Administers the Storefront Improvement Program and various commercial corridor programs.

[phila.gov/commerce/pages/default.aspx](http://phila.gov/commerce/pages/default.aspx)

**The City of Philadelphia Business Services**

A useful clearinghouse of all the resources that can help businesses, big and small, set up shop in Philadelphia. The website breaks down all of the steps to start and manage a business, and also offers place-specific guidelines about zoning, incentives, and agencies like the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

[business.phila.gov](http://business.phila.gov)

Who's Who							



### **Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia**

Supports programs and policies for businesses of all sizes. The Chamber includes programs for small businesses and also works toward policies that support small business development, including wage and business tax policies, permitting, and work with commercial corridors.

[chamberphl.com](http://chamberphl.com)

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### **African American Chamber of Commerce**

Mirrors much of the work of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia, but with a focus on supporting the economic empowerment and growth of African-American businesses in the region. They offer a large selection of programs, speaker series and resources.

[aachamber.com](http://aachamber.com)

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### **Philadelphia Art Commission**

A design review board for architecture and public art that uses City funds or is located on publicly-owned land (for example, streets). The Art Commission also reviews signage on private property in certain high-traffic areas, including the Convention Center, Center City, Parkway, Vine Street, Washington Square, Independence Hall, and Rittenhouse Square.

[phila.gov/artcommission/pages/default.aspx](http://phila.gov/artcommission/pages/default.aspx)

## **State and Federal agencies involved in these issues**

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### **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission**

The official history agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. PHMC also functions as the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (each state has a SHPO). In that role, PHMC oversees various preservation programs, including grant and tax credit programs, the historical marker program, environmental review and disaster planning, and other community preservation initiatives. One of PHMC's largest responsibilities is its review and advisory role for nominations submitted to the National Register of Historic Places for sites located within Pennsylvania, and a similar role in the review of Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit projects. PHMC also administers the State Historic Preservation Incentive Tax Credit Program, together with the Department of Community and Economic Development.

[phmc.pa.gov](http://phmc.pa.gov)

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### **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development**

A state agency with the mission to enhance investment opportunities for businesses and attract new businesses to Pennsylvania. DCED administers the State Historic Preservation Incentive Tax Credit Program with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

[dced.pa.gov/programs/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc](http://dced.pa.gov/programs/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc)

**Pennsylvania Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**

Provides free consulting and low-cost training to help current and future small business owners successfully operate. The SBDC offers an array of seminars through their local partners. In Philadelphia, SBDC works with the Wharton Small Business Development Center (WSBDC) at Penn and the Temple Small Business Development Center, with have both been active since the early 1980s. Their course offerings and trainings are found on their websites.

[whartonsbdc.wharton.upenn.edu](http://whartonsbdc.wharton.upenn.edu)

[fox.temple.edu/institutes-and-centers/small-business-development-center](http://fox.temple.edu/institutes-and-centers/small-business-development-center)

**National Park Service**

Administers the National Register of Historic Places and the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit, and offers free technical advice through its Preservation Briefs.

[nps.gov/nr](http://nps.gov/nr)

[nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm](http://nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm)

[nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm](http://nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm)

**Local organizations working on these issues**

**Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia**

The Philadelphia region’s nonprofit preservation leader, dedicated to the protection and appropriate development of Greater Philadelphia’s historic resources, including buildings, communities, and landscapes.

[preservationalliance.com](http://preservationalliance.com)

**Young Friends of the Preservation Alliance**

A program of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, YFPA serves as a forum for young professionals with a passion for historic preservation.

[preservationalliance.com/what-we-do/yfpa](http://preservationalliance.com/what-we-do/yfpa)

**Partners for Sacred Places**

The only national, non-sectarian, nonprofit organization focused on building the capacity of congregations of historic sacred places. Partners for Sacred Places offers programs nationwide, but is based in Philadelphia.

[sacredplaces.org](http://sacredplaces.org)

**Philadelphia Archaeological Forum**

A nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of archaeological resources in the City of Philadelphia.

