

ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



July/August 2018

<http://www.uchs.net>

Joseph Minardi, Editor

WE WANT YOU TO JOIN OUR BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The UCHS is looking for some qualified people to join our Board of Governors. Do you live in the neighborhood and have a passion for local history? Perhaps you're the perfect person for our Board. We're looking for individuals with a variety of skills and are able to meet every second Wednesday of the month at 7pm. Interested persons should contact us via email at info@uchs.net and be sure to include a brief description of your qualifications.

Burglary Warning

The following warning is from a homeowner who had all of their leaded-glass windows stolen just days after they purchased the house. They've been hit twice and wish to remain anonymous.

I want to let everyone know about a recent uptick in thefts from vacant houses. I know of three houses in the last few months in West Philly (specifically in Spruce Hill) that were about to be sold or just sold and/or under renovation that had exterior doors, stained glass windows, and/or interior doors with stained glass stolen. The thieves are carpenters who knew what they were doing. The windows and doors were skillfully removed and must have been loaded into a truck. I encourage folks to keep an eye on any houses for sale or recently sold and on any contractor-looking folks on their block. Some of the thefts might have happened overnight but they could have happened during the day. If you are about to buy or sell or remodel a house, with any period of vacancy, you should seriously consider a security system with cameras. And I would discourage the use of lock-boxes. It's a shame to see these historical pieces being stolen from the neighborhood and shipped off elsewhere.

Did you know?

When the University of Pennsylvania's first playing fields at 36th and Spruce Streets were taken over by the eastern end of the Dormitory Quadrangle in the 1890s, athletics facilities were relocated to 33rd Street. At first only a cinder track with a wooden grandstand on the south side was provided. These facilities were dedicated on April 20, 1895, with the first running of the Intercollegiate and Interscholastic Relays, the inaugural "Penn Relays." In 1903-5 a low horseshoe structure seating 20,000 was built by Frank Miles Day & Bro; it was in turn demolished to make way for the present structure.

PROFILES IN ARCHITECTURE

Robert J. Aikins

Very little is known about architect Robert J. Aikins (also spelled Aikens). He appears in the Philadelphia city directories as early as 1891, when he is listed as a salesman. By 1902 Robert J. Aikens is part of the building firm of Platt-Prouse, along with George Platt and Walter Prouse. Later listings without the Platt-Prouse designation give Aikins's occupations as builder or contractor. In 1910 he designed 92 houses in West Philadelphia for John McHendricks. He remained as an architect until 1925, his final entry in the city directory.

Selected Relevant Commissions:

1910: McHendricks, John, residences (92), 64th and Girard area.

University City Then & Now: 3812 Walnut Street, President's Hall (Eisenlohr Hall)



Courtesy of the Penn Archives.



Photo by Joseph Minardi.

Eisenlohr Hall was originally built in 1911 for cigar manufacturer, Otto E. Eisenlohr (1852-1914). The architect for the grand French-inspired mansion was Horace Trumbauer (1868-1938), with an assist from Julien Abele (1881-1950), who began working in Trumbauer's office in 1906 after touring Europe. The house was restored in 1980 by the firm of Dagit/Saylor and bestowed to the University of Pennsylvania in 1981 by Josephine Eisenlohr and is named in her honor.

Revised UCHS Bylaws

Dear UCHS members, after lengthy discussion by the Board, here for your review is a draft proposal of the recommended revisions to the bylaws of UCHS for the purpose of updating.

Review by the membership is required before revisions to the bylaws can be ratified.

Please notify the Board if you have comments, questions, or concerns by mail at **PO Box 31927, Philadelphia, PA 19104** or by email at info@uchs.net. Please include your name and specify the Article number(s) for comment.

Comments are due by **August 31, 2018**.

Thank you,
UCHS Board of Governors

DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR 2018 REVISION

of

THE UNIVERSITY CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

The name of this organization shall be THE UNIVERSITY CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ARTICLE II

The University City Historical Society promotes awareness of the history, architecture, and cultural heritage of University City.

ARTICLE III

Membership of the Society shall be open to any dues-paying individual or organization. Members shall receive the Society's newsletter and be kept informed of the Society's activities. They shall also be encouraged to bring to the attention of the Board of Governors any activities in West Philadelphia that require the Society's attention. Membership dues shall be such as the Board from time to time may determine, and shall be payable annually.

