

ADDRESS: 40 W TULPEHOCKEN ST

Name of Resource: G. Harry and Mary E. Davis House

Proposed Action: Designate

Property Owner: Mary A. Meloscia

Nominator: Philadelphia Historical Commission Staff, Alex Till

Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 40 W. Tulpehocken Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. A two-and-a-half-story masonry residential building known as the G. Harry and Mary E. Davis House, designed by the architect Charles F. Collom in the Queen Anne style and built in 1887, stands on the property.

The nomination contends that the G. Harry and Mary E. Davis House satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D. It argues that the building reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style and embodies many of the distinguishing characteristics of the Queen architectural style, satisfying Criteria C & D.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 40 W. Tulpehocken Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D.



NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: _____

Postal code: _____

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: _____

Current/Common Name: _____

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Building

Structure

Site

Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: excellent good fair poor ruins

Occupancy: occupied vacant under construction unknown

Current use: _____

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from _____ to _____

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: _____

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: _____

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: _____

Original owner: _____

Other significant persons: _____

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization _____ Date _____

Name with Title _____ Email _____

Street Address _____ Telephone _____

City, State, and Postal Code _____

Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: _____

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete Date: _____

Date of Notice Issuance: _____

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postal Code: _____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: _____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

Designated Rejected

40 W Tulpehocken Street:

5. Boundary Description



Figure 1: The boundary identifying the parcel at 40 W Tulpehocken Street. North at top of image. Source: Atlas.

Situate in Germantown, in the Twenty-second Ward of the City of Philadelphia, and described according to a Survey made thereof on the Tenth day of September A.D. 1886 by Walter Jones, Esq., Surveyor and Regulator of the Ninth District, as follows, to wit:

Beginning at a point on the Southeasterly side of Tulpehocken Street at the distance of Three hundred and thirty-six feet Northeastwardly from the Northeastery side of Adams (now McCallum) Street; thence extending Southeastwardly between lines parallel with the said Adams Street (now McCallum Street) Two hundred feet to a point; thence extending Northeastwardly along the Southeasterly side of said lot Fifty-six feet eleven inches to a point; thence almost due North Ninety-three feet two inches to a point; thence Northwestwardly One hundred and ten feet and three-eighths inches to a point on the Southeastwardly side of Tulpehocken Street; thence Southwestwardly along the said Tulpehocken Street Seventy-six feet and one-quarter inches to the place of beginning.¹

¹ Philadelphia Deed Book D-188, pg. 435.

6. Description



Figure 2: Front façade of 40 W Tulpehocken Street looking east, May 2024. Source: Author.

40 W Tulpehocken Street is a two-and-a-half-story masonry residential building located on the east side of W Tulpehocken Street between Germantown Avenue and McCallum Street in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia. The building is set on a leafy lot amongst many similar mid to late 19th century single and twin homes. It fronts on W Tulpehocken Street in a suburban residential neighborhood close to the commercial corridor of Germantown Avenue to the north. The primary (west) façade features a symmetrical design that mixes materials including Wissahickon schist stonework and a full width front porch on the first story, red brick on the second, and a gray shingle-clad wide hipped roof with two prominent front facing dormers. Stylistically, the building is wonderful example of Queen Anne residential architecture, with the major exception of its symmetrically arranged front façade marking a departure not typically seen in the style.

The first floor of the west elevation features a full width porch with turned wood posts and decorative brackets. Behind the porch, the wall is constructed with gray Wissahickon schist stone and contains three bays. The center bay holds a double door with a rectangular light above. Each door features a glazed center portion with panel detailing above and below. The north and south bays each contain a set of double hung sash windows with single light lower sashes and classic Queen Anne upper sashes with multiple small square panes arranged around a larger central pane. The second story is constructed of red

brick and has five symmetrically arranged bays. The center bay features a prominent projecting pedimented porch with scalloped shingle detailing, turned posts and railing, and carved brackets. The remaining four bays each feature a double hung sash window with the same light arrangement as those on the first floor and a segmented arched brick lintel above. The roof level is mostly comprised of a wide hipped roof with an overhanging eave and two prominent projecting dormers with an additional small higher central dormer. The two larger dormers each feature a pair of one over one double hung sash windows and scalloped shingles in the space above. The smaller central dormer is set higher up the roof compared to the larger ones and features a small, curved eyebrow window with multiple small lights and a carved decorative detail above. The sides of additional dormers that face the north and south elevations can also be seen on the edges of the roof.

