

# HISTORIC DESIGNATION TASKFORCE MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING: 5-29-20

## ATTENDING:

Gabriela Cesarino, Steve Huntington, Brian Johnston, Tim Kerner, Mike Kihn, Howard Green and Oscar Beisert

## NEXT MEETING:

To be scheduled at the end of June.

## HOMEWORK:

Howard and Evan: Begin work on the nomination of 2006 Chestnut Street

Tim: Provide information about the Center City West Commercial Historic District to Howard and Evan

Brian: Reach out to Avi Eden and set the Judith Eden Historic Preservation Fund into motion

Oscar: Continue work on 1615 Walnut Street. Provide cost to write the nomination of a Commercial Historic District on the 1700, 1800 and 1900 blocks of Chestnut Street.

## ISSUES DISCUSSED:

**NEW MEMBERS:** We have two new members on the Task Force: Howard Green, a historian and the former Director of Research at the New Jersey Historical Commission and Evan Litvan, a center city architect and member of the CCRA zoning committee. Howard and Evan are going to work on the nomination of 2006 Chestnut Street, which the Task Force had previously identified as one of the next buildings to address.

**FUNDRAISING:** Brian had a discussion with Avi Eden about supporting our preservation activities and Avi expressed interest in setting up a Judith Eden fund, which could be a vehicle to help spur further donations. Brian will discuss this again with Avi and determine what he is willing to contribute. After we have a dedicated amount, we will write a description of the intent of the fund and put something into the CCRA newsletter. Steve has a few ideas of people he thinks would be interested in contributing to this fund.

**NOMINATION OF 1615 WALNUT:** Oscar has started his research and had some interesting facts to share. He will continue his research at the Athenaeum when it reopens.

**EXTENSION OF RITTENHOUSE-FITLER HISTORIC DISTRICT:** The district now includes the north side of the west half of the 2000 block of Chestnut but the south side of the block is excluded, although there are buildings on the south side that are consistent with the preservation intents of the district. We discussed the possibility of extending the district boundary to include the south side of the 2000 block and possibly some of the 1900 block. This seems like a reasonable strategy but the group determined that if we are to proceed with a district nomination, it would be better to pursue the district described below because the buildings it would include are more worthwhile to save.

**CHESTNUT STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT:** We continued the discussion about the possibility of nominating the 1700, 1800 and 1900 blocks of Chestnut as a thematic, commercial historic district, which we had previously discussed in an email exchange. The benefit of this approach is that we would be able to nominate more buildings with less overall effort than it would take to nominate each of those buildings individually. The buildings on our original list of potential candidates that are on these three blocks are: 1716, 1722, 1730, 1802, 1804, 1806, 1822 (recently nominated by the HC), 1909, 1921, 1923 and 1935. Seven buildings on these blocks are already individual designated, such as Boyd's, Freeman's, The Belgrave, Nordstram Rack, 1728 and the Boyd Theater (1822 would be the eighth, if successful in the nomination process). There are also several larger-scaled historic buildings that are not designated and are not on our list, but do merit protection.

Another advantage of a district nomination is that it would provide protection to worthwhile historic buildings that are not strong enough candidates for individual nomination. One example is 1802 Chestnut Street, which we had asked Oscar to research. It is a building that positively contributes to the character of the street along with the adjacent two buildings, but is not sufficiently unique to merit an individual nomination. On the other hand, the downside of the district approach is that it could generate more opposition than the quieter building-by-building approach.

Oscar recently nominated a historic district for the blocks of 700, 800 and 900 Chestnut Street. This nomination is currently under review by the staff of the Historical Commission. It will be interesting to see how it progresses through the process. We asked Oscar to provide a cost to work on this nomination and we will discuss it at our next meeting.