



Department of Planning & Development

Philadelphia Historical Commission



City of
Philadelphia

Timeline to Date

- December 2012: Bunting House demolished, spurring action
- September 28, 2017: Councilman Jones introduced Ridge Avenue demolition moratorium legislation
- October and November 2017: Historical Commission developed initial list of 317 potentially historic properties
- November 21, 2017: City Planning Commission supported moratorium and initial list at public meeting
- November 22, 2017: City Planning Commission informed Mayor of support in writing
- December 5, 2017: City Council held public hearing on moratorium and incorporated initial list
- December 8, 2017: Historical Commission discussed designation plan at public meeting
- December 14, 2017: City Council passed demolition moratorium
- December 20, 2017: Mayor Kenney signed moratorium into law
- January to June 2018: Historical Commission developed historic district plan, reducing list from 317 to 188
- July 9, 2018: Historical Commission notified property owners of plan





Timeline Going Forward

- July 9: Historical Commission issued notice
 - Sent written notice to all properties and property owner in proposed district
 - Posted notice in newspaper and in district
 - Posted nomination with inventory on website: www.phila.gov/historical
- July 18: Community meeting in Roxborough (today)
- September 12: Committee on Historic Designation meeting
 - Open to the public
 - Anyone may give oral and/or written testimony
 - Committee will formulate a non-binding recommendation to Historical Commission
- October 12: Historical Commission meeting
 - Open to the public
 - Anyone may give oral and/or written testimony
 - Historical Commission will review Committee recommendation
 - Historical Commission will decide by majority vote whether to designate district



Historical Commission – A Brief History

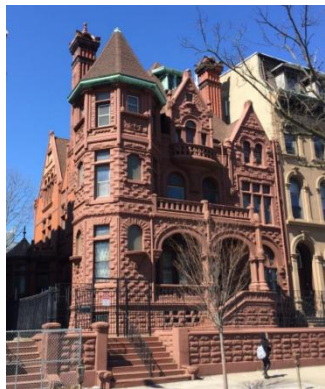
- The Philadelphia Historical Commission is a city government agency
- Established in 1955, first in nation with broad designation powers
- 13-member body appointed by Mayor, meets monthly
- Implements historic preservation ordinance, Section 14-1000 of code
- Served by several advisory committees
- Staff of 8 trained in architecture, history, and historic preservation
- Two primary functions
 - Identify and designate historic resources
 - Ensure the preservation of historic resources
 - Through the City's permitting processes
 - Through education and outreach



Designations

- Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, list of designated properties
- More than 23,000 on Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
- 19 historic districts
 - 1416-32 W Girard Ave
 - 420 Row
 - Awbury
 - Diamond Street
 - East Logan Street
 - F.D.R. Park
 - Girard Estate
 - Greenbelt Knoll
 - Historic Street Paving
 - Main Street Manayunk
 - Old City
 - Park Mall
 - Parkside
 - Rittenhouse-Fitler
 - Satterlee Heights
 - Society Hill
 - Spring Garden
 - Tudor East Falls
 - Wayne Junction

Individual Designations



Properties nominated by PHC staff July 2016- May 2018
Philadelphia Historical Commission



Historic Districts



Girard Estate Historic District



Spring Garden Historic District

Why Designate?

