

ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



November/December 2019

<http://www.uchs.net>

Joseph Minardi, Editor

Get your nominations in!

Join us for our signature annual event next February at the Castle at 48th and Springfield Avenue. This is our opportunity to recognize those who have made a difference in the neighborhood with our Gift to the Street Awards, Outstanding Preservation Award and Preservation Initiative Award. As part of the festivities we invite our guests to partake in our selection of tea, pastries and tea sandwiches. The Valentine Tea is free to all UCHS members and their guests.

Please contact the University City Historical Society to inform us of anyone you know who has performed a superior restoration or renovations during the previous year for our Gift to the Streets Award, Outstanding Preservation Award, or Preservation Initiative Award. Please feel free to nominate yourself. Email your nomination to info@UCHS.net.



Full front porch restoration 327 S. 46th, before (left) and after. Photos courtesy of George Poulin.

Nomination to Protect the International House

The University City Historical Society, along with Docomomo US/ Greater Philadelphia Chapter, recently co-nominated the International House at 3701-15 Chestnut Street to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Constructed between 1968 and 1970, the International House was designed by the Philadelphia architecture firm of Bower and Fradley (now BLTa) and is considered a prominent example of Brutalism - a style noted for its powerful, crudely fabricated but elegantly designed concrete work- in the city. On a social level, the building is significant for its associations with International House as an organization, the oldest organization of its kind in the United States. Its domineering design has become a focal point of the West Philadelphia and University City skyline and was one of the first high-rises in the neighborhood, constructed during a period of Urban Renewal in West Philadelphia.

The International House recently announced their intentions to sell the building, thus putting it in danger of demolition in our ever-changing neighborhood. Despite the building's size and hefty construction, the zoning and size of the parcel makes this property particularly susceptible to redevelopment. UCHS believes that the International House is an important example of our neighborhood's architectural heritage and that it represents a critical time of change in the history of University City. We expect that the International House will oppose the nomination since it comes at a time of transition for the organization.



View of the south elevation of the International House, from Chestnut Street. Allee Davis, photographer, August 2019.

UCHS is encouraging interested parties to voice their support for the nomination at the Committee for Historic Designation once the nomination is calendared on the Commission's agenda. The nomination was co-written by UCHS Board Member Kelly E. Wiles and Allee Davis, Docomomo US/Greater Philadelphia Chapter President.

University City Then & Now: 47th Street north of Kingsessing Avenue



Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Archives.

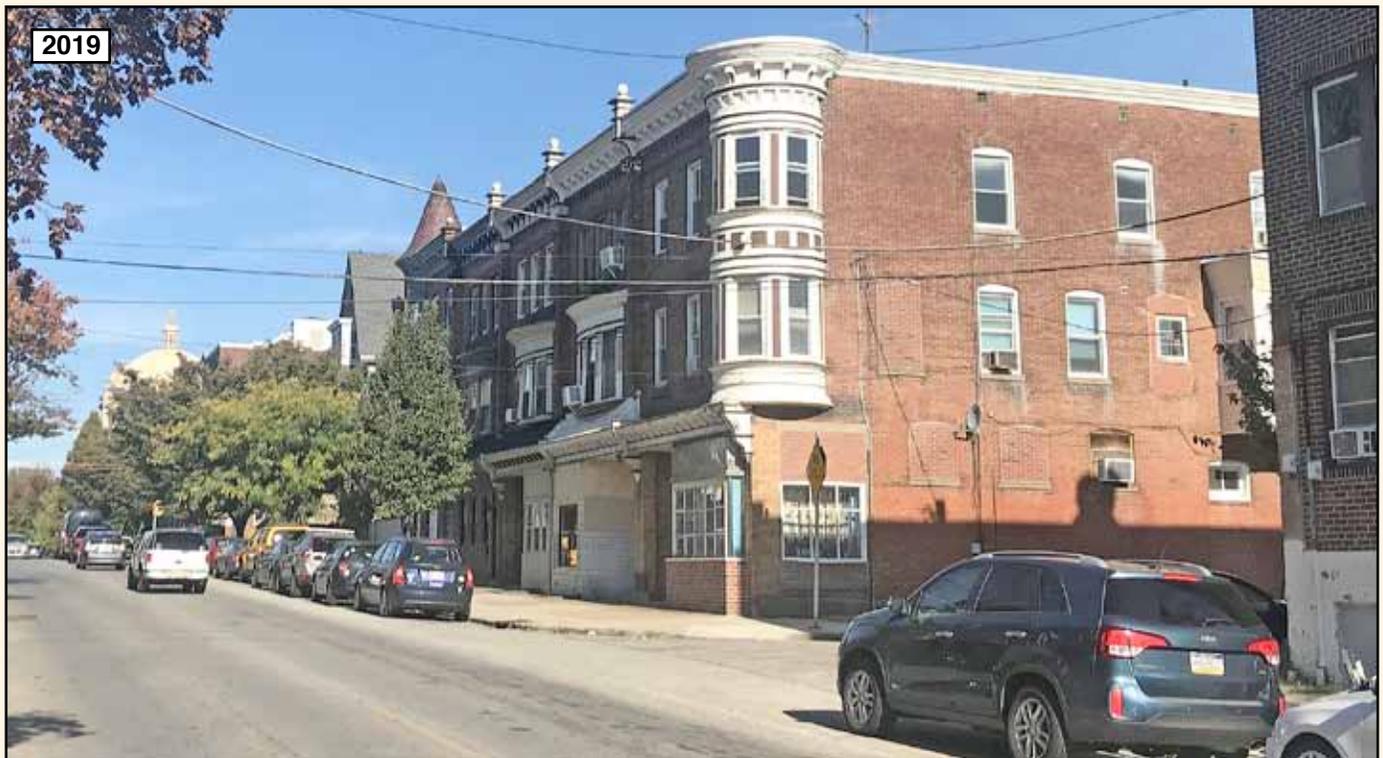
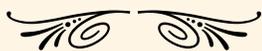


