

Follow-up Q&A regarding the proposed Ridge Avenue Thematic Historic District

Q. Where can I find a copy of the historic district nomination?

A. The Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic Historic District nomination is available on the Historical Commission's website through this link: <http://www.phila.gov/historical/PDF/Ridge-Ave-Nomination.pdf> or by visiting the "Historic Districts" page of the Commission's website.

Q. Where can I find a list of addresses proposed for inclusion in the historic district?

A. The Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic Historic District inventory with all of the addresses proposed for designation is available on the Historical Commission's website through this link: <http://www.phila.gov/historical/PDF/Ridge-Ave-Inventory.pdf> or by visiting the "Historic Districts" page of the Commission's website.

Q. What is the benefit of historic designation?

A. Designation provides some benefits. In addition to the satisfaction derived from the stewardship of a historic landmark and the community pride fostered by the recognition of the 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 historical and technical assistance to the owners of designated properties without charge.

Q. How did the Historical Commission determine the age of my house?

A. The staff of the Historical Commission used a variety of resources when researching the history of properties, including deeds and other property ownership records, historic maps, books, census records, historic newspapers, and city directories.

Q. Can I request that my property not be included in the historic district?

A. Public participation is welcome at both upcoming meetings on September 12th and October 12th, but owner consent is not required for listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Q. My property is a twin. Can I perform exterior work that is limited to my side of the building, or does the work have to be done in conjunction with my neighbor so the exterior looks the same?

A. The staff of the Historical Commission will review work to each half of a twin as it is proposed by the property owner. There is no requirement that both halves of a twin are altered at the same time.

Q. Does the Historical Commission regulate the use of buildings?

A. No, the Historical Commission has no jurisdiction over the use of historically designated buildings, and it encourages adaptive reuse of buildings. Also, the Historical Commission has no jurisdiction over any interior spaces in the buildings proposed for designation in the Ridge Avenue Roxborough Thematic Historic District.

Q. What maintenance and preservation standards will be expected with regards to historically designated cemeteries such as Leverington?

A. The staff of the Historical Commission will review building permit applications for work to the exteriors of all historically designated properties, including cemeteries, and shall be guided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties when reviewing work to these sites. Also, the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance requires that historically designated buildings "shall be kept in good repair." Additionally, all Philadelphia property owners are required to adhere to the City's Property Maintenance Code.

Q. Does the Historical Commission offer financial incentives to owners of historically designated properties?

A. The Mayor's Historic Preservation Task Force is exploring incentive programs for designated properties, but the Historical Commission does not currently offer any incentives.

Q. Does the Historical Commission review paint colors for stucco, brick, or wood trim?

A. Painting of wood trim and wood elements, including doors, windows, storefronts, and cornices, is considered to be routine maintenance and is not regulated by the Historical Commission. The Commission does review the painting of masonry, however, owing to the fact that the painting of

masonry, including brick, can accelerate deterioration of the historic material. The following article explains the concerns related to the painting of historic brick:

<https://architecturaltrust.org/preservation-by-prevention-paint-and-historic-brick/>

Q. If a historically designated property is falling into neglect, at what point and by what means does the Historical Commission intervene?

A: If a historically designated building or other resource falls into a state of deterioration, decay, or disrepair such that the survival of the building or other resource is threatened, what is called “demolition by neglect,” the Historical Commission has an obligation under the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance to seek to compel the property owner to repair the resource. In those very infrequent situations when a building does suffer from “demolition by neglect,” the Historical Commission works with the City’s Department of Licenses & Inspections and Law Department to enforce the Historic Preservation Ordinance and compel the owner to make the requisite repairs.