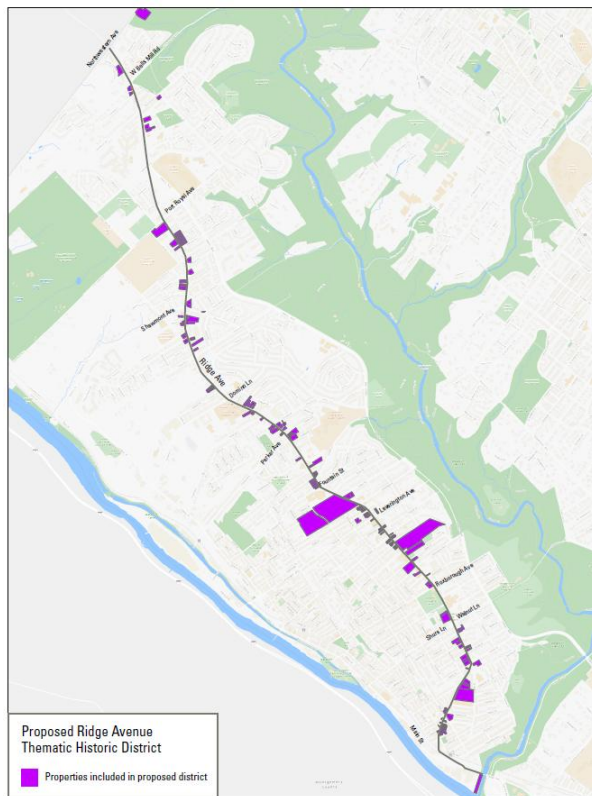
Advantages of historic districts:

- Provides a mechanism to maintain the basic physical and visual characteristics of an area
- Contributes to stabilization of property values
- Fosters community pride
- Demonstrates public commitment to an area



Benefits of Historic Districts
Philadelphia Historical Commission

Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District



- Nomination written by Historical Commission after passage of the Ridge Avenue Demolition Moratorium in December 2017
- Includes 188 properties on or near Ridge Avenue, from the Wissahickon Creek to Montgomery County line
 - 13 properties already individually designated as historic
- The 188 properties represent the history of Ridge Avenue in Roxborough from 1681 to 1908

Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District



1681

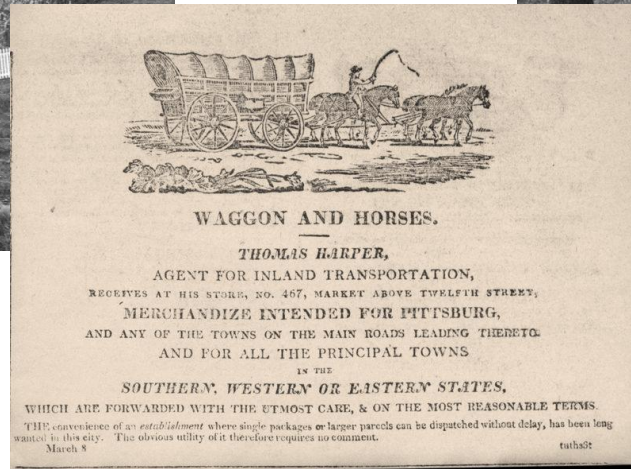
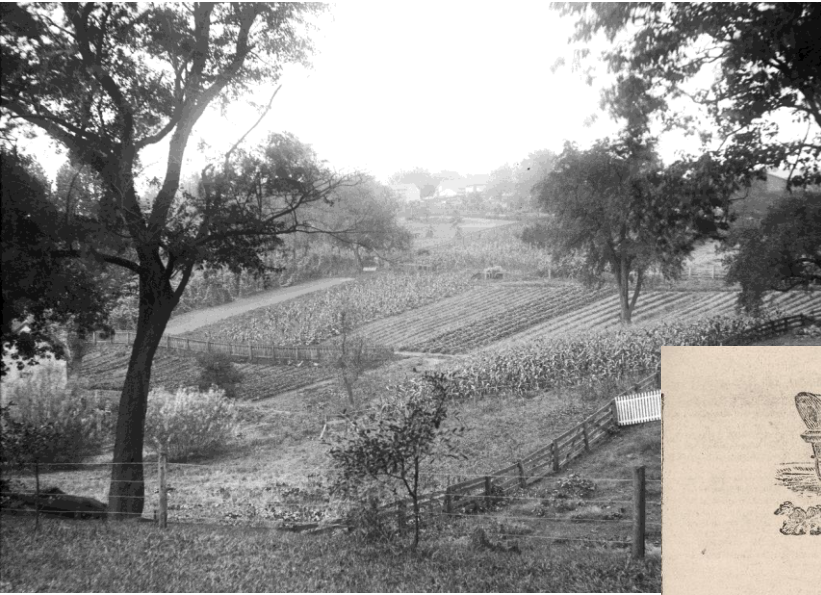


