

**ADDRESS: 1429 W MAYFIELD ST**

Name of Resource: Revell House

Review: Designation

Property Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Philadelphia

Nominator: Roya Taheri, Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Allyson Mehley, allyson.mehley@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1429 W. Mayfield Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the property satisfies Criterion for Designation A. Under Criterion A, the nomination asserts that the house holds significant religious, historical and cultural value, owing to its association with a key moment in the early history of the Bahá'í Faith in the United States. The house is notable for its connection with the Revell family, particularly Mary J. Revell and her daughters, Jessie and Ethel Revell, all influential members of the early Bahá'í community in Philadelphia. It is also historically significant for being one of the locations visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his visit in North America in 1912. The proposed period of significance is 1910-1916, when the Revell family occupied the property.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that 1429 W. Mayfield Street satisfies Criterion for Designation A.



**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: 1429 W. Mayfield Street, Philadelphia, PA

Postal code: 19132

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: Revell House

Current/Common Name: Revell House

**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: Visits, prayers and meditation.

**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 1910 to 1916

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: Early 1880s

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Not known

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Not known

Original owner: Not known.

Other significant persons: Revell family resided in the house from 1910 to 1916.

**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 Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Philadelphia Date August 11, 2023

Name with Title Roya Taheri, PhD, Property Manager Email rtaheri@taheriarch.com

Street Address 2462 Bryn Mawr Avenue Telephone (215) 600-9812

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19131

Nominator  is  is not the property owner. Roya Taheri is representative of the owner

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: December 18, 2024

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: January 14, 2025

Date of Notice Issuance: January 17, 2025

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Philadelphia

Address: 2462 Bryn Mawr Avenue

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19131

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: February 19, 2025

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: March 14, 2025

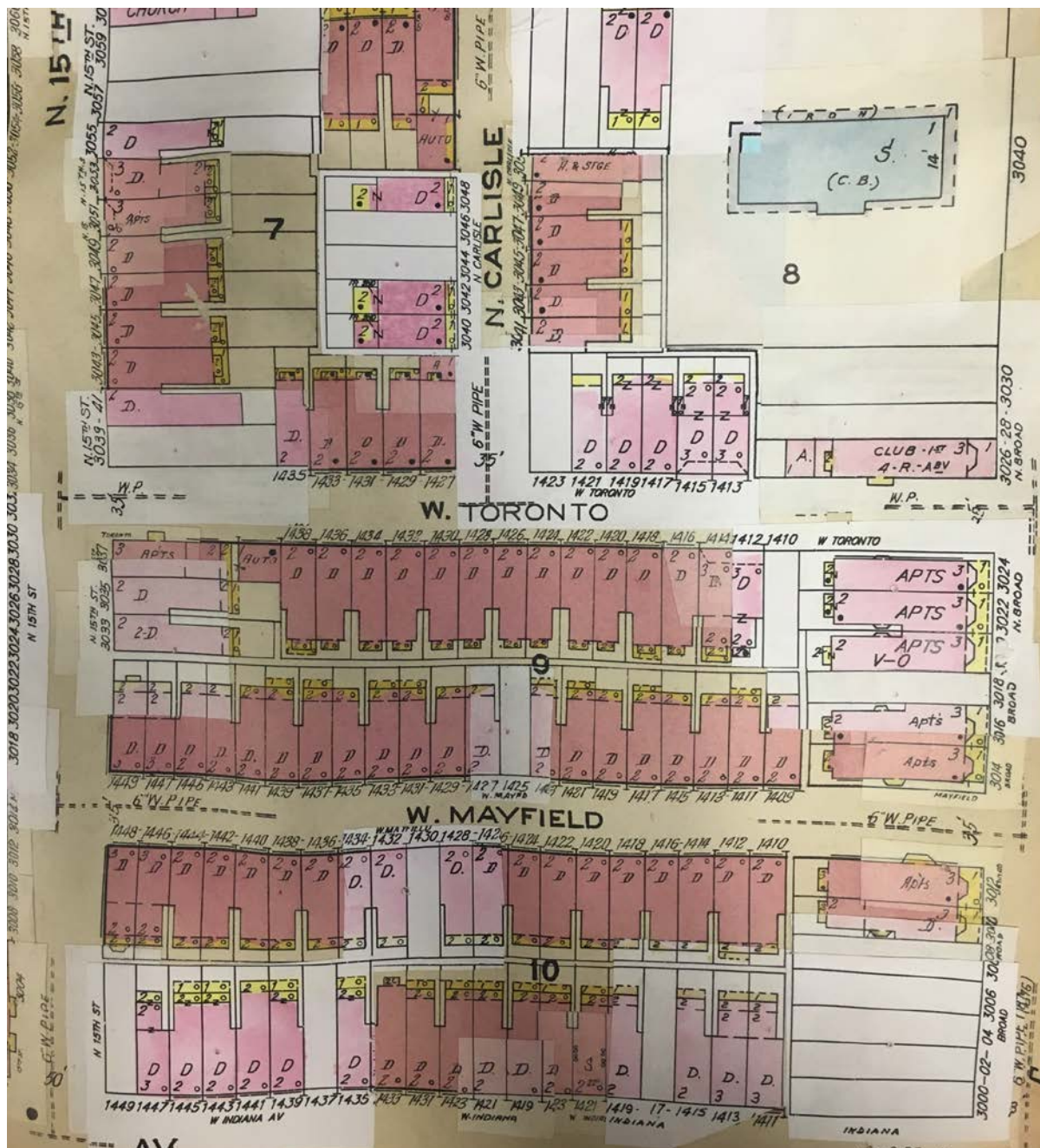
Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Designated  Rejected

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Revell House is situated on North side of the W. Mayfield Street, at the distance of Two Hundred Thirty feet Eight inches Westward from the West side of Broad Street in the 38<sup>th</sup> Ward of the City of Philadelphia. CONTAINING in front or breath on the said Mayfield Street, Fifteen feet and extending of that width in length or depth Northward between parallel lines at right angles to the said Mayfield Street Fifty one feet four inches to a certain three feet wide alley leading Westward into Fifteenth Street.<sup>1</sup>

A Sanborn map of the neighborhood of 1429 W. Mayfield Street is shown below.<sup>2</sup>