[phillyarchaeology.net](http://phillyarchaeology.net)

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**Local historical societies, including  
(but not limited to):**

**Chestnut Hill Conservancy**

[chconservancy.org/about](http://chconservancy.org/about)

**East Falls Historical Society**

[eastfallshistoricalsociety.com](http://eastfallshistoricalsociety.com)

**Historical Society of Frankford**

[frankfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://frankfordhistoricalsociety.org)

**Germantown Historical Society**

[germantownhistory.org](http://germantownhistory.org)

**University City Historical Society**

[uchhs.net](http://uchhs.net)

**Historical Society of Tacony**

[historictacony.org](http://historictacony.org)

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**Preservation Pennsylvania**

A statewide membership organization that assists Pennsylvania communities and groups to protect and utilize the historic resources they want to preserve. It also monitors state legislative activity, publishes a newsletter, and administers a grant program for Pennsylvania preservation projects.

[preservationpa.org](http://preservationpa.org)

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**National Trust for Historic Preservation**

A privately funded nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC, with a national emphasis on research and advocacy for historic preservation.

[savingplaces.org](http://savingplaces.org)

**Pennsylvania Downtown Center**

The only statewide nonprofit dedicated solely to the revitalization of the Commonwealth's core communities. PDC provides outreach, technical assistance, and educational services.

[padowntown.org](http://padowntown.org)

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**Community Design Collaborative**

The Community Design Collaborative provides pro bono preliminary design services to nonprofit organizations in greater Philadelphia. Several CDC projects have focused on older buildings and properties.

[cdesignnc.org](http://cdesignnc.org)

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**Free Library of Philadelphia**

Offers online resources for small businesses. They also offer the Business Resources and Innovation Center with one-on-one consulting and special resources.

[freelibrary.org/programs](http://freelibrary.org/programs)

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**Design Advocacy Group**

A forum to provide an independent and informed public voice for design quality in the architecture and physical planning of the Philadelphia region.

[designadvocacy.org](http://designadvocacy.org)



### **Curbed Philly**

The local outlet of the national news outfit Curbed, covering breaking news and place-based stories about the built environment in Philadelphia.

[philly.curbed.com](http://philly.curbed.com)

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### **UrbanPHL Facebook group**

An informal forum to keep up with news and share opinions about planning, development, and urban design in Philadelphia.

[facebook.com/groups/greaterphiladelphiaplanners](https://facebook.com/groups/greaterphiladelphiaplanners)

## **For research online**

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### **Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network**

A collection of geographic resources from more than a dozen local repositories. Historic maps and atlases are available for viewing alone or in comparison to current maps in an interactive maps viewer.

[PhilaGeoHistory.org](http://PhilaGeoHistory.org)

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### **Philadelphia Architects and Buildings**

An image-rich portal to historical and architectural information for over 250,000 structures, as well as biographies and references to more than 20,000 architects, buildings, contractors, and firms.

[PhiladelphiaBuildings.org](http://PhiladelphiaBuildings.org)

### **PhillyHistory.org**

The City of Philadelphia's photo archive, which contains over 2 million photo records that date from the late 1800s. The site also includes a historic street index, chronicling changes in street names over time, and articles on various topics related to historic sites, neighborhoods, urban planning, events, and people in Philadelphia history.

[PhillyHistory.org](http://PhillyHistory.org)

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### **Temple Special Collections Research Center**

The principal repository for and steward of Temple Libraries' rare books, manuscripts, archives, and University records. Temple's Digital Collections site offers free worldwide access to the unique primary historical and cultural resources held by the Temple University Libraries, as well as to selected scholarly works and other publications produced at Temple.

[library.temple.edu/scrc](http://library.temple.edu/scrc)

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### **University of Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Theses**

A collection of theses from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate Program in Historic Preservation.

[repository.upenn.edu/hp\\_theses](http://repository.upenn.edu/hp_theses)

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### **Workshop of the World**

A collection of industrial, manufacturing, process, architectural, and businesses histories for Philadelphia since 1683.