The north elevation is less symmetrical than the front and continues the first-floor stone and second-floor brick construction of the front. There is a single door approximately centered on the first floor with two windows to its west and one to its east. The door is fronted by a small concrete porch with two turned columns. The second floor features three irregularly spaced windows – one set near the east corner and two set over the door and windows to its west. There is a raised chimney to the west of the front-most window that extends upward through the overhanging eave of the roof to the third story. The roof level features three large dormers. The eastern dormer is larger than the other two and features two one over one double hung sash windows set on either side of the chimney that rises from the second floor. It also has a decorative cut spindlework facing panel in its pediment area. The other two dormers are identical and feature one window each with scalloped shingles and a simplified sunburst panel design in their pediments. All of the first and second story windows match the design of those on the front. Additionally, there is a one story shed roof addition on the east end of the elevation with a single double hung window set in this side.



Figure 3: Aerial views of 40 W Tulpehocken Street looking east (left) and north (right). Though the house presents a symmetrical facade to the street, the remaining facades are all asymmetrical with a prominent cross gable at the rear. Source: ConnectExplorer

The east elevation faces the rear of the property and has a complex asymmetrical arrangement featuring a larger north projection and a smaller south recessed element. The main block on this elevation features the same stone first floor and brick second as the rest of the house. The larger north projection is fronted by the one story shed roofed addition along most of the width of the first floor. This addition is clad with white shingles and its roof extends to a covered porch. There is a central single door flanked by two double hung windows on the addition on this side. There is a single double hung window just to the south of the addition on the main block of the house on the first floor. The second floor has three windows positioned irregularly. Two are the same size as the windows on the rest of the main block of the house

but the one on the south corner is a narrower double hung sash window. The third floor is set within the end of a large cross gable that intersects the main portion of the roof. There are three double hung windows with wide frames set in the wall which is largely clad in painted wood shingles but there is a strip of brick from a chimney that runs between the northmost windows and rises slightly above the roofline. The roof's peak is clipped. The smaller recessed southern block of the façade features a first-floor porch with simple columns and a railing and a single centralized door. The second floor contains a single double hung window and the roof level has a dormer with a pair of double hung windows and scalloped shingle decoration.

The south elevation is largely obscured by plantings but continues the same brick over stone treatment. The first floor has a single double hung window at its east end and a large projecting three faceted bay with a roof with a distinctive overhanging eave to match the main roof. The bay, constructed of stone like the rest of the first floor, has a larger window in its center portion and two narrow windows on the sides. There are two windows on the second floor positioned above the first-floor window and bay and two evenly spaced dormers at the roof level with pairs of windows in each that match those on the rest of the façades.



Figure 4: Portion of north façade of 40 W Tulpehocken Street, May 2024. Source: Author



Figure 5: Portion of east façade of 40 W Tulpehocken Street, May 2024. Source: Author



Figure 6: Detail of north end of front façade porch of 40 W Tulpehocken Street, May 2024. Source: Author

7. Statement of Significance

40 W Tulpehocken Street is historically significant and should be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property satisfies Criteria for Designation C: “Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style,” and D “Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen.” Specifically, the property is an excellent example of the Queen Anne architectural style as represented on residential buildings in Philadelphia and in particular in the Tulpehocken Station neighborhood of Germantown. The period of significance dates to the time of construction, 1887.

Historic Context:

The industrial revolution of the 19th century brought myriad changes to life in American cities. As machines of various kinds were introduced into society, the landscape of our cities became increasingly complex. These radical changes made life both more convenient and comfortable in many ways but also brought increased crowding, pollution, and other complications. As a result, an expanding middle class sought escape from city centers yet still wished to reside within an easy commute downtown by way of newly created rail lines. In Philadelphia, the neighborhood adjacent to Tulpehocken Station has been described as one of the earliest suburban developments in the nation and has been recognized as a National Register Historic District since 1985.²³ The concept of the “Garden Suburb” was largely inspired by the writings and philosophy of Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing was considered to be the father of American landscape architecture and one of his primary principles focused on creating harmony between residences and their surrounding natural landscapes. The Tulpehocken Station neighborhood largely grew along with these principles in the latter half of the 19th century, though was developed in a somewhat piecemeal fashion over a period of 50 to 70 years as opposed to being a single reorganized development. As a result, the area features a wonderful variety of Victorian architectural styles that can be seen almost as a timeline of evolving residential stylistic development over the second half of the 19th century, moving from earlier Gothic and Italianate homes to later Second Empire and Queen Anne examples and even into early 20th century revival styles. Constructed in 1887 in the Queen Anne style, 40 W Tulpehocken Street fits neatly into this progression.