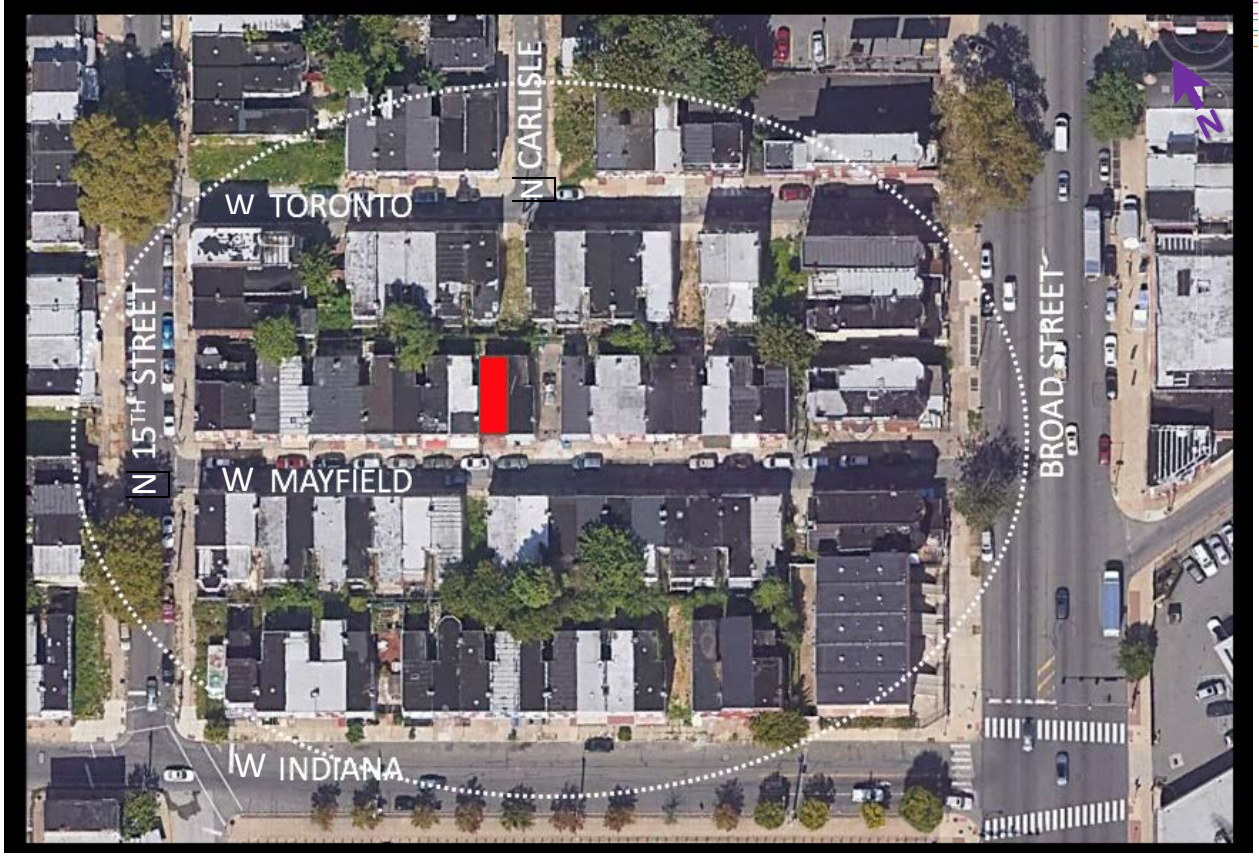
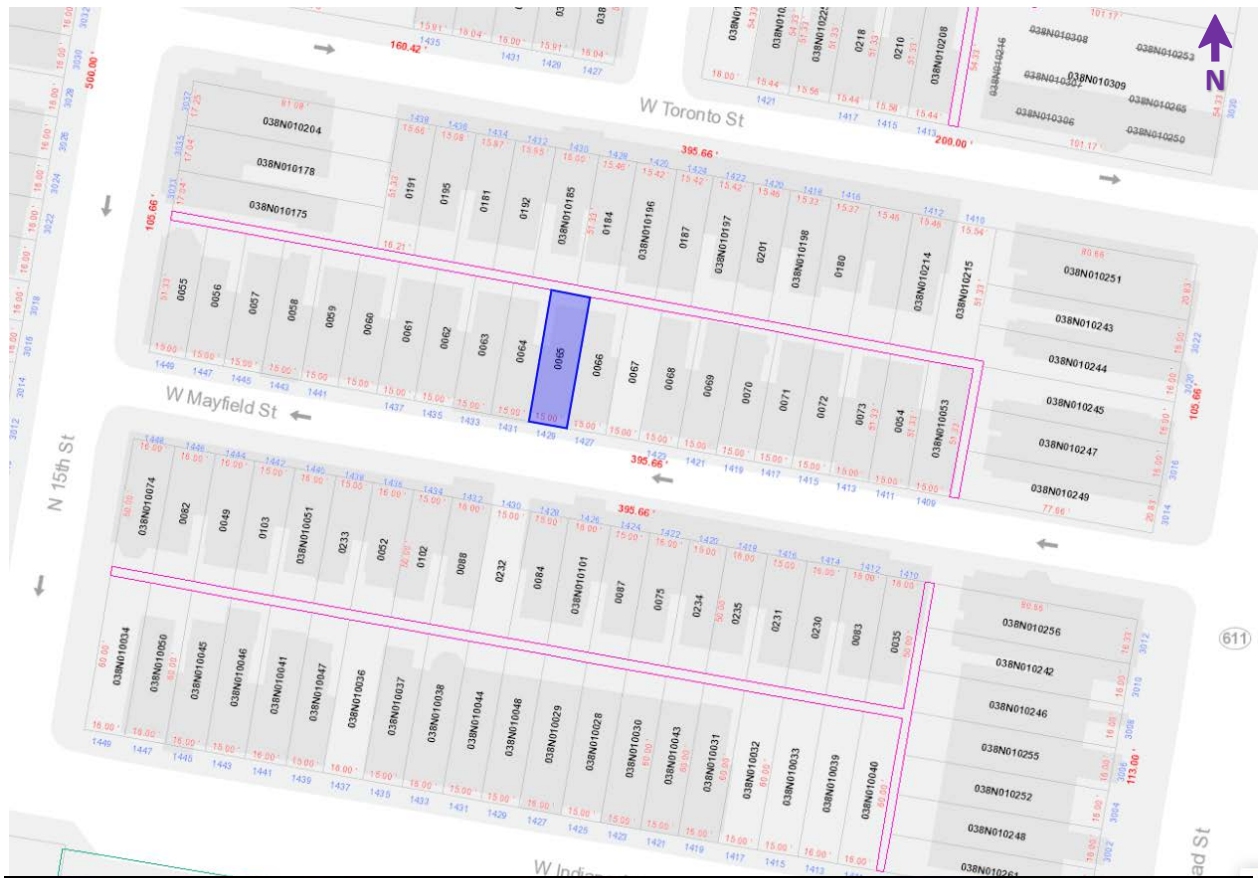
<sup>1</sup> Deed of the site recorded at ATLAS City of Philadelphia Records

<https://epay.phila-records.com/phillyepay/eagleweb/viewAttachment.jsp?id=DOCC50647608.A0&parent=DOCC50647608>

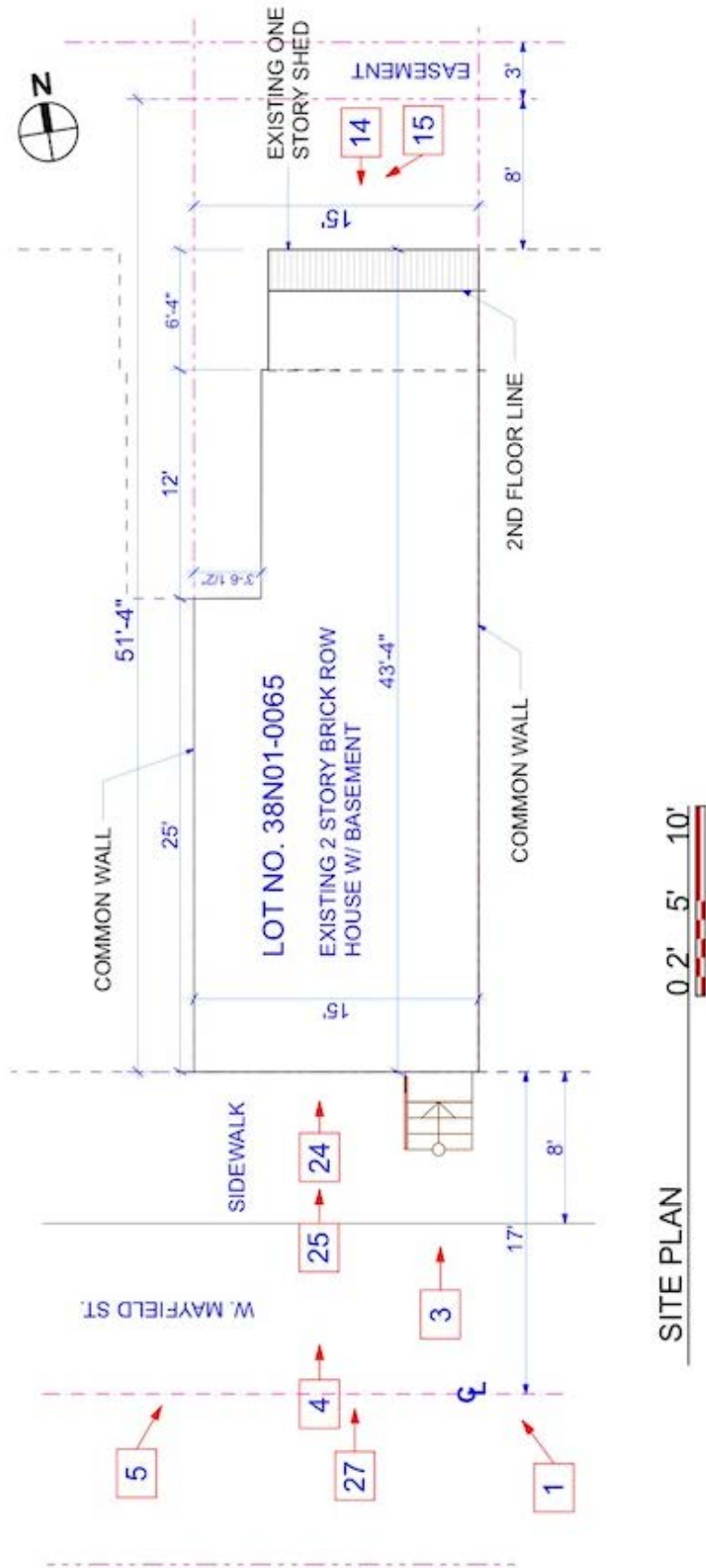
<sup>2</sup> Sanborn Maps of Philadelphia, Office of Planning Commission of City of Philadelphia