[workshopoftheworld.com](http://workshopoftheworld.com)



**Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia Publications/Resources**

PAGP includes several surveys, inventories, and report libraries on its website, including resources specific to African American heritage and a Midcentury Modern Initiative.

[preservationalliance.com/planning-research-2](http://preservationalliance.com/planning-research-2)

[preservationalliance.com/preservation-alliance-publications](http://preservationalliance.com/preservation-alliance-publications)

**Pennsylvania’s Cultural Resources Geographic Information System (CRGIS)**

A map-based inventory of the historic and archaeological sites and surveys stored in the files of the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO). The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) has been collecting information concerning archaeological sites and historic resources for nearly a century.

[dot7.state.pa.us/crgis](http://dot7.state.pa.us/crgis)

**National Archives**

Features a number of databases, online guides, and publications that can help in researching ancestry, military, federal, foreign policy, maritime, aviation, science and technology, and other records.

[archives.gov/research/start/online-tools.html](http://archives.gov/research/start/online-tools.html)

[loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh](http://loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh)

**Catalogued by the Library of Congress and searchable at [loc.gov/pictures/item/2009632512](http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2009632512)**

» **Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)**

Established in 1933 during the Great Depression, HABS is an active collection of photographs, measured drawings, and written histories of structures and sites around the United States. Many buildings and sites in Philadelphia have been documented as part of this program in the decades since HABS was created.

» **Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)**

A partner program of HABS, the HAER program was established in 1969 to document historic mechanical and engineering artifacts.

» **Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS)**

Created in 2000 to document historic American landscapes.

**Research Facilities**

**Athenaeum of Philadelphia**

A special collections library and museum founded in 1814 to collect materials “connected with the history and antiquities of America, and the useful arts, and generally to disseminate useful knowledge” for public benefit. The Athenaeum’s collections include architecture and interior design history, particularly for the period 1800 to 1945.

[philaathenaeum.org](http://philaathenaeum.org)

### **Philadelphia Historical Commission**

The Commission maintains hundreds of files on historic buildings, sites, and objects in Philadelphia, including properties that are listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and others that may be eligible. Contents of the files may vary in thoroughness.

[phila.gov/historical/pages/default.aspx](http://phila.gov/historical/pages/default.aspx)

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### **Historical Society of Pennsylvania**

One of the oldest historical societies in the United States, with a collection of 600,000 printed items and more than 21 million manuscript and graphic items.

[hsp.org](http://hsp.org)

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### **Library Company of Philadelphia**

A rare book and research library with collections documenting the history and background of American culture from the Colonial period to the Civil War.

[librarycompany.org](http://librarycompany.org)

### **Free Library of Philadelphia**

Includes an extensive collection of materials that can be used to research the history of buildings in Philadelphia. A guide to their collections and other resources in Philadelphia is available below.

[freelibrary.org](http://freelibrary.org)

[freelibrary.org/faq/guides/HouseHistory.pdf](http://freelibrary.org/faq/guides/HouseHistory.pdf)

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### **University of Pennsylvania's Architectural Archives**

Preserves the works of more than 400 designers from the 17th century to the present.

[design.upenn.edu/architectural-archives/about](http://design.upenn.edu/architectural-archives/about)



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## GLOSSARY

This glossary is adapted from the glossary developed by the Mayor’s Task Force on Historic Preservation and available at [PHLpreservation.org](http://PHLpreservation.org).

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### A

#### **Adaptive Reuse**

Process of adapting a building or site for a new purpose other than its original use.

#### **Addition**

New construction added to an existing building or structure.

#### **Alter or Alteration**

A change in the appearance of a building, structure, site or object which is not otherwise covered by the definition of demolition, or any other change for which a permit is required under the Philadelphia Code of General Ordinances.

#### **Appropriate**

Especially suitable or compatible.

#### **Archaeological Site**

Property containing archeological deposits or features, usually with site boundaries defined by the character and location of said deposits or features.

#### **Architectural Features**

Features contributing to the general arrangement of the exterior of a structure, including but not limited to, the surface texture, building materials, roof shape, eaves, awnings, arcades, pilasters, cornices, wall offsets, and other building articulations.