1750



7549 and 7551 Ridge Avenue

Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District



Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District



7623 Ridge Avenue



7701 Ridge Avenue

Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District

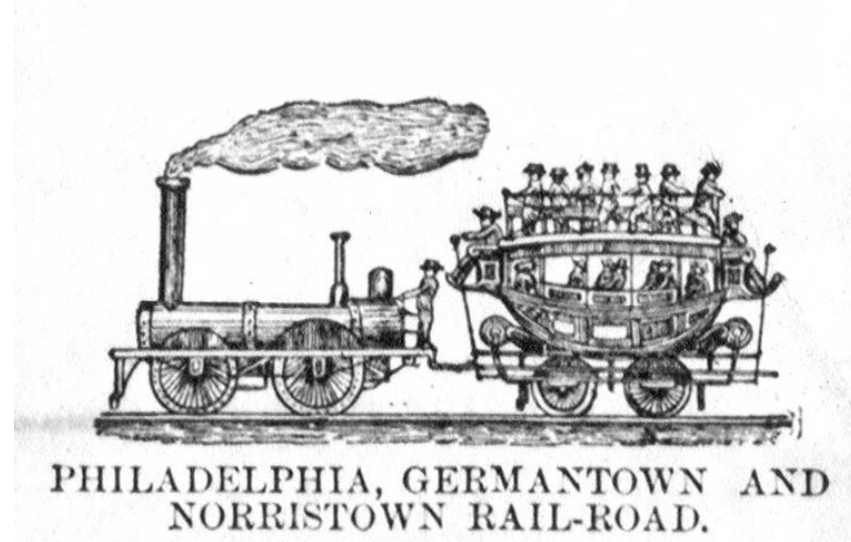


8144 Ridge Avenue



7101 Ridge Avenue

Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District



Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District



559 Righter Street



5504 Ridge Avenue

Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District

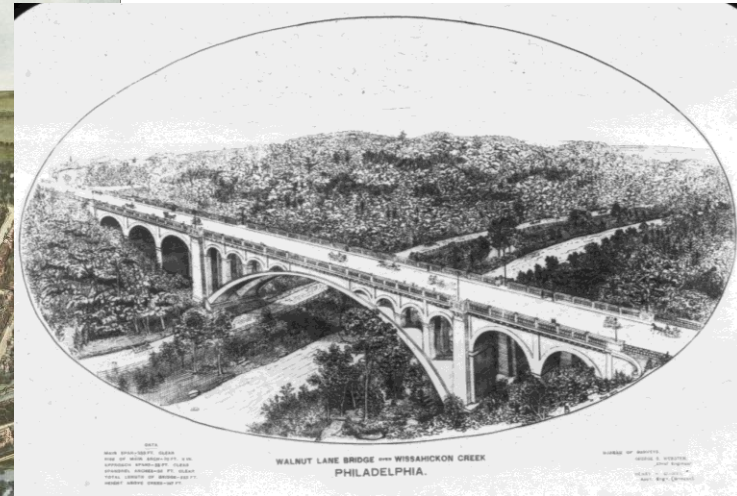


5164 Ridge Avenue



6080 Ridge Avenue

Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District



Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District



Properties Already Individually Designated
Philadelphia Historical Commission

Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District

Types of properties included:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Religious
- Institutional
- Cemeteries
- Parks (Gorgas Park)

Criteria used in review of properties:

- Age
- Integrity
- Social significance
- Architectural style/materials
- Context



Variety of Historic Resources
Philadelphia Historical Commission

Design Review Process

What triggers review by the Historical Commission?

- Licenses & Inspections will not issue a building permit for work to a historically designated building without the Historical Commission's approval stamp on a building permit application.