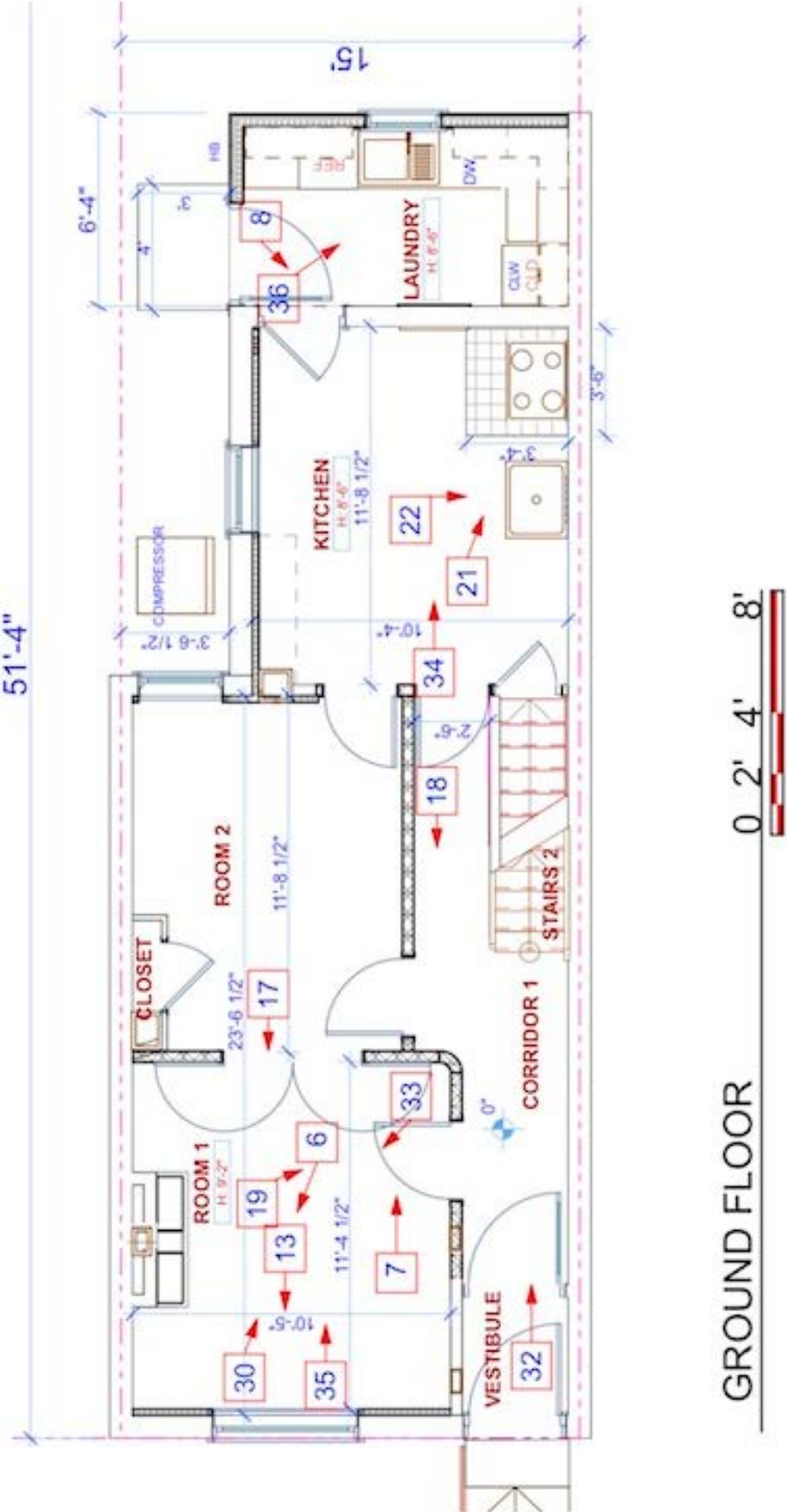
Site Map



SITE PLAN  
Photo locations

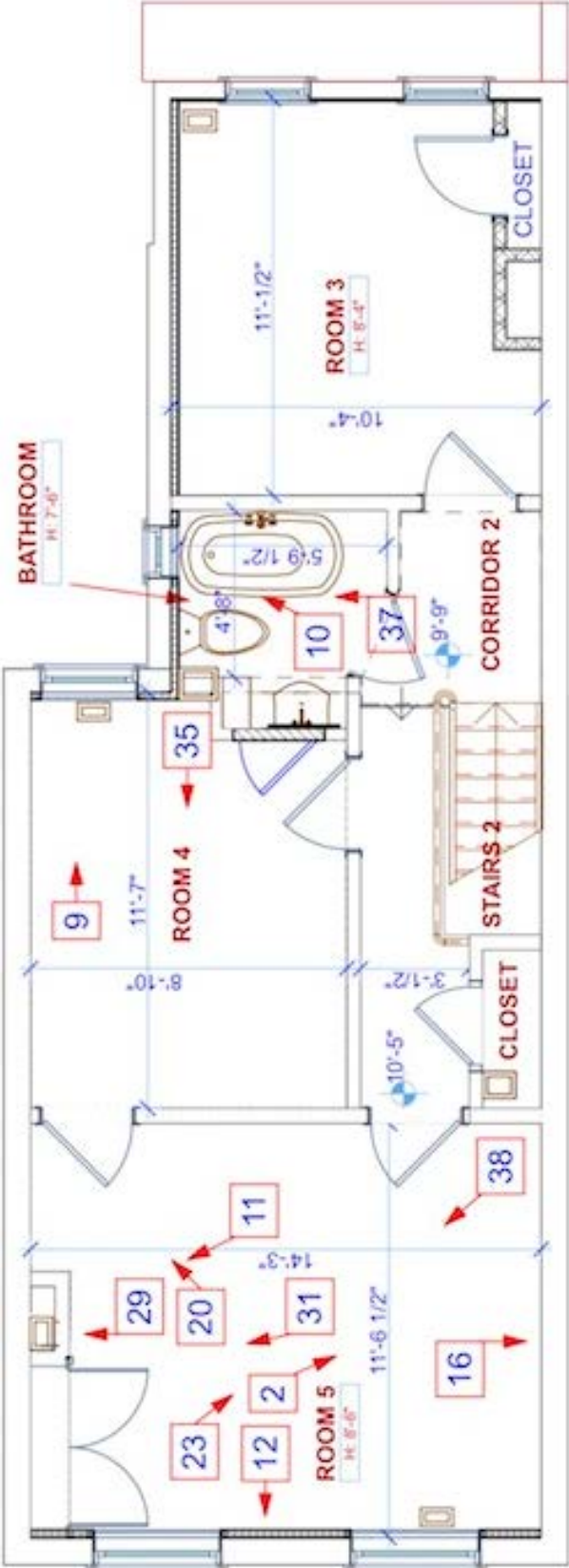


FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
Photo locations





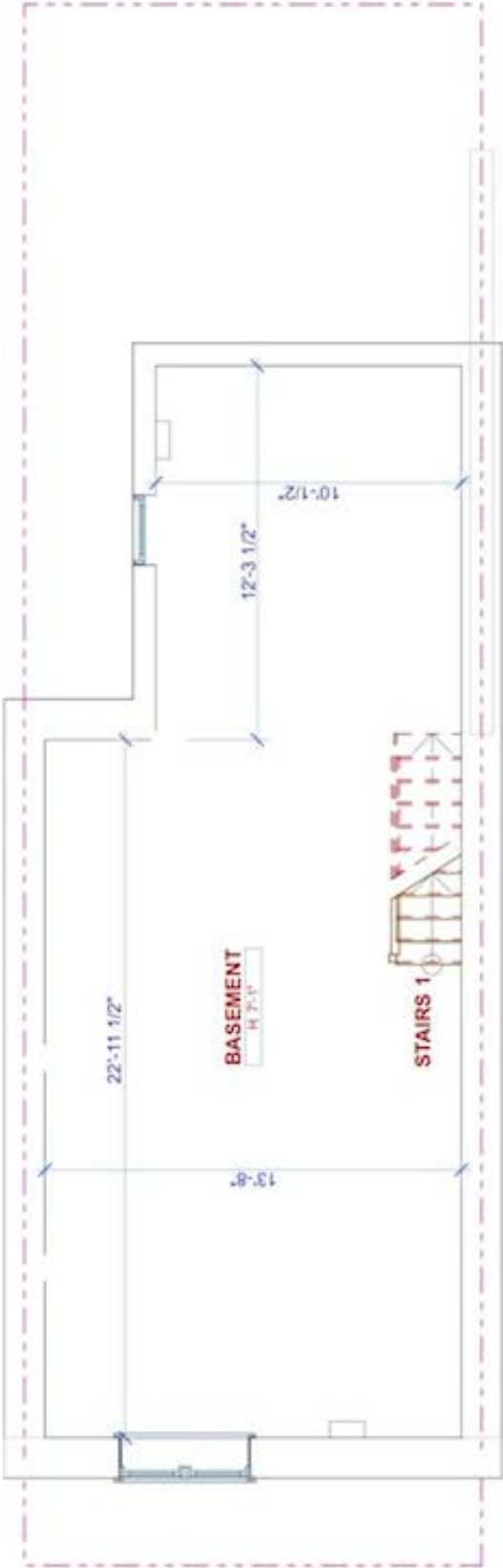
SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
Photo locations



2ND FLOOR



BASEMENT PLAN



## **6. DESCRIPTION**

The Revell House is a two-story and basement row house on West Mayfield Street in North Philadelphia. This house was built in the early 1880s, as a part of North Philadelphia (Workman's) housing development. It had an entry vestibule, shed kitchen, shallow closets, indoor plumbing and central heating typical of the period.<sup>3</sup>

The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Philadelphia purchased the house in 2003. The house was in a condition of disrepair and had been neglected for several decades. The Spiritual Assembly restored the property as closely as possible to its original state because of its historic and spiritual significance. A contract was signed with Marvin D. Fackenthall for the initial stages of rescuing this unique property, by securing doors and windows, as well as the roof.<sup>4</sup> Taheri Architecture was hired in 2011 to investigate and prepare restoration plans. Meanwhile, fundraising for the restorations began. In November 2014 the City of Philadelphia issued the permit for work to begin.