Photo by Joseph Minardi.

Pictured here is a commercial corridor on 47th Street just south of Regent Street in the Cedar Park section of University City. The buildings on the east side of 47th housed a variety of businesses. On the far right is the office of carpenter and builder next to a painter and finisher of hardwood. The next business up the street was a cigar store, a common sight in the early twentieth century. North of Regent Street is Caruther's Grocer, a great convenience for the residents of Cedar Park. The five store/dwellings in this row are still standing in various states of preservation. Beyond them are the twin houses found throughout University City. In the distance is the iconic Byzantine dome of St. Francis de Sales Church on 47th and Springfield Avenue (see page 4 for more about St. Francis de Sales).

Old Time Recipes



Pepper Pot

Although its origins are in West Africa and the Caribbean, pepper pot soup became a signature dish in Philadelphia in the early nineteenth century.

Boil two or three pounds of tripe, cut into pieces and put it on the fire with a knuckle of veal, and a sufficient quantity of water; part of a pod of pepper, a little spice, sweet herbs according to your tastes, salt, and some dumplings; stew it until tender, and thicken the gravy with butter and flour.

-From *The Virginia House-Wife* (1824).



Queen of Puddings

A dessert of British origin, Queen of Puddings was popular among Americans during the Victorian era.

Two egg yolks (save the egg whites for later), one cup of sugar, butter the size of an egg, one pint of broken bits of bread, one pint of milk, couple of sliced fresh or canned peaches, about a dozen raisins. Bake until a rich brown. Beat the egg white to a stiff froth, stir in two tablespoonfuls of sugar, spread on top, brown lightly.

-From *The Germantown Cook Book* (1907).



Mulled Cider

1 gallon of cider
1 stick of cinnamon
1/4 cup of brown sugar
6 whole allspice
6 whole cloves

Tie cloves, cinnamon and allspice into a cheesecloth bag. Add sugar and spices to cider. Bring to a boil and simmer for 15 minutes.

-From *Original 18th Century Recipes by the Friends of Independence National Park* (c. 1970).

Visit our YouTube Channel!

Check out the University City Historical Society's YouTube channel for great videos like our Oral History Project and UCHS updates and events. And be sure to click the subscribe button.



UCHS Welcomes New Board Member

The UCHS would like to welcome a new member to its Board of Governors, Todd Margasak. Todd has been a University City resident for fifteen years and has spent his entire life in the Philadelphia metro area. For him, Philadelphia is a very familiar book that surprises and becomes more meaningful with each reading. He is eager to work with his neighbors to maintain the integrity of the pages in the West Philadelphia chapter.

Todd works for reinsurance broker Willis Re and is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania. He lives with his wife and three children on 42nd Street. His house is part of the newly created "420 Row" historic district, which Todd was instrumental in successfully nominating along with neighbor Justin McDaniels who is currently on the UCHS Board of Governors. Todd, along with Justin, were recipients of the University City Historical Society's Preservation Initiative Award in 2017 for their collaborative effort in writing the nomination.

PROFILES IN ARCHITECTURE

James N. Mitchell

Scottish-born James N. Mitchell worked for a construction firm in Scotland from 1893 to 1898. After a brief stint in London, Mitchell relocated to Philadelphia in 1900, where he quickly became a developer and architect of residences.