² National Register of Historic Places nomination for Tulpehocken Station Historic District

³ Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination for 125 W Walnut Lane, George T. Pearson Residence

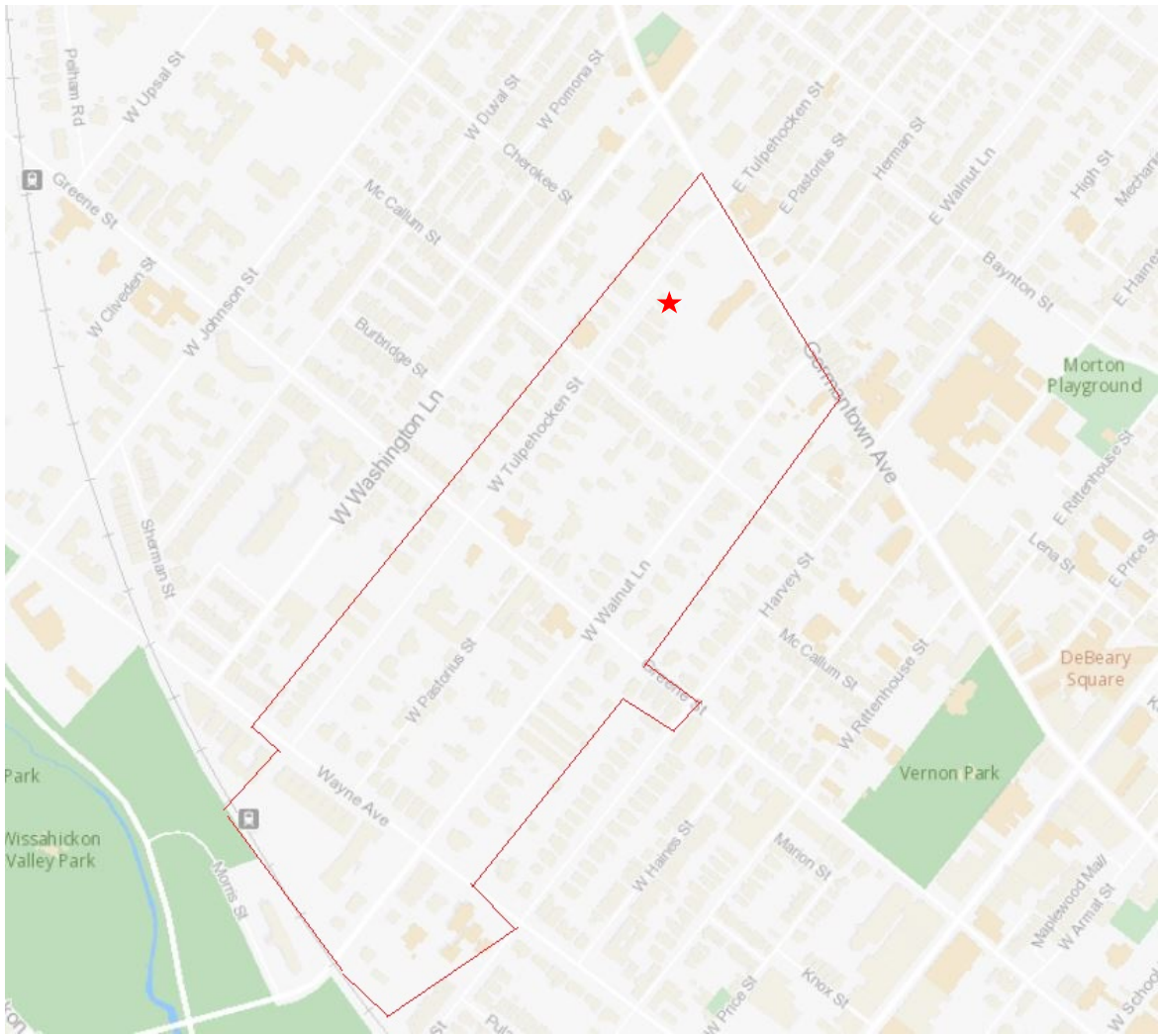


Figure 7: Map showing approximate boundaries of Tulpehocken Station National Register Historic District. Subject property indicated by star. North at top of image. Source: Atlas