The footprint of the house is unchanged at all rooms. The only exception is the second-floor bathroom, where we encroached on the closet of the adjacent room to provide more space to fit the new lavatory sink, without any impact on the appearance of the closet. Effort was made to select fixtures to match the period. The kitchen north wall was masonry (brick) with a window, indicating that it was an exterior wall, and the shed behind it was exposed to weather. The party wall at east side and a canopy roof were assumed to be original. It is assumed that two walls were added at north and west sides at some point; however, at the time of obtaining the house, the shed had no door or flooring, and the added walls and canopy roof were damaged. In this project, the dilapidated open shed at the rear of the building was converted to a laundry/kitchen, which could be used by the potential caretaker and/or visitors.

During the pre-construction clean up and removal of layers of linoleum and wallpaper, the architects discovered the traces of the original location of partitions, the sink in the kitchen, and air registers of the original central heating. There was a gas line in the house; however, the original use is assumed to have been limited to the pendant light fixtures at the center of the ceilings, as gas pipes were found in the walls to these lights. No original light fixtures remained and new fixtures matching the period style were installed at the original locations in the ceilings.

It was assumed that the partitions between the first-floor front and middle room were removed after the Revell family residence in the house, considering the house was still relatively new in 1912, and the Revell family had only rented the house, and unlikely to have removed the partitions. Therefore, partitions were added at the location of the traces in the ceiling and floor, and doors at the location of traces on the wood floor. (photos 17, 18, 19)

All the original wood flooring was preserved, except for the kitchen, which was beyond repair. Wood panels similar in size and material were used to replace the kitchen floor, and some of the original sound wood panels removed from the kitchen were re-used to repair floors of other rooms throughout the house. Original floor panels were 3" (actual 2 7/8") tongue and groove subfloor. Borders and perimeters of the room floors were stained or painted, leaving center part unfinished for area rug or linoleum (photo 20). We applied light sanding and urethane to the flooring for protection.

There were no plumbing fixtures in place at the time of building purchase. The house was found equipped with hot-water radiator heating system, not original to the house and in poor condition. New plumbing fixtures were selected to represent the turn of the century period. The radiators were removed, and the original air ducts and ornamental registers refurbished. A new air-ducted gas furnace was installed instead of the original coal furnace. The architects visited the neighboring houses and salvaged an ornamental wardrobe trim to rebuild the missing one from the second-floor front bedroom.

John Milner Associates, a Historic Preservation Specialist, was retained to perform historic paint analysis to determine the original finish of the doors and window trims as well as floors and masonry mortar and provide finish recommendations. The paint analysis and recommendations are provided in an illustrated

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<sup>3</sup> Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual, Rachel Simmons Schade, AIA, Schade and Bolender architects, City of Philadelphia 2008

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Fackenthall was selected later to complete the full renovation/restoration work at the Revell House.

report for the community. Faux graining techniques were employed to give pine wood, the appearance of mahogany.<sup>5</sup> Volunteers scraped and removed paint from all original doors and trim woodwork in a tedious labor, to be refinished to the original color by a professional painter and artist Robert Barbeau using faux paint technique. Most of the trims could be re-used; however, a few damaged beyond repair were replaced with new millwork. None of the original wall papers had remained, and it was decided to paint the walls and apply appropriate wallpaper to a second-floor room based on a period photograph.

The original plaster/lath ceilings and walls were had been damaged due to water infiltration at a few exterior and interior locations. To facilitate installation of new wiring, ductwork and plumbing pipes, the lath and plaster were removed at a few locations and replaced by GWB panels. The exterior walls and attic space received insulation for energy efficiency. New partitions and doors were added at first floor, restoring it to the original layout.

The staircase and bannisters were repaired, paint removed and repainted to match original. Only four balusters that were damaged beyond repair or missing needed to be replaced.

Decorations of the house were planned by Melanie Etemad, the proctor, and Joe Bolton, the archive manager, to recreate an atmosphere close to 1912. A chair used by Abdu'l-Baha during His talk is exhibited at the front room where He gave the talk. The Revell House Dedication was held on Sunday February 23, 2020.

#### Exterior Elevation

The exterior front wall is an original running course brick with and ornamental brick cornice. The front and rear brick walls were repointed and repaired lightly with a mortar close to their original color. The existing and broken windows and exterior trim were deteriorated beyond repair and a complete replacement was necessary. The location of all doors and windows were kept as original. The windows and trim were replaced in-kind with aluminum-clad wood, double-hung windows mimicking the original look and trim profiles. The front entrance door and frame were beyond repair and was replicated and milled to the original design from a historic picture.

After careful evaluation, Pella Windows provided the most flexibility and options for trim and right finishes. Property managers visited the site several times to measure and document the existing window profiles from what had remained. The lintels, steps and water-table at front facade of the house are made of brownstone. Brownstone was widely used as building material from the mid-1800s until the early-1900s. Unfortunately, its layered composition and high porosity means that brownstone deteriorates easily.<sup>6</sup> Mara Restoration was employed to repair and restore the damaged brownstone.

A window grille was missing when the house was obtained (Photo 24). With the help of volunteers, a metal grille very similar to the original that a few houses still had, was refurbished as close as possible (Photos 26, 27). Overall façade features were preserved close to the original (Photo 39). A railing to match the existing neighborhood railing was added in 2023 (Photo 40).

The rear façade consisted of deteriorated metal at the upper part (Photo 14) and siding at lower level (Photo 15). As part of the renovation, the exterior wall of second floor was insulated and weather tight and received new cement board siding. The first-floor shed was originally only an outdoor space with part of second-floor overhang over it, providing protection from rain. This outdoor space had been enclosed at a later date but was deteriorated and exposed to the weather, had a mud floor, and no door. This space was replaced completely, and a laundry/kitchen room was built in its place (Photo 41). The back yard access path is shown in Photo 42, which also shows the repaired windows, as well as a transparent cover for the basement window well.

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<sup>5</sup> Paint Analysis Report by Catherine Subick, John Milner Architects, Inc., 2/27/2017

<sup>6</sup> The Brownstone Guide, Maintenance & Repair Facts for Historic Property Owners, New York Landmarks Conservancy Technical Services Center, 2003

**List of Photographs**

<b>Photo #</b>	<b>1914 The Revell house exterior 1914</b>	<b>Camera Facing</b>
1	1914 The Revell house exterior	North
2	1914 Photo of 2nd Floor South Bedroom (photographer unknown)	East
3	1914 Mrs. Mary Revell at the front door (photographer Unknown)	North
4	1914 Revell family -Front window (photographer unknown)	North
5	2003 The Revell House Front Facade (photo by Joe Bolton)	NE
6	2003-7 Front Room at the time of purchase (photo by Joe Bolton)	SW
7	2003-7 Dining Kitchen stairs to 2nd floor (photo by Joe Bolton)	North
8	2003-7 Door to Back Shed (photo by Joe Bolton)	
9	2003-7 2nd Floor Mid-room (photo by Joe Bolton)	North
10	2003-7 2nd fl Bathroom (photo by Joe Bolton)	West
11	2012-3 2nd fl south bedroom -	West
12	2011-10 Wall Papers 2nd fl south Room (photo by Roya Taheri)	South
13	2011-10 Interior front Room Window Base Panel	South
14	2011-10 Rear Facade- Second Floor and Shed Canopy Roof	South
15	2011-10 Architects, at rear yard. Part of Shed visible	SW
16	2011-10 Measurement of Base Board	
17	2013-4 Wall and door Trace on floor, 1st Floor Front Room	East
18	2011-10 Wall Traces at Ceiling, 1st Floor Front Room	South
19	2013-1 Wall Traces at Ceiling uncovered, 1st Floor Front Room	East
20	2013-4 Stain on Floor margins, 2nd Floor, South Room	NW
21	2013-1 Kitchen duct above original stove	NE
22	2013-1 Kitchen sink location uncovered	East
23	2011-10 Ceiling and light, 2nd floor South Room	NE
24	2011-4 Front Facade Brown Stone deterioration, window grille missing	North
25	2017-12 Front Facade Brown Stone after Restoration	South
26	2011-10 Basement window Grille at a neighbor house	North
27	2020-2 Basement window Grille restored, volunteers, photo: M. Etemad	North
28	2013-3 Laundry Room Addition construction	SE
29	2011-10 Original Air Outlet uncovered, 2nd Floor South Room	West
30	2015-2 Paint Analysis by Catherine Subick, John Milner Architects	North
31	2019-8 Wardrobe with salvaged frame and Air outlet	West
32	2020-12 View from Entrance (photo by Massoud Mohadjeri)	North
33	2020-5 Front Room 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor – after restoration	SW
34	2020-5 Kitchen after restoration	North
35	2020-5 Front Room view with added partition, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor	South
36	2020-5 Shed modified to Laundry Room	NW
37	2020-5 Bathroom restored, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor	East
38	2020-5 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor South Bedroom	SW
39	2023-10 Front Façade view	South
40	2023-11 Railing Addition (photo by Massoud Mohadjeri)	NW
41	2019-7 Rear Shed Siding	South
42	2020-5 Back yard	South
43	1961 Jessie and Ethel Revell as members of International Baha’i Council ( <a href="https://bahai.media/File:International_Baha%27i_Council_at_Bahji,_June_1961.png">https://bahai.media/File:International Baha%27i Council at Bahji, June 1961.png</a> )	



## **7. SIGNIFICANCE**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Revell House, located at 1429 W. Mayfield Street in the Tioga neighborhood of Philadelphia, meets Criterion A for designation. The house holds significant religious, historical and cultural value due to its association with a key moment in the early history of the Bahá'í Faith in the United States. The house is notable for its connection with the Revell family, particularly Mary J. Revell and her daughters, Jessie and Ethel Revell, all influential members of the early Bahá'í community in Philadelphia. It is also historically significant for being one of the locations visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his sojourn in North America in 1912—a visit that had a profound impact on the growth and public recognition of the Bahá'í Faith in the United States and beyond.

