


Re: Postponing Wash West Historic Designation - Required Notice Has Not Been Provided

Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>

Wed 6/5/2024 11:26 AM

To: Jonathan Hessney <jonathan.hessney@gmail.com>

Cc: Renee Garcia <Renee.Garcia@Phila.gov>; Lydia Furst <Lydia.Furst@Phila.gov>; Lewis Rosman <Lewis.Rosman@Phila.gov>; Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>; Kenyatta Johnson <Kenyatta.Johnson@Phila.gov>; jmattioni@mattioni.com <jmattioni@mattioni.com>; Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>; preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

 3 attachments (7 MB)

First Notice WWHD 3-21-2024 to Alder Ct.pdf; Philadelphia_Daily_News_Fri__Mar_22__2024_.pdf; Washington Square West poster photos.pdf;

Mr. Hessney:

Thank you for your email to the Philadelphia Historical Commission on behalf of the Alder Court Homeowners Association of June 4, 2024 regarding the proposed Washington Square West Historic District. Copies of it will be provided to the members of the Historical Commission.

In your email, you request that the Historical Commission postpone the review of the nomination proposing a Washington Square West Historic District from its meeting of June 14, 2024 to a later, unspecified date. The Historical Commission can consider that request at its June 14 meeting in advance of any consideration of the merits of the nomination. You also request that the Historical Commission remove the properties at 1-13 Alder Court from the proposed district. The Historical Commission can consider that request when it reviews the nomination on June 14 or at a later date.

In your email, you claim that the Historical Commission failed to notify property owners of the review of the nomination proposing a Washington Square West Historic District. That claim is incorrect. The Historical Commission met all notice requirements as enumerated in Section 14-1004(2)(b) of the Philadelphia Code as well as all other provisions of state and local law and regulation. I am attaching copies of the notice letters, dated March 21, 2024, mailed to all property owners and properties at Alder Court with accompanying inserts. The address information for the letters was obtained from City of Philadelphia property tax records, as required by the Code. I am attaching a copy of the legal notice announcing the consideration of the proposed historic district, which was published on page 10 of the March 22, 2024 edition of the *Philadelphia Daily News*. I am attaching a copy of the poster announcing the consideration of the proposed historic district that was hung in the area on March 21, 2024, along with some photographs of the poster hanging in the proposed district taken on March 21, 2024.

I note that you cc'ed John Mattioni, a member of the Historical Commission, in your email of June 4, 2024. In the future, please do not directly contact members of the Historical Commission regarding matters that are or may be pending before the Historical Commission. Please contact the staff of the Historical Commission, but not the members. Contacting a member of the Historical Commission directly in an attempt to influence that member with regard to a matter that is or may reasonably be expected to be pending before the Historical Commission can be a violation of Section 20-605 of the Philadelphia Code, the City's exparte communication law.

Thank you again for your email, which, as I noted, will be provided to the Commissioners.

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Philadelphia Historical Commission

From: Jonathan Hessney <jonathan.hessney@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 4:58 PM

To: Jon Farnham <Jon.Farnham@phila.gov>; Laura Dipasquale <Laura.Dipasquale@Phila.gov>

Cc: Renee Garcia <Renee.Garcia@Phila.gov>; Lydia Furst <Lydia.Furst@Phila.gov>; Lewis Rosman <Lewis.Rosman@Phila.gov>; Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>; Kenyatta Johnson <Kenyatta.Johnson@Phila.gov>; jmattioni@mattioni.com <jmattioni@mattioni.com>

Subject: Postponing Wash West Historic Designation - Required Notice Has Not Been Provided

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Mr. Farnham-

I am writing on behalf of the Alder Court Homeowners Association to object to lack of notice, and our inclusion in the proposed Washington Square West historic district. We are 13 properties located at 1-13 Alder Ct.

Due to lack of required notice and deficiencies in the nomination document, we are requesting the designation meeting on June 14th be postponed and that 1-13 Alder Court be removed from the proposed district.

Most of our members have only found out about the nomination from the HOA or neighbors. Only one member has reported receiving a letter from the historic commission notifying them of the nomination.

The city code requires notice 60 days prior to a public meeting for consideration of the district to include:

1. **Written notice by mail** - I have not received this notice and neither have most of the HOA property owners
2. **Publication in the newspaper** - We have not seen and after searching cannot find a published notice in a newspaper
3. **Posted notice in the district** - We have not seen notice physically posted at locations within the district

Designation requires this notice to allow participation in the process by property owners who would be subject to the restrictions and costs associated with historic designation. We have not received that notice and don't believe the historic commission has met the requirements laid out in the city code to hold the meeting to determine designation.

Separately we do not see the rationale for including 1-13 Alder Court in the historic district. In the property inventory, we are marked as "contributing" without any explanation why. Our understanding is that would subject our properties to a higher degree of scrutiny than "non-contributing properties. The inventory lacks photos of the facade of 8 of the properties, since they are not visible from the right of way. The notes on our property records in the inventory are:

1. Survey notes for 8 of 13 properties : " Not visible from public right-of-way"
2. History notes: " Part of 13-property development including attached courtyard houses and townhouses."

Why properties that the public cannot view should be subject to designation is highly questionable. How being part of a "13-property development" makes the properties "contributing" is not defended.

In light of the lack of required notice, and the deficiency in the nomination documentation, we ask that the meeting on June 14th be postponed and that the 1-13 Alder Court be removed from the proposed district.

Thank you,

Jonathan Hessney
President, Alder Court HOA