

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building & Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Historic Resource Inventory Amendments

Prepared By: Greg Prichard, Historic Preservation Planner

Date: May 31, 2018

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Authorization to direct the Township Secretary to advertise a public hearing for an ordinance to amend the Code to add eight parcels/buildings and fifty-six objects to the Historic Resource Inventory.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

Historic Resource Inventory amendments must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Commissioners.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

NA

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

The Historical Commission has been working to identify and recommend designation of significant un-protected or under-protected historic resources since 2015. A committee formed a list of over 30 potential candidates for enhanced protection, representing a variety of building types, uses, and locations. In 2015-16, the Township received a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) to hire a consultant to survey the selected properties and make recommendations as to their eligibility for the Historic Resource Inventory. Upon completion of these surveys, the Historical Commission reviewed them and reduced the list of properties to 13, at which time the Building & Planning Committee and Board of Commissioners removed one property from the list and instructed Township staff to investigate whether the properties recommended for Class I designation would qualify under the current criteria. Staff submitted the surveys to PHMC to obtain Determinations of Eligibility (DOE) for the National Register of Historic Places, which is one of the criteria for Class I designation. Of the 12 resources then under consideration, four were found to be ineligible for the National Register given the amount of information available. Two of these are currently designated as Class II resources, and therefore cannot be upgraded; the

other two are currently undesignated and thus can be assigned Class II status with the recommendation of the Historical Commission and approval of the Board of Commissioners.

On April 30, 2018, the Historical Commission held a special public meeting to review and recommend the inventory amendments. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend the designation or upgrade of all ten resources, with contributing outbuildings as outlined in the consultant's surveys and listed below. The Commission also outlined which of the ten designation criteria (as described in § 88-18-A of the Township Code) applied to each of the properties they considered.

On May 16, 2018, the Board of Commissioners voted to delay a Class I upgrade for Clairemont (the Clothier Estate), 1860 West Montgomery Avenue, until June 13, leaving nine properties on the list to upgrade or designate.

Attached is a list of the resources under consideration with detailed information, as well as the following relevant Code sections:

- § 88-18-A: Historic Resource Inventory
- § 88-18-A: Procedure for Designation or Removal
- § 155-4-B: Definitions of Class I and Class II Historic Resources

V. Impact on Township Finances:

There is no significant impact on Township finances.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Building and Planning Committee and Board of Commissioners authorize the advertisement and public hearing of the proposed ordinance.

Historic Resource Candidates

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary

100 East Wynnewood Road, Wynnewood, Ward 7

Built 1866-71, 1925-28

Current Designation: None

Recommended Designation: Class I

Reason for Class I Eligibility: DOE

Matching HRI Designation Criteria: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10

Contributing Resources: 1866-71 Seminary, 1925-28 Seminary, Service Building, Watchman's House, Fencing & Gates, Stairway (west of 1925-28 Seminary), Stairs Fronting Chapel on its East, Roadway System

The Barnes Foundation

300 North Latches Lane, Merion Station, Ward 12

Built 1922-25

Current Designation: None

Recommended Designation: Class I

Reason for Class I Eligibility: DOE

Matching HRI Designation Criteria: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10

Contributing Resources: Main Gallery, Service Building, Greenhouse, Gate House, Visitors' Kiosk

Erdman Hall, Bryn Mawr College

101 North Merion Avenue, Bryn Mawr, Ward 11

Built 1965

Current Designation: None

Recommended Designation: Class I

Reason for Class I Eligibility: Contributing resource in Bryn Mawr College National Register Historic District

Matching HRI Designation Criteria: 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10

Contributing Resources: Dormitory

Wynnewood Train Station

75 East Wynnewood Road, Wynnewood, Ward 7

Built 1870

Current Designation: None

Recommended Designation: Class I

Reason for Class I Eligibility: DOE

Matching HRI Designation Criteria: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10

Contributing Resources: Passenger Station, Outbound Shelter, Tunnel

Merion Train Station Complex

204 Civic Circle, Merion Station, Ward 12

Built 1914-1924

Current Designation: None

Recommended Designation: Class I

Reason for Class I Eligibility: DOE

Matching HRI Designation Criteria: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10

Contributing Resources: Passenger Station, Post Office/Passenger Shelter, Freight House, Tunnel

Gladwyne Jewish Memorial Cemetery

1110 Greaves Lane, Gladwyne, Ward 2 (Parcel 1)

Parcel 400020636006, Greaves Lane, Gladwyne, Ward 2 (Parcel 2)

Constructed 1890

Current Designation: None

Recommended Designation: Class II

Matching HRI Designation Criteria: 1, 3, 7, 9, 10

Contributing Resources: Site, Entrance Gateposts, Northeast Corner Marker, Memorials, Plot Enclosures