The significance of the Revell House is primarily in its association with the visit of Abdu'l-Bahá in 1912. Abdu'l-Bahá is the most important figure in the Baha'i Faith after Baha'u'llah, the prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith. He is considered the Center of the Covenant of the Faith, appointed by Baha'u'llah Himself. Baha'u'llah, understood by Baha'is to be the bearer of Divine revelation, named His son Abdu'l-Baha as the one to Whom the faithful should turn for guidance after His (Baha'u'llah's) passing, in order to protect the faith from schism. In 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá embarked on a historic journey to North America, where he visited several cities, including New York, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia. His visit marked a pivotal moment in the development of the Bahá'í Faith in the United States and Canada, as he engaged with individuals, communities, and intellectuals, spreading the message of unity, peace, and social justice. Over the course of Abdu'l-Baha's eight-month sojourn in the United States in 1912, this unique figure in religious history was the object of intense interest from the general public, the press, and from distinguished civic and religious leaders, scholars, and other notables. He spent time only in selected cities, thus His choice of Philadelphia to receive a visit was a signal honor for the Baha'i community. He gave a speech at the house of the Revells encouraging the small group of followers to be united and arise to serve the community. This house was the only private residence He visited during His visits to Philadelphia.

The second significance of the Revell House is its association with the Baha'i Faith. It was the center of Philadelphia Baha'i community activity when the Revell family lived there between 1909 and 1914. Since that time, the Baha'i community has grown from a handful of individuals to over 500 in the Philadelphia area. The Bahá'í Faith, founded by Bahá'u'lláh in the mid-19th century, is an international monotheistic religion that emphasizes the oneness of humanity, the equality of all people, and the unity of the world's religions. It is the newest of the world's major religions and is established in more than 100,000 localities in virtually every country and territory around the world.<sup>7</sup>

The third significance is association with the Revell Family. Mrs. Mary J. Revell and four of her six children lived at 1429 Mayfield Street in the years noted. Mary was known to Baha'is as "Mother Revell" for her foundational role in establishing the Baha'i Faith in Philadelphia. Although there were Baha'is in the city from 1897, it was not until the Revell family embraced the faith in 1906 that the community was set upon a firm footing. Mrs. Revell was teaching the Baha'i Faith and its principles of unity and race amity until the end of her life. All her children were active in the religion to some extent; Jessie and Ethel, like their mother, were founding members of the community and of the Spiritual Assembly (governing council). All three played important roles locally and nationally.

### **BACKGROUND:**

#### **The Baha'i Faith**

Throughout history, God has sent to humanity a series of divine Educators—known as Manifestations of God—whose teachings have provided the basis for the advancement of civilization. These Manifestations have included Abraham, Krishna, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad. Bahá'u'lláh, the latest of these Messengers, explained that the religions of the world come from the same Source and are in essence successive chapters of one religion from God.

Bahá'ís believe the crucial need facing humanity is to find a unifying vision of the future of society and of the nature and purpose of life. Such a vision unfolds in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

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<sup>7</sup> The Baha'i Faith, <https://www.bahai.org/>

The Bahá'í Faith began with the mission entrusted by God to two Divine Messengers—the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Today, the distinctive unity of the Faith They founded stems from explicit instructions given by Bahá'u'lláh that have assured the continuity of guidance following His passing. This line of succession, referred to as the Covenant, went from Bahá'u'lláh to His Son 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and then from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to His grandson, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh. A Bahá'í accepts the divine authority of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh and of these appointed successors.

#### The Báb (1819-1850)

The Báb is the Herald of the Bahá'í Faith. In the middle of the 19th century, He announced that He was the bearer of a message destined to transform humanity's spiritual life. His mission was to prepare the way for the coming of a second Messenger from God, greater than Himself, who would usher in an age of peace and justice.

#### Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892)

Bahá'u'lláh—the “Glory of God”—is the Promised One foretold by the Báb and all of the Divine Messengers of the past. Bahá'u'lláh delivered a new Revelation from God to humanity. Thousands of verses, letters and books flowed from His pen. In His Writings, He outlined a framework for the development of a global civilization which takes into account both the spiritual and material dimensions of human life. For this, He endured 40 years of imprisonment, torture and exile.

#### 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844-1921)

In His will, Bahá'u'lláh appointed His oldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the authorized interpreter of His teachings and Head of the Faith. Throughout the East and West, 'Abdu'l-Bahá became known as an ambassador of peace, an exemplary human being, and the leading exponent of a new Faith.

#### Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957)

Appointed Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, spent 36 years systematically nurturing the development, deepening the understanding, and strengthening the unity of the Bahá'í community, as it increasingly grew to reflect the diversity of the entire human race.

#### The Universal House of Justice (established 1963)

The development of the Bahá'í Faith worldwide is today guided by the Universal House of Justice. In His book of laws, Bahá'u'lláh instructed the Universal House of Justice to exert a positive influence on the welfare of humankind, promote education, peace and global prosperity, and safeguard human honour and the position of religion.<sup>8</sup> The Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois is registered under U.S. National Register of Historic Places.<sup>9</sup>

The Baha'i Faith began in America with its first public mention at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Baha'u'llah was quoted during the World parliament of Religions saying, “..... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.”<sup>10</sup>

### **National and Local significance of the Revell House**

The visit of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the son of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, within 50 years of the religion's founding in Persia, now Iran, formed a remarkable series of events that is unparalleled in world religions.<sup>11</sup> This was the age of the so-called Third Great Awakening in the United States between the late 1850s and the early twentieth century that began with the Abolition movement and the Civil War and continued to prompt the founding of numerous religious organizations and movements until its energies dissipated in the aftermath of the first World War. Simultaneously, there was a rising tide of anti-Black sentiment in Philadelphia and elsewhere. Just a few miles west of Philadelphia in 1911, a Black steelworker had been

<sup>8</sup> The Baha'i Faith, <https://www.bahai.org/>

<sup>9</sup> Wikipedia; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%BC%C3%AD\\_House\\_of\\_Worship\\_\(Wilmette,\\_Illinois\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%BC%C3%AD_House_of_Worship_(Wilmette,_Illinois))

<sup>10</sup> Abdu'l-Baha in America. 1912-2012, Calling America to its Spiritual Destiny

<https://centenary.bahai.us/photo/first-public-mention-bahai-faith-america-world-parliament-religions-1893>

<sup>11</sup> Wikipedia: ['Abdu'l-Bahá's journeys to the West - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/'Abdu'l-Bahá's_journeys_to_the_West)[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/'Abdu'l-Bahá's\\_journeys\\_to\\_the\\_West](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/'Abdu'l-Bahá's_journeys_to_the_West)

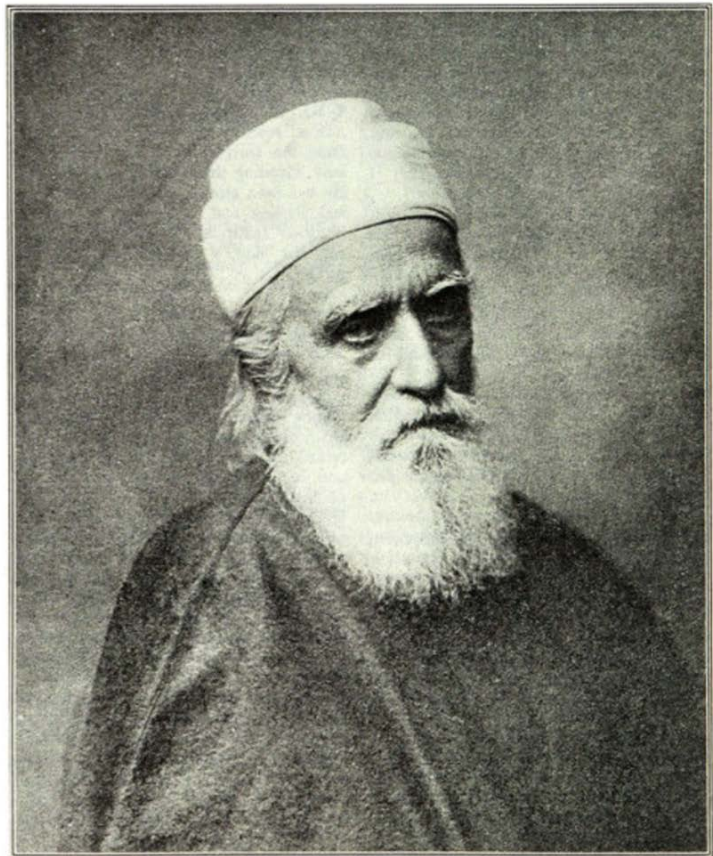
lynched. In these contexts, it was significant that two nationally important religious leaders located in Philadelphia welcomed 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to the city to speak to their congregations.