[illegible]

| PRE-REQUISITE APPROVALS FOR: | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| ADDRESS: 3436 W. Penn St. | | | APPLICATION #: | | |
| # OF SECT | AGENCY | INITIALS | DATE | REMARKS | |
| 1ST COMMISSION | 1ST PUDOM - 1018 ARCH STREET 1ST PLANNING COMMISSION 1ST PUDOM - 1018 ARCH STREET | | | <p><i>Y.C. APPROVED</i></p> <p>JUN 9 2008</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION</p> | |
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Building Permit Applications

Philadelphia Historical Commission

Design Review Process

The Historical Commission does *not* regulate:

- Interiors
- Building use
- Paint color
- Window air conditioners
- General maintenance, including:
 - scraping and painting wood trim
 - cleaning gutters
 - replacing clear window glass
 - gardening/landscaping/tree trimming
 - temporary holiday decorations



What is not regulated
Philadelphia Historical Commission



Design Review Process

The Historical Commission *does* regulate:

- construction, alteration, and demolition of buildings and addition to buildings;
- construction, installation, alteration, repair, removal, replacement, or covering of:
 - windows and doors;
 - porches and decks;
 - fences and gates;
 - facades;
 - roofing;
 - storefront features including signage;
 - exterior mechanical equipment
 - masonry repair and repointing;
 - painting of masonry



Design Review Process

To initiate a staff review for work to a property:

- Contact the Historical Commission staff, who can help guide you through the process.
- Complete a standard Building Permit Application.
- Provide any additional documentation necessary for the staff to understand the scope of work.
- **Our staff approves nearly 95% of all permit applications,** most on the day of submission, always within 5 days.
- Many reviews can be conducted by email.
- In 2017, 2215 applications were reviewed
 - 2209 were approved, some with amendments
 - 6 were denied outright, any denial can be appealed

Design Review: Restoration



Staff-reviewed façade
restoration in Old City
Historic District

← Before

After →



Review by the staff, 52 S 2nd Street
Philadelphia Historical Commission

Design Review: Restoration/Reconstruction



Design review of 6 Strawberry Street restoration
Philadelphia Historical Commission

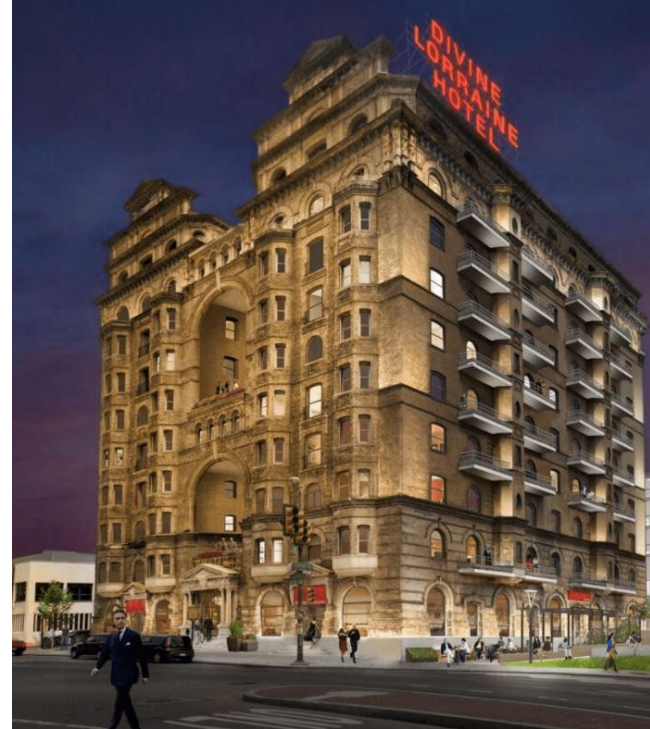


Design Review Process

For work that exceeds staff-review authority:

- Examples: new construction, large additions, significant removal of historic features without replacement in kind.
- Contact the Historical Commission staff, who can help guide you through the process.
- Complete a standard Building Permit Application.
- Provide any additional documentation necessary for the staff to understand the scope of work.
- The application will be placed on the agenda of the Architectural Committee and Historical Commission, to be reviewed at public meetings, and to be voted on by the Commission.