Ashbridge Memorial Park

1301 West Montgomery Avenue, Bryn Mawr, Ward 6

Built c. 1710-1769

Current Designation: Class II

Recommended Designation: Class I

Reason for Class I Eligibility: DOE

Matching HRI Designation Criteria: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10

Contributing Resources: Main house, Stable/Garage, Chicken Coop, Barn, Entrance Gateposts

Colonial Milestones

Various locations and wards

Installed c. 1740, 1793 & 1795; two modern replacements

Current Designation: None

Recommended Designation: Class I

Reason for Class I Eligibility: DOE

Matching HRI Designation Criteria: 1, 2, 4, 8, 10

Contributing Resources: 14 Milestones (including two modern replacements)

Merion Road Signs

42 intersections in Merion Station, Wards 12 and 13

Installed 1915, c. 1926

Current Designation: None

Recommended Designation: Class II

Matching HRI Designation Criteria: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10

Contributing Resources: 42 Road Signs

The two properties ineligible for upgrades are:

Egyptian/Bala Theatre

163 Bala Avenue, Bala Cynwyd, Ward 9

Current Designation: Class II

WCAU TV Studio

10 Monument Road, Bala Cynwyd, Ward 9

Current Designation: Class II

Designation Criteria and Definitions

§ 88-18 Historic Resource Inventory.

A. Criteria for designation. A building, structure or site, or a complex of the same, may be placed on the Historic Resource Inventory if it meets any three or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the Township, county, region, commonwealth or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- (2) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the Township, county, region, commonwealth or nation;
- (3) Embodies an icon associated with an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (4) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (5) Is the noteworthy work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social or cultural development of the Township, county, region, commonwealth or nation;
- (6) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation;
- (7) Is part of or related to a commercial center, park, community or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif;
- (8) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or Township;

(9) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history;
or

(10) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

B. Procedure for designation or removal. Any property proposed for designation on or removal from the Historic Resource Inventory shall be proposed by or shall first be referred to the Historical Commission, which shall hold a public meeting thereon.

(1) Unless a property is proposed by the owner(s), such owner(s) shall be notified upon receipt of a proposal that their property be placed on or removed from the Historic Resource Inventory and asked to respond to such proposal within 15 days.

(2) At least 30 days before holding a public meeting to consider the proposed designation or removal of a building, structure or site as historic, the Historical Commission shall send notice to the owner of the property proposed for designation. Such notice shall indicate the date, time and place of the public meeting at which the Historical Commission will consider the proposed designation or removal. Notice shall be sent to the registered owner's last known address as the same appears in the real estate tax records of the Township Treasurer and sent to the "owner" at the street address of the property in question.

(3) Any interested party may present testimony or documentary evidence regarding the proposed designation or removal at the public meeting.

(4) The Historical Commission shall present its written report to the Board of Commissioners, the applicant and the owner within 60 days following the public meeting, basing its recommendation upon those criteria for designation established in this section. A property shall be recommended for removal from the Historic Resource Inventory if it does not currently meet the criteria for designation. The report shall include a summary of the information and copies of all documents presented at the meeting and used by the Historical Commission in making its recommendation.

(5) Based upon the criteria set forth in this section and after receiving the recommendations of the Historical Commission, the Board of Commissioners shall from time to time, by ordinance, add or delete buildings, structures and sites to or from the Historic Resource Inventory. Written notice of the action of the Board of Commissioners shall be given to the property owner and to any person appearing at the public meeting of the Historical Commission who requests notification.

§ 155-4 Definitions.

CLASS I HISTORIC RESOURCE

Any of the following:

- (1) All historic sites designated by the Secretary of the Interior as National Historic Landmarks;
- (2) All historic buildings, structures, objects, and sites listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places;
- (3) All historic buildings, objects, and structures classified as "certified historic structures" by the Secretary of the Interior;
- (4) All historic buildings, structures, objects, and sites documented as "contributing resources" in any National Register Historic District;
- (5) All historic buildings, structures, objects, and sites documented as "contributing resources" in any local historic district certified by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) in accordance with Pennsylvania Act 167; and
- (6) Any resources which have received a determination of eligibility (DOE) from the PHMC.

CLASS II HISTORIC RESOURCE

Any of the following:

- (1) All historic resources individually listed in the Lower Merion Township Historic Resource Inventory, not otherwise designated a Class I Historic Resource, and approved as such by the Board of Commissioners pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 88; and
- (2) All historic buildings, objects, structures and sites documented as "contributing resources" in an historic neighborhood, having received a determination of eligibility (DOE) from the PHMC.