Selected Relevant Commissions:

- 1905: Residences (8), west side of 61st, 198' north of Master
- 1906: Residences (22), north side of Spruce, 40' west of 59th
- 1907: Residences (19), south side of Spruce, 80' west of 59th
- 1908: Residences (8), south side of Chestnut, 116' west of 51st
Residences (2), 178' west of 51st, south of Chestnut
Residences (2), 5130-32 Chestnut
Residences (8), south of Chestnut, 65' east of 52nd
Residences (14), west side of Redfield, 81' south of Race
- 1909: Residences (6), south side of Locust, east of 52nd
Residences (8), north side of Irving, east of 52nd
Residences (5), south side of Haverford, 75' west of 62nd
Residences (4), north side of Chancellor, 120' east of 53rd
Residences (4), south side of Walnut, 120' east of 53rd
Residences (22), Race Street and Salford area
- 1910: Residences (21), Ludlow and Markoe area
Residences (10), Chestnut and Ludlow area
Residences (18), east & west side of Dewey, north of Ludlow
- 1911: Residences (8), Chestnut and Ludlow area
Residences (15), Locust and Markoe area (as a builder)

Did You Know?

After the Market Street Elevated opened in 1907, what was once open farmland developed rapidly with modest row houses with West Philadelphia's signature front porch and garden, electricity, indoor plumbing, resulting in Philadelphia receiving the national reputation as a "City of Homes."



House Tour Wrap Up

“What a beautiful day for a house tour,” was a common refrain heard on the day of the UCHS Historic Home of University City house tour on October 19th. The beautiful weather was matched only by the beautiful houses that were on the agenda. The UCHS would like to extend our gratitude to the homeowners, including four UCHS Board members, who opened up their lovely homes for the tour and to the Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College for allowing us to set up our registration desk at their historic school and for supplying us with a huge tray of delicious cookies.

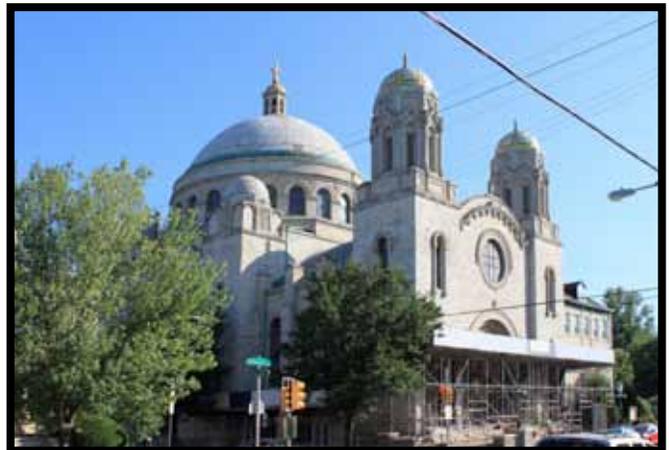
All-in-all there were twelve homes on the tour, all of which are on the Local Register of Historic Places. Beginning at the Restaurant School’s main building (the 1854 Samuel Sloan-designed Joseph Allison mansion), the next three were on nearby St. Marks Square, the 1878 porch-fronted row house block by the Hewitt Brothers. A wonderful 1860 Second Empire twin greeted visitors on 42nd Street before a stop at a lovely Queen Anne house on “Spruce Street Row.” An attractive Italianate twin on the remarkable Woodland Terrace was included for all to enjoy. The final five houses on the agenda are all included in the recently nominated Chester-Regent Historic District and feature the outstanding work of Willis G. Hale and his exuberant Victorian style. The UCHS is indebted to four of our Board members who live in the district and allowed their houses to be included and to Roy Harker for designing the brochure.

We would also love to thank all of you who purchased tickets and made this event such a success. Overall we heard very positive comments. “Congratulations on a really interesting and well-organized House Tour! My friend and I really enjoyed it. Also the program was informative and we appreciated the historical details. The refreshments were a nice touch, too. And you had a great choice of houses.” We love comments like that!

St. Francis de Sales

The church of St. Francis de Sales has been part of the West Philadelphia landscape for over 118 years, and it finally has historic designation. The Roman Catholic Church, with its familiar Byzantine-Revival dome said to have been inspired by the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, was designed by Henry D. Dagit, who specialized in Catholic Church architecture. The church features stained glass by Nicola D’Ascenzo and tiles by Rafael Guastavino who also engineered the iconic dome.

The successful nomination was written by Corey Loftus, a recent Penn undergraduate. It easily passed through the nomination process at the October meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission with no objections. Corey has also written three other nominations for buildings in the neighborhood; 3920 Spruce, 3922 Spruce, and 4525 Spruce. We at UCHS applaud her impressive efforts on behalf of historic preservation in West Philadelphia.



St. Francis de Sales Church at 917 S. 47th Street (corner of 47th and Springfield Avenue) was built between 1907 and 1911. Photo by Joseph Minardi.

University City Historical Society
PO Box 31927
Philadelphia PA 19104-0627