Criterion C:⁴

Germantown was first settled in the 17th century by Quaker and Mennonite German immigrants and was established as its own municipality until it was incorporated into the city of Philadelphia by the Act of Consolidation in 1854. For much of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, Germantown was a popular location for country estates of wealthy Philadelphians who wanted a nearby respite from the crowding of the city. Despite this, Germantown remained a unique entity separated from Philadelphia and developed as its own distinct community until developing transportation technologies and consolidation linked it more closely with the city. The first rail link in the area was created in 1832 when the Philadelphia, Germantown, and Norristown Railroad (PG&N) was established, connecting Germantown to downtown Philadelphia. For much of its early history, the area around what would become 40 W Tulpehocken Street was comprised of several large farms that spread out linearly from Germantown

⁴ Much of the history of the Tulpehocken Station neighborhood was taken from the National Register of Historic Places nomination for Tulpehocken Station Historic District.

Avenue. But soon after the PG&N railroad was established, nearby Walnut Lane was dedicated as a public road in 1848 and Tulpehocken Street was laid out by 1849, marking the beginning of suburban residential development in the neighborhood. Most of this initial development occurred close to Germantown Avenue as the earlier farmsteads were broken up into residential lots.

Some of the first homes built in the 1850s along Tulpehocken Street close to Germantown Avenue feature various early Victorian styles such as Carpenter Gothic and Italianate and many were inspired by designs found in publications made by Downing and others. The earliest homes on the street include both 9 and 20 W Tulpehocken Street, designed by architect John C Fallon in 1851 as part of a never used retreat for Maria Christina, Queen of Spain. By 1858, Phineas Hamm constructed a series of large Italianate homes along the 100 block of Tulpehocken Street and in 1859, Ebenezer Maxwell built an elaborate Norman Gothic Villa at the corner of Tulpehocken and Green Streets.



Figure 8: Left: Queen's House at 9 W Tulpehocken St, built c. 1851, John C. Fallon, architect. Right: 128 W Tulpehocken St, built c. 1858, Phineas Hamm, architect. Source: Cyclomedia

Rail service along the PG&N line improved when it was leased to the Reading Railroad company in 1870 and the Chestnut Hill Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad was opened in 1884 with its adjacent Tulpehocken Station stop, which spurred a burst of development of suburban homes on the blocks of Tulpehocken Street and Walnut Lane between the station and Germantown Avenue.⁵ From the 1870s until the end of the century, the houses in the area were primarily constructed in later Victorian styles such as Second Empire and Queen Anne, along with other elaborate revival styles including Italian Renaissance Revival/Palazzo, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival. 124 W Walnut Lane and its neighboring twin at 130-132 W Walnut Lane represent large Second Empire designs with prominent mansards and stone construction. Queen Anne houses like the subject property begin to appear starting in the 1880s and more elaborate examples of revival styles appear through the 1890s and 1900s. Some of these houses were more modestly designed such as the subject property and some examples from the 1900s located at

⁵ Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination for 125 W Walnut Lane, George T. Pearson Residence

105 (Colonial Revival) and 115 (Tudor Revival) W Tulpehocken Street, among others. Other designs, particularly those on the 200 blocks closer to Tulpehocken Station and Wayne Avenue, were designed by notable architects and are grand and imaginative. 258 W Tulpehocken is a majestic and elaborate Queen Anne with intricate wall decoration and wood trim along with a multitude of porches and rooflines and was designed and built by architect G.W. Hewitt in 1886 along with a companion building at 266. Nearby, 240 W Tulpehocken Street stands as a Renaissance Italian Palazzo with stuccoed walls and terracotta roof. It was designed by architect Frank Miles Day and built in 1892.