ARTICLE IV

Section 1:

The Board shall consist of not less than 10 or more than 15 governors.

Section 2:

There will be an annual call for nominations. Any member of the society can nominate a member to the Board, subject to the approval the majority of the full Board. New Governors must become active members of the Society upon appointment and shall remain active members for the duration of their term.

Section 3: The duties of the Board shall be:

- A. To initiate, control and supervise the activities of the Society in such a manner as to accomplish the purposes of the organization as stated in Article II.
- B. To make and change regulations for the management of the affairs of the Society.
- C. To purchase goods and services that are in keeping with the mission of the organization, Expenditures above and beyond \$2,000 shall require approval of two-thirds majority of the Governors.

- D. To establish yearly dues for the membership, and to notify the membership of these changes when they occur.
- E. To keep the members and community apprised of the activities of the society.

Section 4:

Any Governor who has not attended 3 consecutive meetings of the Board without notice of due cause shall be considered to have resigned.

Section 5:

Board members who are unwilling or unable to fulfill the duties required of them will be subject to dismissal by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the full Board.

Section 6:

Meetings of the Board shall be held not less than five times per annum, at the time and place designated by the President. For action of the Board to become official action of the Society, it must be voted on and passed by a majority of the Governors at a meeting where there is a quorum. A quorum shall consist of two thirds of the members of the Board.

ARTICLE V

Section 1:

The administrative work of the Society shall be performed by the following officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Registrar, Editor, and Web Manager.

Section 2:

Officers shall be elected by the Board for a term of three years customarily beginning in September. Officers should not serve more than two consecutive full terms in the same position.

Section 3:

The President shall preside at all regular and special meetings, take appropriate action to ensure that any resolution or direction of the Board is carried out, and appoint special committees to advise the Board.

Section 4:

The Vice-President shall take over the duties and powers of the President in his/her absence. The Vice President shall support the President in carrying out the affairs of the organization.

Section 5:

The Secretary shall record and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings, advise members of special meetings, and carry out any correspondence of the Society not delegated to other officers.

Section 6:

The Treasurer shall collect and keep in proper custody all funds of the society and expend such funds in the manner and for the purposes designated by the Board.

Section 7:

The Registrar shall be responsible for maintaining an active record of the membership and shall be responsible for sending renewal notices and other duties relating to the maintenance of the Society's membership.

Section 8:

The Editor shall manage the production of the Society's regular newsletter according to a frequency and volume agreed by the Board.

Section 9:

The Web Manager shall be responsible for the design, management

and upkeep of the Society's website and media accounts as the primary means of representing the Society's activities to the outside world.

ARTICLE VI

Section 1. Committees appointed by the President shall be submitted for approval by the Board. Committee chairs shall be appointed by the President from among Board members. Committee Chairs shall report on the progress of their committee's work at each meeting of the Board.

Section 2.

Whenever a governor or officer has a financial or personal interest in any matter coming before the board of directors, the affected person shall a) fully disclose the nature of the interest and b) withdraw from discussion, lobbying, and voting on the matter. Any transaction or vote involving a potential conflict of interest shall be approved only when a majority of disinterested directors determine that it is in the best interest of the corporation to do so. The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record such disclosure, abstention and rationale for approval.

Article VII

All alterations, additions, deletions and amendments to these by-laws shall be made on recommendation of the Board and ratified after consultation with the membership.

View from Yesteryear

Pictured below is Louis Walz's Star Hotel on Darby Road (now Woodland Avenue) with a sign advertising lager beer. The Star Hotel once stood opposite of the Woodland Cemetery. The current site is where Baltimore and Woodland Avenues diverge. The Star Hotel was demolished shortly after this photograph was taken in 1882.



Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Satterlee Heights Historic District

At the Philadelphia Historical Commission meeting of Friday, July 13th, 2018, the remainder of the properties on the south side of the 4300 block of Osage Avenue were added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. 4300-02 and 4304-06 Osage Avenue were designated October 9, 2015. The vote was unanimous. It's now called the **Satterlee Heights Historic District**.

LEARN TO SPEAK ITALIANATE



A GLOSSARY

Continued from previous issue.

Ashlar: smooth faced masonry with square edges, laid evenly.

Astylar: A facade without columns or pilasters.

Balustrade: A series of balusters or turned columns usually shaped like urns, supporting a rail and used for outer edges of balconies and "loggias."