#### **Architecturally and/or Historically Significant Building**

Shall mean, in part, a Cultural Resource.

### B

#### **Boundaries**

Lines delineating a geographical extent or area.

#### **Building**

A structure, its site, and appurtenances created to shelter any form of human activity, including a public interior portion of a building; a structure having a roof.

### C

#### **Character-Defining Features**

Elements of a historic property, including the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment.

#### **Compatible**

In harmony with location, context, setting, and historic character.

#### **Contemporary**

Reflecting characteristics of the current period. Contemporary denotes characteristics which illustrate that a building, structure, or detail was constructed in the present or recent past rather than being imitative or reflective of a historic design.

#### **Contributing Building, Structure, Site, or Object**

A building, structure, site, or object within a historic district that reflects the historical or architectural character of the district, as defined in the Historical Commission’s designation. These resources are of the highest importance in maintaining the character of the historic district.

#### **Conservation Easement**

Also called a preservation easement, a conservation easement is a legal agreement designed to protect a significant historic, archaeological, or cultural resource through a “less than fee” interest in real property acquired through donation or purchase and carried as a deed restriction on the property. In the case of a façade easement, the historic property owner is assured that the building’s façade will be maintained, protected and preserved forever.

**Construct or Construction**

The erection of a new building, structure, or object upon an undeveloped site.

**Cultural Landscape**

A cultural landscape is a geographic area that historically has been used by people, and is shaped or modified by human activity, occupation or intervention or possesses significant value in the belief system of a culture or society.

**Cultural Resource**

Includes, but is not limited to, any building, area, place, record or manuscript, site, structure, street furniture, monuments, object, district, or landscape evaluated as historically or archaeologically significant, or is significant in architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the nation.

**D**

**Demolition or demolish**

The razing or destruction, whether entirely or in significant part, of a building, structure, site, or object. Demolition includes the removal of a building, structure, site, or object from its site, or object from its site or the removal or destruction of the façade or surface.

**Design**

Features including mass, height, appearance, volume, and the texture, color, nature, and composition of materials.

**Design Guidelines**

Design Guidelines detail the character defining features that are unique to a particular landmark or historic district. Design Guidelines are used to evaluate the appropriateness of projects that may result in alteration, construction, relocation or new construction of a landmark or historic district.

**Designated Property or District**

An individual building, structure, site, object, or district, which has been designated as having historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or other significance by a local, state, or federal government.

**Designation**

The process by which an individual building, structure, site, object, or district is recognized as having historical significance and given formal status under law recognizing that value

**Development**

The division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels, the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alterations, relocation or enlargement of any building or other structure, and any use or change in the use of any building or other structure, or land or extension of use of land, for which permission may be required.

**District**

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.

**E**

**Exterior Architectural Appearance**

The architectural character and general composition of the exterior of a structure visible from a public street or way, including but not limited to the kind, color and texture of the building material and the type, including, but not limited to, windows, doors, light fixtures, trim and signs.

**F**

**Façade**

The exterior or face of a building. The principal or primary façade faces onto a street or open space.

**Fenestration**

The arrangement of windows on a building.

**Fixture**

An article which has been so annexed to and/or affixed to a public interior portion of a building or structure that it



is regarded as a part of the public interior portion of the building or structure. An article is deemed to be annexed to and affixed to a public interior portion of a building or structure when it is attached to it by roots, embedded in it, permanently resting upon it, or permanently attached to what is thus permanent, by means including but not limited to cement, plaster, nails, bolts, or screws.

### **Formally Determined Eligible for Listing**

An action through which the eligibility of a property for listing is decided but the property is not actually listed. Nominating authorities and federal agency officials commonly request determinations of eligibility for federal planning purposes.

## **H**

### **Hearing**

A formal public meeting of the Commission, pursuant to quorum, where the Commission takes an action affecting the rights of a property owner as authorized by Section 14-2007 of the Philadelphia Code. Hearings shall be held on the proposed designation of buildings, structures, sites, objects or districts and on applications for permits to alter or demolish. The formal submission of reports, testimony, and recommendations shall occur at these hearings. Hearings shall be publicized and open to the public as established by law.