Under the caption, A PERSIAN TEACHER, W.E.B. DuBois had already written with great enthusiasm earlier in 1912 in *The Crisis* magazine, "On April 12 Abdul Baha, the head of the religious movement known as Bahatism [the Baha'i Faith], arrived in America to visit his rapidly increasing band of followers. His coming is of particular interest to those of us who believe in the brotherhood of man, for that is the doctrine the Baha'is emphasize above all other things." This was the first of three major articles featuring 'Abdu'l-Baha that DuBois was to publish in *The Crisis* in that year. Included in the June issue of the magazine was the full text of 'Abdu'l-Baha's address to the national convention of the NAACP. DuBois also featured a disproportionately large picture of Him the following month in his "Men of the Month" section.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the stage was set in Philadelphia, then an active center of opposition to the growing racial antagonism, when Pastor Kenneth Evans of Spring Garden Unitarian Church, who was in correspondence with DuBois, welcomed 'Abdu'l-Baha to speak at his church. Kenneth Evans was noted for his championing of school desegregation in Philadelphia, while Abdu'l-Baha was known for Baha'u'llah's promotion of the unity of mankind as one of the Baha'i Faith's primary teachings.

At the same time Russell Conwell, founder of Temple University, who had already visited 'Abdu'l-Baha in Palestine during His imprisonment, also repeatedly urged Him to come to Philadelphia and address his congregation.

'Abdu'l-Baha spoke to large congregations on the subject of tolerance and unity of mankind at both churches and elsewhere. The audience for His talk at Dr. Conwell's Baptist Temple exceeded 2,500 souls. In his public and private talks while in Philadelphia, Abdu'l-Baha called for racial equality. This was a major theme of his addresses throughout his nearly nine-months' tour of North America at a time when racial segregation was the norm and African Americans in Northern and Southern states were denied human dignity and the rights of citizens as a matter of course. Among the fruits of Abdu'l-Baha's teaching were a widespread series of Race Amity Conferences, including one held in Philadelphia in 1924.



ABDUL BAHA. THE PERSIAN TEACHER OF BROTHERHOOD

Illustration from The Crisis magazine

<sup>12</sup> Black Perspectives, W.E.B. Du Bois and the Baha'i Faith, October 16, 2016, AAHS; <https://www.aaihs.org/w-e-b-du-bois-and-the-bahai-faith/>

It was during this visit that 'Abdu'l-Baha was able to speak to the fledgling local Bahá'í community at their center of activity, the row home on Mayfield Street. Not only had it been for two years the center of all Delaware Valley Bahá'í activities, but it had also through the efforts of the Revell family played an important role in supporting both national and international Bahá'í activities. Because the two Revell sisters, Jessie and Ethel, had both received business training and had strong secretarial skills they acted for many years as a clearing house for communications between the Bahá'í world center in Palestine and the growing American Bahá'í community. As soon as a missive was received by the latest steamship, the Revells would set to work retyping it on onion skin and sending it out promptly to dozens of communities in the United States and Canada. The home of the Revells constituted not only a local center but also a national communications hub. These two sisters would continue to provide vital services locally, nationally, and eventually internationally until the end of their lives. (Photo 43)<sup>13 14</sup>

Already in the period around 1912 the Revell home was also the site of international events and undertakings of significance to the developing Bahá'í community which was still under religious proscription in many Muslim countries including the land of its birth, Persia.

The visit of Abdu'l-Baha to the 1429 Mayfield Street home of leading Philadelphia Baha'i member Mrs. Mary Jane Revell and her family is also significant in that the house is one of only four of over 25 private homes visited by Abdu'l-Baha in the United States and Canada that are now owned and preserved by the Baha'i community. The Revell house was the only private residence in Philadelphia visited by Abdu'l-Baha and was designated by him as the "Baha'i Home".

The Baha'i history, like that of any other religion, is filled with heroic figures and events, crisis and victory, recorded in the annals of history. Abdul-Baha, the son of the prophet founder of the Baha'i Faith, was freed in his later years after over 40 years of exile in the prison city of Akka.

He took on a two- and half- year travel through Europe and North America at the invitations of many noble and philanthropic figures and presented talks and visited Baha'i communities.<sup>15</sup>

He visited Philadelphia on his luminous journey to the North America continent on June 8, 1912. Dr. Conwell, the founder of the Temple University, had invited Him.

### **Visit to the Revell House:**

Abdu'l-Baha Visited the Revell House on Monday, June 10, 1912. The Master's Visit at the Home of Mrs. Revell:

"At 9:30 Monday morning, 'Abdul-Bahá went to the home of Mrs. Mary J. Revell, where a meeting had been arranged. There were about fifty people present. 'Abdul-Bahá went into every room of the home and seemed very happy. He sat in a rocker by the front window and spoke these blessed words to all: 'This is a meeting, the members of which are stranded together like pearls and all the pearls are brilliant, for all are Bahá'ís. The brilliancy of these pearls is not known for the present; their brilliancy will be known later on. Thank ye God that He has drawn you together through the Blessed Perfection. He has made you fruitful like unto trees. He has made you like unto a rose garden, the freshness of which will be known in the future. When the heat and rays of the Sun of Reality shine in the future, then the freshness and beauty of these flowers will be realized. In brief, render thanks to God, for your spirits are gladdened with the glad tidings of God. Be forgetful of all other thoughts. Be filled with the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh. Your thoughts must be of Bahá'u'lláh. Your mention must be of Bahá'u'lláh. Your life must be devoted to Bahá'u'lláh. Your firmness must be evident in Bahá'u'lláh, for Bahá'u'lláh has endured for your sake infinite vicissitudes. All His life He was subject to persecutions. During the nights, He was not at rest. He did not sleep in peace for one night, - not one. Never did He find peace and composure. All His life He was subject to persecution. All His life He was exiled. All His life He was imprisoned. Therefore, we must be loyal to Him; turn our faces to Him; praise His mention in this world; expound His teachings; quicken people with His Spirit, so that His Heavenly Image may descend, and His Heavenly Power affect the hearts. Thus, every day may we find a new spirit, every day may we make a new resolution, every day may we be confirmed and illumine the world of

<sup>13</sup> Bahaipedia; [https://bahaipedia.org/Jessie\\_Revell](https://bahaipedia.org/Jessie_Revell) , [https://bahaipedia.org/Ethel\\_Revell](https://bahaipedia.org/Ethel_Revell)

<sup>14</sup> Bahaipedia; [https://bahaipedia.org/International\\_Bahá'í\\_Council](https://bahaipedia.org/International_Bahá'í_Council)

<sup>15</sup> Wikipedia; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CA%BBAbdu%27I-Bah%C3%A1%27s\\_journeys\\_to\\_the\\_West#On\\_the\\_RMS\\_Cedric](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CA%BBAbdu%27I-Bah%C3%A1%27s_journeys_to_the_West#On_the_RMS_Cedric)



humanity. We must supplicate day and night, beg assistance and confirmation from His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh that we may become pure mirrors, that the rays of sincerity may perfect them, the virtues of the human world appear, the moralities of the Kingdom be reflected and that we may attain the high station of happiness. This is my advice to you. This is my bequest for you. This is my hope for you.'

All day Monday He gave private interviews.

After the meeting in the morning at Mrs. Revell's home He met the friends who wished a personal word. After having seen most of them He slept for a few moments. Between one and two o'clock, two of the Bahá'ís went to the hotel and found 'Abdu'l-Bahá there alone. He talked to them in English. To one of them He said, "Why were you not at the Bahá'í home this morning? All the Bahá'ís were there. You should have been at this Bahá'í home." He was smiling and very happy.

At three o'clock 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His party took the train back to New York City. Although an indescribable feeling of sadness came over each and every one, still they know the Sun shall never set for Philadelphia again; she will go on and on until all promises are fulfilled, and the true spirit of "brotherly love" be fully realized. For 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said so and His words give life and are creative."<sup>16</sup>

This house was the only private residence He visited during His visits to Philadelphia. It was the center of Philadelphia Baha'i community activity when the Revell family lived there between 1909 and 1914.<sup>17</sup> Upon learning of the Spiritual Assembly's purchase of the house, the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing institution of the Baha'i Faith, wrote, "It is hoped that this building may again serve as a source of unity and spiritual upliftment for the community around it."<sup>18</sup>

The house, at present, is a place of pilgrimage for Baha'ís and serves visitors and neighborhood children and families.

### **The Revell Family<sup>19</sup>**

First Baha'i Community activities in Philadelphia are reported from 1897. However, throughout the years the community weakened. The Revells reconstituted the community after it fell apart, and the community has persisted unbroken from that time onward.