Figure 9: 130-32 W Walnut Lane, built c. 1870. Source: Cyclomedia



Figure 10: 105 (right) and 115 (left) W Tulpehocken Street. 105 was built in 1906 in a Colonial Revival style with a prominent two-story front porch. E.S. Childs, architect. 115 was built in 1910 in the Tudor Revival style. Heacock and Hokenson, architects. Source: Cyclomedia.



Figure 11: 240 W Tulpehocken St, Henry Cummings House, built 1892. Frank Miles Day, architect. Source: Cyclomedia



Figure 12: 258 W Tulpehocken St, built 1892. Attributed to G.W. Hewitt, architect. Source: Cyclomedia

Property History:

40 W Tulpehocken, along with the three twins to its south, were some of the latest homes to be constructed on the unit block of the street, together comprising an open lot owned by H. F. Robinson as late as 1871.⁶ In October 1883, the parcel that would become 40 W Tulpehocken Street passed to Thomas Shoemaker who in turn sold it to M C Roberts for one dollar in a deed dated Sept 26, 1886. On the same date, Roberts passed the property off to Mary E Davis and her husband G Harry Davis. The Davises had the house built on the subject property in 1887 based on references to stone and brick work contracts and a “fine dwelling on Tulpehocken street” found in Builder’s Guide mentions of that year.⁷ The design is attributed to architect Charles F Collom, who was active in designing residential buildings in Northwest Philadelphia in the 1880s and had an office at 907 and 909 Walnut St.⁸ G Harry Davis then sold the property to Mary D Eckersley on May 27, 1895. Mary and her husband James H Eckersley were by far the longest tenured owners of the property, raising several generations of their family there until Mary’s death in 1954. The Eckersley’s were active members of Philadelphia’s society, and their names appear beginning in 1896 associated with 40 W Tulpehocken in Boyd’s Blue Book society directory of the city.¹⁰ James Eckersley was also a member of the Republican party in Philadelphia, helping several people get elected to local offices of Sheriff and District Attorney. He was appointed a Special Deputy Sheriff himself and later held the position of Real Estate Deputy. Additionally, Eckersley was the founder of the Lincoln Club in the city. James Eckersley died in 1921.¹¹ Upon the death of Mary Eckersley in 1954, the property passed to William A Adam through her will. Adam himself passed it on to Dena Winn in his own will in 1978 who in turn sold it to Northwestern Properties Group in 1984. That entity sold the property to a Margaret Grant Hawley later that same year and Hawley sold the property to its current owners, Nicolas and Mary Meloscia in 1993.¹²

⁶ Atlas of (the late borough of) Germantown, 1871.

⁷ *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide*, v.2, 1887, pg. 135.

⁸ Tatman, Sandra L., “Collon, Charles F.”, *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23012, accessed Aug 2024.

⁹ *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide*, v.1, 1886, pg. 518

¹⁰ Boyd’s Blue Book; A Directory from Selected Streets of Philadelphia and Surroundings, 1896, p. 324.

¹¹ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 Jan 1921, pg. 20

¹² All dates of sale or transfer of the property were gathered from the Transfer of Deed and Registry Plan records. The property can be located under 050N010058.

