

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building & Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Historic Resource Inventory Amendment

Prepared By: Greg Prichard, Historic Preservation Planner

Date: December 4, 2018

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Authorize the Township Secretary to advertise notice of intent to hold a public hearing and adopt an ordinance to amend the Historic Resource Inventory (HRI) to upgrade the Bala Theatre at 163 Bala Avenue, currently a Class II historic resource, to become a Class I historic resource.

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):

N/A

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

The Lower Merion Conservancy submitted an application to the Township to upgrade the property in October 2018. Upon receipt, the Township sent the required notices to the property owner giving the opportunity to comment and stating the date of the Historical Commission meeting during which a vote would be taken. On November 26, 2018, the Historical Commission reviewed the application and found that the building met six out of ten historic resource designation criteria, including two in the criteria list's Category B. In order to qualify for Class I designation, a resource must meet at least three criteria including at least one in Category B.

The following are the ten historic resource designation criteria. The six criteria that the Historical Commission found that the Bala Theatre meets are shown in **bold**:

CATEGORY A

- 1. Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the Township, county, region, commonwealth or nation;**

2. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of neighborhood, community or Township;

3. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community;

4. 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;

CATEGORY B

5. Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the Township, county, region, commonwealth or nation;

6. Is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;

7. Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, engineering technology, construction or building method, or material fabrication technique;

8. Is the noteworthy work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social or cultural development of the Township, county, region, commonwealth or nation;

9. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation;

10. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

V. Impact on Township Finances:

There is no impact on Township finances.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners authorize the advertisement of a public hearing.