In addition to the visiting teachers and efforts of Elizabeth Stewart, it was only with the enrollment of the Revell family in 1906, that the Baha'í Faith in Philadelphia began to grow again as a community. Once she heard of the Faith from her sister Annie McKinney, Mrs. Mary Jane Revell along with her son William and daughters Jessie, Ethel, Mary, and Rebecca formed a hub of Baha'i activity. Wherever they lived, especially Mrs. Revell and her daughters Jessie and Ethel, that residence served as de-facto Baha'i headquarters for Philadelphia.

Like most American Baha'ís at that time, before joining the Bahai Faith Mrs. Revell and her children were protestant Christians. They attended Philadelphia's Fairhill Baptist Church and shared their new Faith with their church's congregation and leadership. By the time the Revells were living on Mayfield Street, half the community of about 20 people were former members of Mrs. Revell's church.

### **Local Philadelphia Baha'i activities of Revell family at the Revell House 1910 to 1914<sup>20</sup>**

In the early years of the twentieth century members of the Revell family emerged prominently as leaders in the Baha'i community of Philadelphia. While informational and devotional meetings were hosted by different households in rotation, wherever the Revell family lived their home served as Philadelphia's Baha'i headquarters. By April 1910, when the family had moved to 1429 Mayfield Street, Jessie Revell was serving as secretary for the Baha'i community of Philadelphia and continued to do so for the next 40 years. With the

<sup>16</sup> Star of the West, Vol. V, No. 6, p. 90

<sup>17</sup> Doc.1

<sup>18</sup> The Universal House of Justice, private message of 8 May 2003, to the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Philadelphia

<sup>19</sup> Documents provided by the Baha'i Community of Philadelphia, Archive Manager: Joseph Bolton, including photos, letters, individuals' accounts.

<sup>20</sup> Department of Commerce & Labor -Bureau of the Census, Census of the United States: 1910-Population, PA, Philadelphia

help of leading Baha'i travel teacher Isabella Brittingham, they introduced Baha'i children's classes and the Baha'i worship service, the Nineteen-day Feast.

By the time the Revells were living on Mayfield Street, half the community of about 20 people were former members of Mrs. Revell's church.

During this period, Mary Revell served as delegate to the national convention of the organization then known as the Bahai Temple Unity. This body evolved into the National Spiritual Assembly, the governing institution for the Baha'is of the United States to this day.

### **National and International Baha'i activities coordinated at the Revell home**

In addition to assisting in the development of local organization, the Revell home also assisted in national and international Baha'i initiatives. After almost a year living at the Mayfield Street address, Abdu'l-Baha wrote to Jessie Revell as secretary, to thank the Philadelphia Baha'i community for its efforts internationally as well as nationally and locally., "You have written that you will provide for the education of a girl as well as one boy in Tehran (then Persia's Baha'i sponsored Tarbiat school). Mutual co-operation between the East and the West is very acceptable. Likewise, the contribution toward the Translator's fund and the Mashrak-el-Askar (Refers to the Baha'i Temple project in Chicago) are also essential."<sup>21</sup>

In 1910, the Revell home was also the residence of Elizabeth H. Stewart, a nurse who participated in an important international project initiated by Abdu'l-Baha to bring to Iranians of all faiths modern education and healthcare. In 1911, Elizabeth Stewart left the Revell home and traveled to Iran. Once in Tehran, Iran, Elizabeth Stewart assisted Dr. Susan Moody, a Baha'i physician from New York who worked with the Baha'i sponsored hospital and school in Tehran. Elizabeth Stewart worked with Dr. Moody for nearly 15 years before declining health and political unrest made it necessary for her to return to Philadelphia to live with the Revells until her death in 1926.<sup>22</sup>

One of the culminations of the activities begun by the Revell family while on Mayfield Street was a Congress for Race Amity sponsored by the Philadelphia Baha'i community with help from the Society of Friends and other race unity supportive organizations. This congress was held at the Witherspoon building in Center City in the fall of 1924. It was held at time when whippings, lynchings and race riots were being spurred on by racist individuals as well as local governments and organizations like the Ku Klux Klan. Philadelphia's race amity congress was part of a multi-city effort urged by Abdul'-Baha to stop the racial tensions and America's "streets running with blood" over racial strife as He had predicted during His visit to America in 1912. Philadelphia's Race Amity Congress was well attended with 400 and 600 attendees over two nights. This congress was made possible by the Revell family in collaboration with prominent race unity advocates including Leslie Pinkney Hill, Alain Locke, Louis Gregory, Roy Williams and many others. Beginning in 1936, the Revell family joined in efforts to take the Baha'i Faith from Philadelphia out to the suburbs. Teaming up with other Philadelphia Baha'is, Mrs. Revell and her daughters Jessie and Ethel would take trolleys and trains to different towns surrounding Philadelphia to help establish centers of Baha'i activity that have become many of the Baha'i communities in places as far as West Chester, PA and Delaware.

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<sup>21</sup> Letter A.K. A. Tablet, from Abdu'l-Baha to the believers and the maidservants of the merciful, Phila. PA., Translated March 4th, 1911, HBRPP p. 1; History Committee of the Philadelphia Local Spiritual Assembly: History of the Baha'i Revelation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, (HBRPP) unpublished manuscript, 1910 and 1926

<sup>22</sup> Adapted from Star of the West, vol. 17, no. 8, November 1926

### The Revell House as a center for the duplication and distribution of Baha'i literature

Adding to the efforts of Mrs. Mary J. Revell, other family members assisted in the Faith's growth in Philadelphia.<sup>23</sup> In the early 1900s, the supply of printed Baha'i literature was limited. The vast majority of Baha'i literature had to be copied and distributed by hand. The Revell family especially oldest daughter Jessie Revell (who had been working as a stenographer as early as 1909) were very involved in the duplication and distribution of Baha'i information.

**Mrs. Mary J. Revell Rites**  
 Funeral services for Mrs. Mary J. Revell, who died Sunday at her home, 2531 N. 9th st., after a long illness, will be held at 2 P. M. tomorrow from 1820 Chestnut st. She was 84.  
 Mrs. Revell, long active in the Bahai Faith, was honored in 1912 by having as her guest Abdu'l-Baha, head of the faith. Burial will be in Mt. Vernon Cemetery.

Shortly after the family moved to Mayfield Street praising Jessie Revell's efforts, Abdu'l-Baha wrote to say, "Thy services in copying the Tablets [the writings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha] and the writings of and spreading them among the Believers are accepted in the Kingdom of ABHA [Glory]." A few years later, Abdu'l-Baha wrote again saying, "Praise be to God thou are occupied in spreading the verses and utterances of God and art bearing the expenses incurred out of thine own income."<sup>24</sup> Looking back on her early Baha'i service in October 1935, Jessie Revell wrote, "[I] worked very closely for eighteen years with Mrs. Isabela D. Brittingham copying Tablets for her to use in teaching the Cause."

Beginning in 1936, the Revell family joined in efforts to take the Baha'i Faith from Philadelphia out to the suburbs. Teaming up with other Philadelphia Baha'is Mrs. Revell and her daughters Jessie and Ethel would take trollies and trains to different towns surrounding Philadelphia to help establish centers of Baha'i activity that have become many of the Baha'i communities in places as far as West Chester PA and Delaware.

### CONCLUSION:

The Revell House meets Criterion A through its association with Abdu'l-Baha, a central figure of the Baha'i Faith, the events and work happening in this house, and the services exerted by the Revell family in consolidation of the Baha'i community, bringing together people and helping to establish the foundation of race amity among neighbors. Their services grew beyond Philadelphia to the international arena. The house is a pilgrimage point for the Baha'is from around the world, a point of inspiration and joy for the neighborhood. If preserved, this building could serve as a source of unity and spiritual upliftment for the community around it so that the true spirit of "brotherly love" may be fully realized.

<sup>23</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, Wednesday October 20, 1943, Obituary for Mrs. Mary J. Revell

<sup>24</sup> From Abdu'l-Baha to Jessie E. Revell, August 9, 1914 HBRPP p. 12.