Design Review: Rehabilitation



Design review of Divine Lorraine rehabilitation
Philadelphia Historical Commission

Design Review: Additions/New Construction



Design review of Roman Catholic HS addition
Philadelphia Historical Commission

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is my building included in the historic district?

- Initial survey: 566 tax parcels abutting Ridge Avenue
 - 13 already designated as historic
 - Of remaining 553 properties, 317 determined potentially eligible
- Staff surveyed 317 potentially eligible and evaluated eligibility based on:
 - Age of historic resource
 - Architectural style
 - Integrity
 - Context
 - Social significance/association
- Based on survey, staff narrowed inventory down to 188 potentially eligible properties.



Frequently Asked Questions

Am I now required to restore my building?

- No. Except in cases of extreme neglect, the Historical Commission cannot require a property owner to undertake work, and may only review a scope of work defined by the owner.
- Alterations in place at the time of designation, such as vinyl windows, are grandfathered and may be retained until the owner determines that they need replacement.





Frequently Asked Questions

Can I demolish my building in a historic district?

- Generally, no. To secure a demolition permit for a historic building, an applicant must prove either that there is no feasible reuse for the building, or that demolition is necessary in the public interest.
- Demolition may also be permitted in instances when Licenses & Inspections has cited a property as “imminently dangerous” and has determined that demolition is the *only* means of safely abating the dangerous condition.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the Historical Commission regulate the use of buildings?

- No. The Historical Commission has no jurisdiction over the use of historically designated buildings, and it encourages adaptive reuse of buildings.



Frequently Asked Questions

Does the Commission review work to the rear of a building?



- The Historical Commission's jurisdiction extends over the entire exterior envelope of a building, but the Commission concentrates its reviews on facades, roofs, and site features that are visible from the public right-of-way.
- If the rear of your building is not visible from the public right-of-way, the staff has the authority to be lenient in its review of proposed alterations, but is still required to stamp a building permit application for the scope of work.



Frequently Asked Questions

Does historic designation affect my tax assessment?

- No. The Office of Property Assessment has confirmed that historic designation does *not* play a role in property assessments.
- Size, amenities, location, condition, and use are factors that impact property assessments, and thus property taxes.



Frequently Asked Questions

Does historic designation affect my property insurance?

- No. Location, age, materials, and updates are key factors in determining insurance premiums.
- Historic designation is not a question used to determine insurance rates.
- Cost to ensure older homes is higher across the board because older homes were typically constructed with higher-quality materials and features, and therefore are more costly to rebuild, assuming an owner wishes to rebuild with similar quality and finishes.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can the Historical Commission require me to do something I cannot afford?

- No. The Historical Commission does not have the authority to require anything that would create an unreasonable or undue economic hardship for you.
- The Historic Preservation Ordinance authorizes the Commission to relax and/or disregard its preservation standards in cases of economic hardship.
- The Commission and its advisory Committee on Financial Hardship evaluate claims of hardship.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is the Historical Commission's regulation of my property unconstitutional or constitute a "taking"?

- No. Both federal and state courts have ruled that governmental actions under historic preservation laws that prevent landowners from realizing the highest and best use of their property are not unconstitutional.
- Most cities and towns regulate private property for historic preservation reasons.

Frequently Asked Questions



Is a listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places different from a listing on the National Register?

- Yes. The National Register of Historic Places is a nationwide list of historically significant properties administered by the National Park Service.
- The Philadelphia Register of Historic Places is unrelated to the National Register.
- Properties can be listed on both Registers.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why would I want my property listed on the Philadelphia Register?

- Satisfaction derived from stewardship of a historic landmark.
- Community pride fostered by recognition of the historic district.
- Property values in historic districts fluctuate less and increase more than those of comparable properties outside of historic districts.
- The Historical Commission provides historical and technical assistance to property owners without charge.
- Mayor's Preservation Task Force is currently exploring incentive programs for designated properties.