### **Historic Building**

A building or complex of buildings and site, or the public interior portion of a building, which is designated pursuant to a Designation of a Historic Structure or District or listed by the Historical Commission under the prior Zoning Code or the prior historic buildings ordinance approved December 7, 1955.

### **Historic Context**

A unit created for planning purposes that groups information about historic properties based on a shared theme, specific time period, and geographical area. .

### **Historic District, Object, Site, or Structure**

A district, object, site, or structure, or a public interior portion of a structure, which is designated by the Historical

Commission pursuant to a Designation of a Historic Structure or District or designated under the prior Zoning Code.

### **Historic Property**

A district, site, building, structure or object significant in American history, architecture, engineering, archeology or culture at the national, State, or local level.

### **Historic Fabric**

For a historic building, it is the particular materials, ornamentation and architectural features that together define the historic character of the building. For a historic district, it is all sites, building, structures, historic landscape features, objects, infrastructure improvements and related design components that together define the historic character of the district.

### **Historic Integrity**

The ability of a property to convey its significance; the retention of sufficient aspects of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, or association for a property to convey its historic significance. Integrity is the authenticity of physical characteristics from which resources obtain their significance.

### **Historic Preservation**

According to the National Historic Preservation Act, includes identification, evaluation, recordation, documentation, curation, acquisition, protection, management, rehabilitation, restoration, stabilization, maintenance, research, interpretation, conservation, and education and training regarding the foregoing activities or a combination of the foregoing activities.

### **Historical Significance**

Determines why, where, and when a property is important. Historic significance is the importance of a property with regard to history, architecture, engineering, or the culture of a state, community, or nation. The key to determining whether the characteristics or associations of a property are significant is to consider the property within its historic context. Properties can be significant for their association or linkage to events or persons important in the past, as representatives of manmade expression of culture (design/construction) or

technology, or for their ability to yield important information about history or prehistory.

**Historic Tax Credit**

A provision under tax law which allows the amount of money invested in capital rehabilitation to be deducted from personal income taxes owed, specifically the provisions for certified National Register structures. The federal program is the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program and the state program is the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program.

**Historical Commission**

The Philadelphia Historical Commission.

I

**Interior Architectural Design**

The architectural character and general composition of the interior of a structure, including but not limited to room design and configuration, material and the type, pattern and character of all architectural details and elements, including but not limited to staircases, floors, hardware, moldings, trim, plaster work, light fixtures and wall coverings.

**Integrity**

See Historic Integrity.

**Inventory**

A list of historic properties determined to meet specified criteria of significance.

L

**Listing**

The formal entry of a property in the local, state, or National Register of Historic Places; also referred to as designation, certification, or registration.

M

**Maintain**

To keep in an existing state of preservation or repair.

**Mortar**

A substance used to bind stone, brick, and other masonry units together. It is applied as a paste and hardens as it dries (cures). Lime was the primary binder in older mortars while Portland cement has been a common binder since the early 20th century. Historic buildings in Philadelphia usually require a repointing mortar that contains both lime and Portland cement.

**Mothball (Stabilization)**

Temporarily closing or stabilizing a building to protect it from the weather as well as to secure it from vandalism; the act or process of applying measures essential to the maintenance of a deteriorated building as it exists at present, establishing structural stability and a weather-resistant enclosure.

**Mural**

A painting, picture or decoration applied, executed on or affixed to a wall.

N

**National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)**

(42 United States Code 4321- 4347). NEPA established a review and assessment process for federally funded or license projects with the potential to render adverse environmental impacts, including historic properties.

**National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470-470t), as amended. Established the National Register of Historic Places program and extended national historic preservation programs to properties of state and local significance.

**National Register of Historic Places**

The official inventory of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architectural, archeology and culture, maintained by the Secretary of Interior under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (amended) (16 U.S.C. 470-470+, 36. C.F.R. Sections 60, 63).