Doc.1

STATE Pennsylvania COUNTY Philadelphia TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY X NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE Philadelphia City of ENUMERATED BY ME ON THE 16<sup>th</sup> DAY OF April 1910. SUPERVISOR'S DISTRICT NO. 1 ENUMERATION DISTRICT NO. 50 WARD OF CITY 13<sup>th</sup> SHEET NO. A

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS  
THIRTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1910—POPULATION

INSTITUTION	NAME	RELATION	PERSONAL DESCRIPTIONS	NATIVITY			OCCUPATION	EDUCATION	MARRIAGE	SPECIAL NOTES
				Place of Birth of each parent and ancestor (if from this United States, give name and locality)	Place of Birth of this Person	Place of Birth of Father of this Person				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1417 49 578	High, Rebecca J.	Wife	F W 27 M 0 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1418 50 58	Hansen, Thora S.	Wife	M W 52 01 14	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Holt	Wife	F W 50 02 17 1 1	New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey	English	None		
	Gayler, Edna T.	Wife	F W 18 M 0 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	New Jersey	English	None		
	Eda S.	Wife	M W 43 M 0 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1421 51 59	Bennett, Joseph E.	Wife	M W 52 M 10	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	William R.	Wife	F W 42 M 11 2 2	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Raymond J.	Wife	M W 10 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Marie M.	Wife	F W 10 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1424 52 57	James, Sara M.	Wife	M W 44 M 14	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Mary B.	Wife	F W 44 M 14 5 5	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1425 53 58	Stewart, Sarah J.	Wife	M W 50 M 10	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Charles J.	Wife	F W 32 M 10 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Carl P.	Wife	F W 17 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Edith R.	Wife	F W 16 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Howard B.	Wife	M W 2 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1427 54 57	James, Mary V.	Wife	F W 28 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	William R.	Wife	M W 33 M 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1428 55 60	Revell, Mary J.	Wife	F W 40 M 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	William R.	Wife	F W 50 M 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	John C.	Wife	F W 12 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Mary J.	Wife	F W 16 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Edith R.	Wife	F W 10 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	William R.	Wife	F W 10 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Edward H.	Wife	F W 10 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1431 56 61	Stewart, Charles	Wife	F W 14 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Jessie W.	Wife	M W 77 M 24	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Blanche	Wife	F W 44 M 24 5 2	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	James C.	Wife	F W 22 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	John	Wife	M W 20 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Harmon	Wife	M W 18 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1434 57 62	Stark, George	Wife	F W 52 M 4 2	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Wm. A.	Wife	M W 44 M 10	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Paul K.	Wife	F W 24 M 0 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Charles	Wife	M W 42 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1435 58 63	James, James	Wife	M W 19 M 10	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Marion	Wife	F W 43 M 2 2 2	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Lawrence	Wife	M W 25 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Mary M.	Wife	F W 25 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	John	Wife	M W 12 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1437 59 64	Stewart, Charles	Wife	F W 14 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Charles G.	Wife	F W 44 M 4	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Harold M.	Wife	F W 12 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	John	Wife	M W 16 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	John D.	Wife	F W 15 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Lawrence M.	Wife	F W 12 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
1438 60 65	Stark, George	Wife	M W 44 M 22	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	John	Wife	M W 32 M 22 2 2	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	John	Wife	M W 22 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		
	Caroline F.	Wife	M W 17 0 0	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	English	None		



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**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Philadelphia

Photographs

1-The Revell House exterior 1914



**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Philadelphia

Photographs

2- Photo of 2nd Floor South Bedroom, 1914, Mrs. Mary Revell and her daughters





**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of Philadelphia

Photographs

**3. Mrs. Mary Revell at the front door, 1914**



**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Philadelphia

Photographs

4. Revell family in front window, 1914





**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Philadelphia

Photographs

5. The Revell House Front Facade (photo by Joe Bolton, 2003)





**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of Philadelphia

Photographs

6. Front Room at the time of purchase (photo by Joe Bolton, 2003-7)



**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of Philadelphia

Photographs

7. Dining Kitchen stairs to 2nd floor (photo by Joe Bolton, 2003-7)





**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of Philadelphia

Photographs

8- Door to Back Shed (photo by Joe Bolton, 2003-7)

Back shed was in pitiful condition. Door (right side of photo) was missing and flooring was deteriorated and gone.



**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of Philadelphia

Photographs

9- Second Floor Mid-room (photo by Joe Bolton, 2003-7)

Radiators were not original to the building, which was air system heated by coal.

Majority of windows and frames were damaged beyond repair. Trims were reused.

The original style was replicated for new windows.





**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Philadelphia

Photographs

10- Second floor Bathroom (photo by Joe Bolton, 2003-7)

No Plumbing fixture was remained. Location of the original fixtures were detected from some remaining pipes and the holes and traces on the walls and floors.



**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of Philadelphia

Photographs

11- Second floor south bedroom - 2012-3

Wardrobe door and drawers were missing. Original decorated air outlet register uncovered next to the wardrobe.





**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of Philadelphia

Photographs

12- Wall Papers second floor south Room (photo by Roya Taheri, 2011-10)

According to a paint and wall paper analysis, no trace of the original wall covering had remained. Investigation is underway to find a wall paper with a pattern close to the wall paper visible in the background of 2 old photos.



**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of Philadelphia

Photographs

13- Interior front Room Window Base Panel, 2011-10

Temporary windows were installed to secure the place.





**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Philadelphia

Photographs

14- Rear Facade- Second Floor and Shed Canopy Roof, 2011-10

Status of the damaged building envelope is obvious.





**The Revell House**

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

Owner: Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Philadelphia

Photographs

15- Architects, at rear yard. Part of Shed visible. (photo by Joe Bolton, 2011-10)  
Wall siding and window were deteriorated.





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Photographs

16- Measurement of Base Board, 2011-10



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Photographs

17- Wall and door Trace on floor, 1st Floor Front Room, 2013-4

After removal of layers of floor covering, traces of original wall and door were revealed.

This photo also indicates a band of stain next to the wall. It is possible that to save expenses, only the revealed edges were stained, leaving clear the parts under the carpet.





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Photographs

18- Wall Traces at Ceiling, 1st Floor Front Room, before removal of the ceiling, 2011-10



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Photographs

19- Wall Traces at Ceiling, 1st Floor Front Room, after removal of ceiling. 2011-10



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Photographs

20- Stain on Floor margins, 2nd Floor, South Room, 2013-4

This room was a bedroom. This photo indicates a band of stain next to the wall. It is possible that to save expenses, only the revealed edges were stained, leaving clear the parts under the carpet.





**The Revell House**

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Photographs

21- Kitchen soffit with duct above original stove. (Photo by Roya Taheri, 2013-1 )  
Condition after removal of ceiling and wall coverings.



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Photographs

22- Kitchen sink location uncovered. 2013-1

The wood piece indicated pipe outlet holes and fasteners for installation of the sink.





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Photographs

23- Ceiling and light, 2nd floor South Room. 2011-10

Original Ceiling lights were gas lit. In this project we replaced the lights with electric at their original locations.



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Photographs

24- Front Facade Brown Stone deterioration, window grille missing, 2011-4





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Photographs

25- Front Facade Brown Stone after Restoration, Photo 2017-12

Restoration was performed by Mara Restoration.



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Photographs

26- Basement window Grille at a neighbor house, 2011-10





**The Revell House**

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Photographs

27- Basement window Grille restored, volunteers, (photo: M. Etemad, 2020-2)



**The Revell House**

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Photographs

28- Laundry Room Addition construction, 2013-3

Rear Façade showing re-construction of shed, to be used as a laundry room/ kitchen for the use of Care Taker and visitors.





**The Revell House**

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Photographs

29- Original Air Outlet uncovered, 2nd Floor South Room, 2011-10





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Photographs

30- Paint Analysis by Catherine Subick, John Milner Architects, 2015-2

Samples of Paints and wallpaper were taken in a non-intrusive way by the architect Subick and analyzed on site and further at the lab.



**The Revell House**

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Photographs

31- Wardrobe with salvaged frame and Air outlet, 2 019-8

Wardrobe crown and trims were savaged from a neighbor house. No door were found.



**The Revell House**

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Photographs

32- View from Entrance after restoration. (photo by Massoud Mohadjeri, 2020-12)

New wall was added. Trims, floor and stairs wood were restored to original finish colors.





## The Revell House

1429 W. Mayfield St., Philadelphia, PA19132-2327

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Photographs

### 33- Front Room 1st floor -after restoration, 2020-5

The original chair where Abd'ulBaha gave His talk and had been preserved since 1912 was decorated at the room He originally gave His talk. The rest of the decoration is conducted by a team of Proctors appointed for this project; Melanie Etemad and archivist Joe Bolton.

The fire place is restored and an air outlet register revived.



**The Revell House**

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Photographs

34- Kitchen after Restoration. (photo by Roya Taheri, 2020-5)  
View of the Kitchen and the laundry/kitchen beyond.



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Photographs

35- View from first floor Front Room into the middle room. 2020-5  
Original partition was rebuilt between the two rooms.





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Photographs

36- Shed modified to Laundry Room. 2020-5

Modern appliances were provided at this room for convenience of the users.

It is possible that the shed was covered, but was open on the north and west sides. The only wall was probably the east party wall, at which a plumbing outlet was found, indicating a semi-outdoor kitchen/laundry.



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Photographs

37- Bathroom restored, 2nd floor. 2020-5



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Photographs

38- Second floor South Bedroom after restoration. (Photo by Roya Taheri, 2020-5)





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Photographs

39 - Front Façade view, October 2023



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Photographs

40 - Railing Addition (photo by Massoud Mohadjeri), November 2025





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Photographs

41 - Rear Shed Siding, July 2019





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Photographs

42 – Back yard, May 2020



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Photographs

43 - Jessie and Ethel Revell as members of International Baha'i Council, 1961



*The International Bahá'í Council, Bahjí, June 1961.*

*Left to right: Sylvia Ioas, Charles Wolcott, Jessie Revell, Ethel Revell, Ian Semple,  
Borrah Kavelin, Lutfallah Hakim, Ali Nakhjavani, Mildred Mottahedeh*