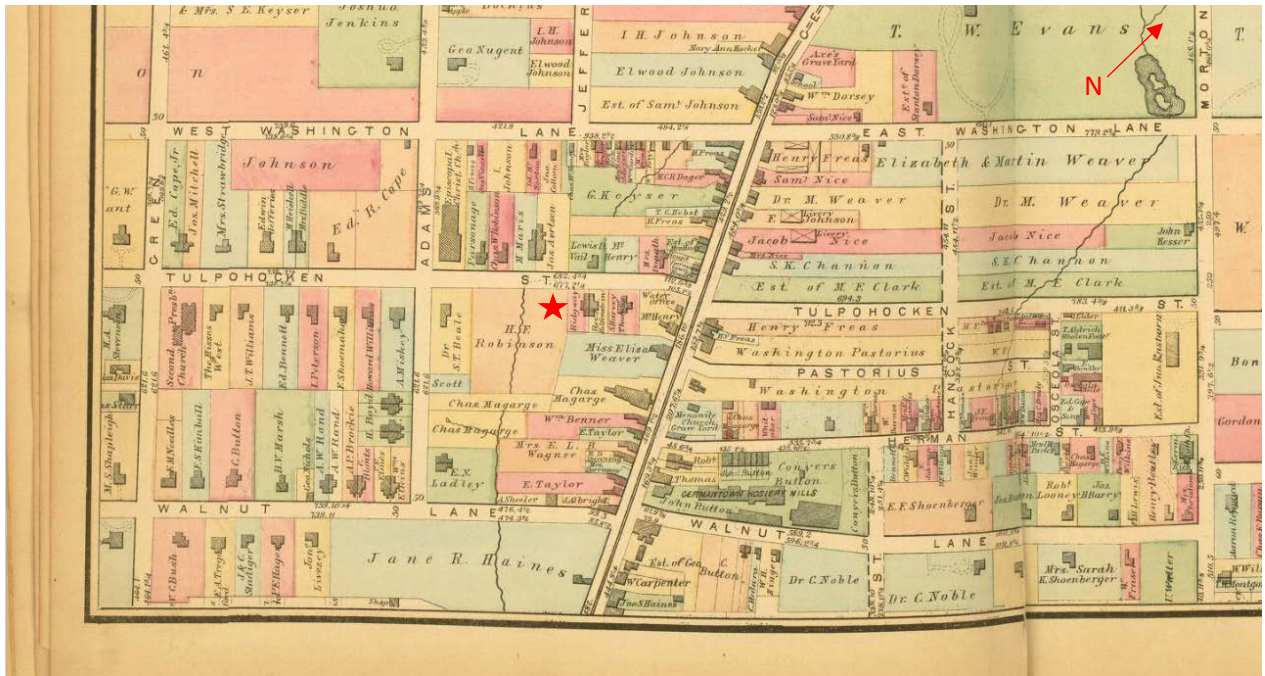


Figure 13: Map showing location of 40 W Tulphocken Street in 1871 before the house had been built, but much of the rest of first few blocks of W Tulphocken Street have been built up. Atlas of (the late borough of) Germantown, 1871.

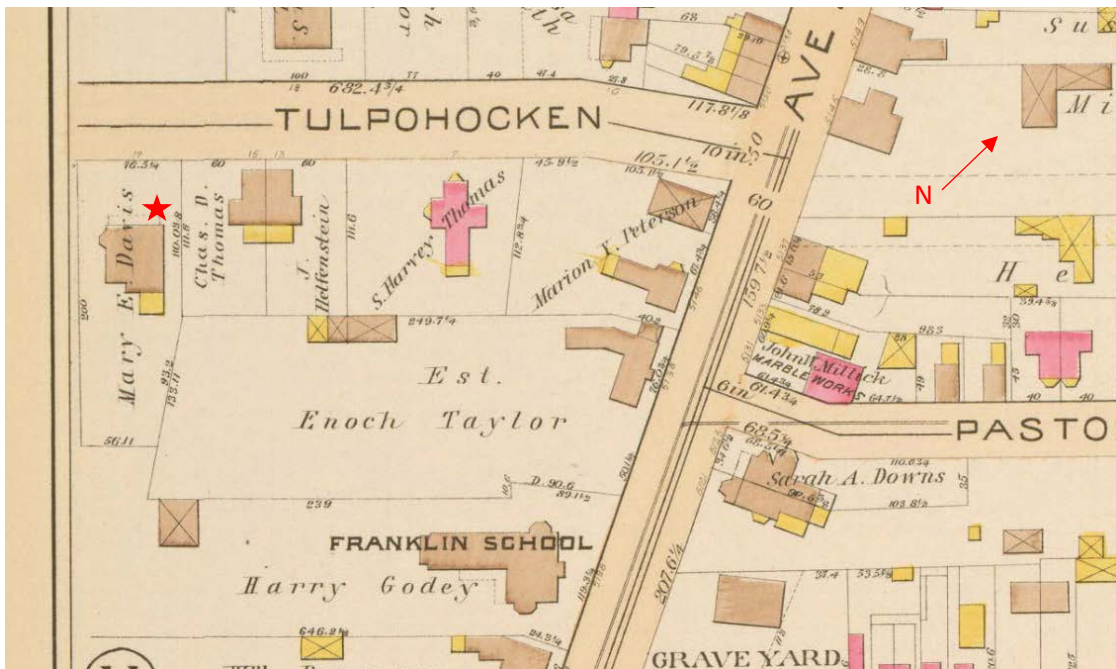


Figure 14: Map showing location of 40 W Tulphocken Street in 1889 while owned by Mary E Davis. Atlas the City of Philadelphia, Volume 7, 1889.