## **National Register Criteria**

The federally established standards for evaluating the eligibility of properties for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Nomination**

Official recommendation for listing a property on the local, state, or National Register of Historic Places.

### **Nomination Form**

A standard document used to nominate a building, structure, site, or object.

### **Non-Contributing Building, Structure, Site, or Object**

A building, structure, site, or object within a district that does not reflect the historical or architectural character of the district as defined in the designation.

## **O**

### **Obscured**

Covered, concealed, or hidden from view.

## **P**

### **Period of Significance**

The length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, or person, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for National Register listing. Period of significance usually begins with a date when significant activities or events began giving the property its historic significance; this is often a date of construction. For prehistoric properties, the period of significance is the broad span of time about which the site or district is likely to provide information; it is often the period associated with a particular cultural group.

### **Portland cement**

A strong, inflexible hydraulic cement used to bind mortar. Mortar or patching materials with a high Portland cement content should not be used on pre-1920 buildings. The Portland cement is harder than the masonry, thereby causing serious damage over annual freeze-thaw cycles.

## **Preservation**

The act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally relies upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

### **Preservation Planning**

A series of activities through which goals, priorities and strategies for identification, evaluation, registration and protection of historic properties are developed, set forth and carried out.

### **Property Type**

A grouping of individual properties based on a set of shared physical or associative characteristics.

## **R**

### **Reconstruction**

The act or process of reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished building, structure, or object, or any part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period of time.

### **Refurbish**

To renovate, or make clean, fresh, or functional again through a process of major maintenance or minor repair.

### **Registration**

See Listing.

### **Rehabilitation**

The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration that makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural value.

**Remodel**

to change a building without regard to its distinctive features or style. Often involves changing the appearance of a structure by removing or covering original details and substituting new materials and forms.

**Renovate**

To repair a structure and make it usable again, without attempting to restore its historic appearance or duplicate original construction methods or material.

**Repair**

Acts of ordinary maintenance that do not include a change in the design, material, form, or outer appearance of a resource, such as repainting. This includes methods of stabilizing and preventing further decay and may incorporate replacement in kind or refurbishment of materials on a building or structure.

**Replication**

Constructing a building so that it is an exact replica or imitation of an historic architectural style or period.

**Repointing**

Repair or fill in the mortar joints of masonry construction. Repointing focuses on the external part of mortar joints.

**Residential Building**

A building used for household living.

**Restoration**

The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work. It is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other coderequired work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

**Retain**

To keep secure and intact. In the guidelines, “retain” and “maintain” describe the act of keeping an element, detail, or structure and continuing the same level of repair to aid in the preservation of elements, sites and structures.

**Rhythm**

Regular occurrence of elements or features such as spacing between buildings.

**S**

**Scale**

Proportional elements that demonstrate the size, materials, and style of buildings.

**Significance**

See Historical Significance.

**Significant Building, Structure, Site, or Object**

A building, structure, site, or object within a district that warrants individual listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places under the criteria established in Section 14-2007(5)(a)-(j) of the Philadelphia Code.

**Site**

The location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure—whether standing or vanished—where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure. Examples include a battlefield, campsite, designed landscape, shipwreck, ruins of a building or structure, natural feature, trail, rock carvings, or ceremonial site.

**Stabilization**

Is defined as the act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a building or structure, and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site. It may include initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials. Also see Mothball.

**Street**

A strip of land, including the right-of-way, confirmed upon the City Plan, intended for use as a means of vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic, but not including limited access highways.

**Streetscape**

The distinguishing character of a particular street as created by its width, degree of curvature, paving materials, design of the street furniture, and forms of surrounding buildings.

**Structure**

A work made up of interdependent and interrelated parts in a definite pattern of organization constructed by man and affixed to real property, including a public interior portion of a structure; any type or form of construction above the ground.

**Style**

A type of architecture distinguished by special characteristics of structure and ornament and often related in time; also, a general quality of a distinctive character.

**Vernacular**

A regional form or adaptation of an architectural style.

This project coincided with, but was not a part of, the Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation.

This project was made possible through funding from the William Penn Foundation.

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