Bay Window: A window that projects out from the surface of an exterior wall, and extends to the ground.

Belvedere: Projection from the top of a roof, usually square, large enough for two or more people to stand in. It has windows from which to see the "beautiful view." Also called "cupola."

Blind Arcade: A series of connected arches with engaged columns, attached to a building's facade.

Bracket: A supporting member. When it upholds a cornice, the cornice is called a "bracket cornice."

Campanile: A tower, originally a belltower. In Italianate architecture, a square tower that projects from the central part of a villa.

Camfered: Beveled or angled corners of stone. In Italianate architecture, to make them appear rough hewn, or "rusticated."

Classical Orders: Includes the base, shaft, and capital of columns with the entablature they support. There are five modes: Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite.

Corinthian: One of the original orders. The capital features acanthus leaves with four small volutes on top.

Dentil Moulding: A series of small blocks used in Classical cornices, most common Tuscan and Italianate buildings.

Engaged Columns: Columns that are partially attached to a wall. Sometimes called "half-columns."

Entablature: The upper portion of a Classical order, consisting of the architrave, frieze, and cornice.

Frieze: In Classical architecture, the central band of the entablature, sometimes sculpted or painted.

Ionic: A Classical order characterized by a volute or scroll on the capital.

Keystone: The small stone sometimes placed at the peak of an arch.

Lintel: A strong piece of wood or stone that spans the top of a window, and supports the weight above it.

From *The Old-House Journal*, January, 1981.

To be continued in next issue.



What Defines a District? (cont'd from previous issue)

In addition to tens of thousands of individual National Register (NR) properties there are thousands of districts, which recognize the historic significance of a collection of buildings all within established boundaries. The collective significance of the district is often greater than the sum of each property's individual significance. An NR district (and a local district, as well) recognizes the thematic context--for example, a warehouse district, a Victorian residential neighborhood, a commercial center, or a planner commuter suburb--and this context helps determine the boundaries of the district. Within the district, each property is identified as either *contributing* or *noncontributing* to the significance of the district.

It is a surprise to many that an NR district offers little real protection for the historic resources within it. NR districts do not prevent owners from demolishing or severely altering the appearance of their historic properties. (In some situations, though, a mandatory review process may result in protecting an NR property that would be adversely affected by a project that is supported by federal funds or involves a federal agency.) Inclusion in an NR district does, however, open the door for possible financial benefits. Most local, state, or charitable foundation preservation grants require that eligible properties be listed individually on the National Register, or be a contributing part of an NR district.

The same is true for many other preservation incentives, such as real-estate tax abatements or federal tax deductions resulting from the donation of a preservation easement. Currently 45 states have some kind of restoration tax-incentive program. Perhaps most significant is a federal tax credit equal to 20 percent of qualifying restoration costs for income-producing properties (such as rental or commercial properties) in NR districts. Since 1976, some 29,000 NR properties have been rehabilitated using the Historic Preservation Tax Credit program.

The real muscle for protecting properties is primarily provided by local districts. Most state legislatures have passed enabling legislation that empowers local municipalities --cities, townships,

counties --to create and regulate local historic districts.

The specific powers of local historical commissions to create and control local historic districts are further established by a local preservation ordinance; these powers vary widely from state to state. A historical commission may have autonomous power to create and regulate local districts. In other cases, the historical only advises the governing body of the local municipality.

The real purpose of a local district is to protect the historic characteristics that make it worthy of preservation. This is achieved by granting the local governing body the power to regulate the demolition of, or changes to, the historic appearance of properties in the district.

Again, these regulatory powers vary widely. Some are very strict; others are much weaker. Owners planning changes to their historic properties usually must have their requests reviewed by a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), a step that is generally part of the building permit process. HARB decisions can be binding, or only advisory to the municipality's governing body. In turn, most HARBs are guided by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

So how do you know whether you live in a local or National Register historic district--or maybe both? The easiest way is to ask your local government if local districts exist, or if your property is individually designated as historic. Luckily we have the **Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC)**, which has updated lists of properties on the Philadelphia Register.

Philadelphia Historical Commission

One Parkway, 13th Floor

1515 Arch Street

Philadelphia, PA 19102

215-686-7660

<http://www.phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/districts.aspx>

From *The Old-House Journal*, March/April, 2002.

University City Historical Society

PO Box 31927

Philadelphia PA 19104-0627