Criterion D, The Queen Anne Architecture Style:

The Queen Anne architectural style was one of the most popular styles used for residential buildings in America during the late Victorian period from about 1880 to 1910. It has its roots in England where the style was first created and promoted by Richard Norman Shaw along with other architects and artists associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th century. The English Queen Anne style aimed to capture the ideal of pre-industrial life and revived aspects of the medieval forms of the preceding Elizabethan and Jacobean eras in England. The style came to America via pattern books and architectural magazines and evolved from its English roots to take on a more distinct American version with numerous regional variations. Queen Anne buildings can be found across the country in various communities both large and small. The style is typified by contrast of forms, materials, and textures. It often employs asymmetrical massing, complex and steeply pitched roofs, and intricate surfaces and materials. It also frequently features elaborate elements such as corner towers, cross gables, bay windows, expansive porches with decorative spindlework and trim, and a multitude of patterned wall surfaces and decorative elements.^{13 14}

40 W Tulpehocken Street embodies many of the typical characteristics of the Queen Anne style. Although it presents a symmetrical face to the street, a detail that is not typically seen on Queen Anne buildings, its main facade features a full width first floor porch with turned columns and carved decorative pieces of trim along with a wide, steeply pitched hip roof with many dormers and cross sections. The walls are constructed of a textured mix of field stone on the first floor with red brick above. The projecting pedimented second floor porch and two forward facing dormers on the facade feature scalloped decorative shingles and the porch continues the decorative posts and brackets of the first floor. All of the first and second floor windows on the main block of the house also feature a very common Queen Anne light arrangement with a single large pane on the lower sashes and upper sashes that contain multiple small square panes arranged around a larger central pane. The secondary façades also contain many characteristically Queen Anne elements and none of them are symmetrical. The scalloped shingles appear in dormers on all remaining facades and there are additional cut out geometric spindlework panels on the north side dormers and ends of the porch. Additionally, smaller porches appear on the north and east facades with additional turned posts, the rear façade features a prominent forward facing cross gable, and the south façade contains a large projecting bay window with a roof that mimics the large overhanging eave of the main roof.

Architectural designs in the late Victorian era frequently diverged from rigid definitions of style and often, architects injected their own twists into their designs. In this case, the symmetrical front façade with its centrally placed double door and four points spread across the second-floor porch and dormers along the roof incorporate what would usually be characteristics seen on earlier period styles such as Gothic Revival. Even with some characteristics that depart from the Queen Anne style, 40 W Tulpehocken St stands as an excellent example of a late Victorian residential building that showcases many of the typical characteristics of Queen Anne along with the tendency of architects of the time to mix elements from multiple sources into their designs.

¹³Queen Anne Style (1880-1910)," *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide*. Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, 2015. < <https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/queen-anne.html>> Accessed on 9/11/24.

¹⁴ Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination for 125 W Walnut Lane, George T. Pearson Residence.



Figure 15: Details of the second-floor front porch and rear porch 40 W Tulpehocken Street, May 2024. Source: Author

Conclusion:

40 W Tulpehocken Street stands as an important example of Queen Anne architecture as seen on residential buildings in Philadelphia. The building satisfies Criterion D as an excellent example of the style and thus merits designation on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It additionally satisfies Criterion C as an excellent example of the progression of varied Victorian housing styles present in the Tulpehocken Station neighborhood. For these reasons, the property merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Bibliography:

- All dates of sale or transfer of the property were gathered from Philadelphia Transfer of Deed and Registry Plan records. The property can be located under 050N010058.
- Hopkins, Griffith Morgan; Hopkins, Henry W.; Smith, Weston R.; Huff, Samuel A., *Atlas of (the late borough of) Germantown, 1871*. Hopkins, G. M., 1871. Collection of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.
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- Queen Anne Style (1880-1910)," *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide*. Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, 2015.
<<https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/queen-anne.html>> Accessed on 9/11/24.
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