

ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY
CITY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



October, 2008

<http://www.uchs.net>

Mike Hardy, Editor

EVALUATING HISTORIC RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY CITY

By Alexander Balloon,
University of Pennsylvania

My name is **Alexander Balloon**, and I am a graduate student in the graduate program of **Historic Preservation** at the **Graduate School of Design** at the **University of Pennsylvania**. This summer, I was hired by the **University City Historical Society** to evaluate some of the locally registered landmarks in University City. This summer, I evaluated and reached out by mail to more than 240 property owners to inform them that their properties are registered by the **Philadelphia Historical Commission**.

It's important to recognize that there are two levels of historic protections for properties in the University City. The first type of historic registration is the **National Register of Historic Places**, kept with the **National Park Service**. This listing to the National Register of Historic Places includes both individually listed properties as well as contributing buildings in a **National Register Historic District**. The other type of historic protection is local registration with the Philadelphia Historical Commission. This local registration can

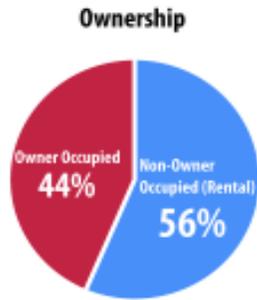


regulate changes to historic properties, as well as other regulatory tools. Many people don't know that the National Register listing offers few protections against exterior changes and demolition, while local registration offers more protection with respect to exterior changes and demolition.

My research concluded that there are approximately 18,700 total properties in the **University City Survey Area**. Of these 4,275 are listed as "contributing" to one of the five National Register Historic Districts including: **Woodland Terrace, Sansom Row, Garden Court, Powelton Village, and West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb**. This means that nearly one in four properties in the University City Survey Area is historically significant. While 4,275 properties are listed to the National Register, only 253 properties are listed locally with the Philadelphia Historical Commission. This is just 5.9% of all the historically significant properties. When considering the levels of protection for these properties, far more are regulated at a lower standard, than those at the local historical commission standard.

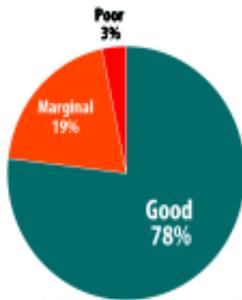
In analyzing all of the locally registered properties, I found that there was a great degree of stylistic diversity. You are probably very familiar with these styles; most of the listed properties were **Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne** and **Colonial Revival**. Each of these styles has distinguishing features, and an in-depth description will soon be available when my complete report is placed on the University City Historical Society website (www.uchs.net). Paralleling these style distributions, most locally registered properties were constructed between the 1860s and 1880s, as well as the 1910s.

My report also analyzed patterns of zoning and ownership with respect to these properties. Of registered properties, 56% were non-owner occupied (rentals).



44% of properties were owner-occupied. In addition, 60% of properties were zoned for multi-family use, and 22% were zoned for single-family. These characteristics can have important implications when considering available incen-

Building Condition



tives as well as ownership/stewardship challenges. More information about this will be available in the full report.

This study also evaluated the condition of each locally registered property. Properties were evaluated with respect to the condition of exterior masonry, paint, wood, and metal. Each property was classified as good, marginal, and poor with respect to these core condition areas. This report found that 78% of properties were in good condition, 19% were in marginal condition, and only 3% were in poor condition. This is good news for the condition of these historic resources.

In considering all of these areas of evaluation, I put forth recommendations to make the best uses of each of these assessments. These included aligning incentives, promoting educational activities, and using programs that promise to be most effective in the diverse area of University City. The full recommendations will be available online or in the complete report.

Letters were sent to more than 240 property owners of historic properties, informing each that their property was locally listed. In addition to this report, a searchable database will be added to the website, showing the property, date of construction,

style, and photo to help publicize the historic resources of University City.

Looking back on this entire summer project, the locally registered historic properties are in good condition. There are specific challenges with regard to ownership and incentives that can be best used in University City. Members may receive a free copy of the complete report by contacting **UCHS** by phone, mail or email.

Available Incentives

	Residential	Commercial	Owner-Occupied	Rental	Multi-Family
Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation Weatherization Program	0		0	0	0
Keystone Renovate & Repair Low Interest Loan Program	0		0		
City of Philadelphia Property Tax Abatement on Improvements	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit 10-20% of Improvements	0	0		0	0
Preservation Alliance Historic Properties Repair Program	0		0		

BOARD ELECTIONS

If you are a regular member of **UCHS**, you will find a ballot for this year’s slate of candidates for the **Board of Governors of UCHS**.

Among these are returning for another 3-year term are Board Members, **Belynda Stewart, 4812 Springfield Avenue; Helma Weeks, 3623 Pearl Street** and **Moe Phillips, 4505 Regent Street**.

Nominated as new members are **Richard Dretsch** of **4618 Hazel Avenue** and **Lee J. Garner** of **4516 Chester Avenue**. Dretsch is an employee of the **National Park Service** and is a former board member. He has resided in University City for 20 years and enjoys abstract painting, architectural renderings and short story writing. Lee Garner is a self-employed electrician and judges in the **Philadelphia Flower Show**. He has lived in University City for 33 years and enjoys growing cactus, skiing, folk dancing and biking.

FALL PLANT SALE



Saturday, Oct. 18th, 10 am to 2 pm, **Historic Bartram's Garden, 54th Street and Lindbergh Boulevard, 19143, (215) 729-5281**, easily assessable from the **Route 36** trolley

It's not too late to plant! Mark your calendars for the **Bartram's Garden Fall Plant Sale** with an exciting variety of native specimens. Go to www.bartramsgarden.org to see the list of plants, including some that have been propagated at the Garden. Limited quantities; come early for best selection and stay for the **DaVinci Art Alliance** hands-on workshops.

THE TREE IN ART: *Material, Motif, Metaphor*

DaVinci Art Alliance at Bartram's Garden:

Fri., Oct. 17, 5:00-8:00 pm, Public Opening
Sat. & Sun., Oct. 18-19, 10-4 pm, Exhibit Open,
Workshops Offered

This new multimedia exhibition from the DaVinci Art Alliance draws its inspiration from trees. Weekend includes curator's tours for adults and children and hands-on art workshops for all ages. Workshop schedule, pre-registration required.

Sat., Oct. 18, 10-noon & Sun., Oct. 19, 11am-1pm
Mosaics with **Liz Nicklus**, a 2 day workshop
Sat., Oct. 18, noon-2 pm **Pisanki** (Polish egg
decorating with wax) with **Felicia Dvornicky**
Sun., Oct. 19, 1:30-3:30 pm **Sculpture** with **Ted Warchal**
Sat., Oct. 18, 2:30 pm **Curator's Tour** of the
exhibition



GIFTS TO THE STREETS

Before the light of fall fades, it's time to survey your neighborhood – be it **Cedar Park, Garden Court, Powelton, Spruce Hill** or **Walnut Hill** or others in between– to check out examples of historically sensitive repairs and restorations, new or in-process, including multicolored paint schemes and recommend them for a commendation and thanks from UCHS for these “**Gifts to the Streets**” for all of us.

The same goes for new greening and gardening efforts which will receive letters of commendation for UCHS for “**Green Gifts to the Streets**” as well.

Just give us the property address and we will find those responsible for the kudos who will also received complementary memberships in UCHS and invitations to our **Annual Valentine's Awards Tea** in February.

NEW UCHS MUG

UCHS has just commissioned a newly minted mug bearing an architectural rendering by **Sylvia Barkan** of the c. 1903 white marble mansion at **4801 Springfield Avenue** built for **Hanson H. Haines** to the designs of **Charles Balderston**, architect. Now known as “**The Castle**” and the home of **Ellie and Nick Cernansky**, its maroon outline wraps around a white coffee mug. Delivered orders are available using the form on the back..

UCHS

PO Box 31927

Philadelphia, PA 19104

Please deliver ___ of the new “**Castle**” mugs to:

Name

Address

I enclose \$6 each (as a UCHS member) or \$8 each as a non-member. My check is enclosed..

ARCHITECT CHARLES BALDERSTON



*HANSON H. HAINES
HOUSE
1903*

***THE
CASTLE***

*THE
UNIVERSITY
CITY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY*

ON THE WEST SIDE

***THE UNIVERSITY CITY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY***

P.O. BOX 31927

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19104