



# PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

for greater philadelphia

## PRESERVATION

# MATTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE FOR GREATER PHILADELPHIA

SPRING 2009

## Hyman Myers Recognized with James Biddle Award for Lifetime Achievement



on over 200 projects, including many of Philadelphia's National Historic Landmarks. Among his early projects in Philadelphia were the 1976 restoration of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, followed in 1980 by the restoration and conversion of the Bellevue Stratford Hotel to a mixed-use facility. Subsequently, Hy directed preservation work on such notable sites as Independence Hall, the Academy of Music, Girard College, the Reading Terminal Train Shed, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and City Hall.

Hy's work has not been confined to Philadelphia. As director of preservation services for VITETTA, he has led restoration projects for the Pennsylvania Capitol Building in Harrisburg, the Cleveland Museum of Art and the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

Hy has also lent his considerable knowledge of architectural history to the service of many nonprofit and public organizations, including serving as chair of the board of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Historic Preservation. His most notable public service was his 27-year membership on the Designation Committee of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, where he helped to strengthen numerous nominations of historic buildings and districts through his scholarly knowledge of architectural history.

**H**yman Myers, FAIA is the recipient of the Preservation Alliance's 2009 James Biddle Award, given for lifetime achievement in historic preservation.

Hy has made an exceptional contribution to the field of historic preservation, both as an architect and through service on the boards and committees of many nonprofit organizations and public agencies. Over the course of his 37-year career, Hy has directed preservation work

Hy's work has been recognized with many honors, including awards from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In 1992, Hy received the F. Otto Haas Award, Pennsylvania's highest recognition for contributions by an individual in the field of historic preservation.

### The 16th Annual Preservation Achievement Awards

Every May, Preservation Month, the Preservation Alliance honors individuals, organizations and projects for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to the field of historic preservation. The 16th annual Preservation Achievement Awards will be held on Monday, May 11 at the Park Hyatt at the Bellevue. Visit [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com) for details. (See more about the award winners on page 2-3.)



### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

**W**hen Inga Saffron, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* architecture critic, made remarks recently at a wonderful panel discussion organized by Avi Eden in memory of his wife, Judith Eden, a longtime community activist and advocate, I was struck by how well her observations echoed a point of view expressed by the Preservation Alliance in recent years. (See page 4 for Inga's remarks.)

The topic was "Community Groups and Distressing Economic Times: Should the Criteria for Opposing Development Projects be Re-Assessed?" and in her remarks, Inga first addressed how the physical fabric of Philadelphia is one of the city's most important assets. When she referred to the walkable character of Philadelphia and its human scale, she was implicitly reminding us that the historic architecture that predominates in Philadelphia neighborhoods and in much of Center City creates an unusually pleasant and distinctive urban environment. However, she also noted that change is necessary for a city to grow and stay lively. The issue is not whether we should oppose the inevitability of change, but is one, as she put it, of finding the right balance between the existing urban fabric that gives the city its special character and new additions to that fabric.

Finding the right balance between the existing character of Philadelphia neighborhoods and historic districts and proposals for new development has been one of the biggest challenges in Philadelphia in recent years. I could easily list a dozen examples of new developments opposed by neighborhood organizations and the Preservation Alliance because of their inconsistency with the character of the neighborhoods in which they were proposed. In spite of the current economic slowdown, this is still a significant issue. Developers continue to come forth with projects that threaten historic districts or historic properties because they are out of scale, designed with radically different materials or in a deliberately different architectural style than the urban fabric that surrounds them.

From a historic preservation point of view, the situation seems to be out of balance because these projects continue to get large zoning variances and project approvals.

Finding the right balance first requires a commitment to preserve the existing urban fabric and the architectural elements that comprise it. But just as important is a commitment to design infill that is compatible with that fabric, that harmonizes with it in scale, materials and architectural character. New buildings can be distinctively modern without being radically out of character with the urban context in which they are located. Finding the right balance is the key to maintaining the distinctive character that sets Philadelphia apart from other cities.

JOHN ANDREW GALLERY  
Executive Director

## Nancy Kolb Recipient of Public Service Award

**N**ancy Kolb, president and CEO of the Please Touch Museum, is the recipient of the Preservation Alliance's 2009 Public Service Award recognizing achievement in preservation in the public interest.

Nancy began her career in the field of historic preservation. She served as director of Pennsbury Manor from 1972 to 1982, and then moved to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission from 1982 to 1988. She returned to serve as a member of the Commission from 1998 to 2002. This long-standing interest in history, her professional preservation background and 20 years of museum experience made Nancy the perfect person to lead the adaptive reuse of Memorial Hall for the Please Touch Museum.

From the start of the \$88 million conversion, Nancy set a high standard for faithful restoration of the historic building and its reuse as a children's museum. Not only were the exterior of the building and the central rotunda space



carefully restored, but under Nancy's leadership other historic elements were added, including the restored 1908 Woodside Park Dentzel Carousel. Nancy also extended the project's scope to include the history of the Centennial and worked with nearby institutions to create a master plan for a Centennial District.

Nancy has long been recognized as a leader in the museum field and for her dedication to fostering educational and arts programs for children. She has served on the Mayor's Cabinet for Children and Families, the Philadelphia Art Commission and on a national program to link museums with Head Start programs. In 2009, she was appointed general chair of the American Association of Museums' annual meeting in Philadelphia.

With the restoration of Memorial Hall, Nancy has provided children with the opportunity to experience firsthand a great historic building, an essential step in developing the next generation of historic preservationists.

# The 16th Annual Preservation Achievement Awards

## 2009 Special Recognition Awards



### The James Biddle Award

For lifetime achievement in historic preservation

Hyman Myers, FAIA



### Public Service Award

For preservation in the public interest

Nancy Kolb



### Rhoda and Permar Richards Award

For service to the Preservation Alliance

George Hoessel



### Board of Directors Award

For exceptional stewardship of historic properties

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Inc.



### Community Action Awards

For achievement by community organizations

Historical Society of Frankford's Center for Northeast Philadelphia History



Chester County Historic Preservation Network



Historic Germantown

## 2009 AIA Philadelphia Awards



### The 2009 AIA LANDMARK BUILDING AWARD

Philadelphia Carnegie Grant Libraries  
Philadelphia, PA

Various Architects, 1905-1930



### THE HENRY J. MAGAZINER, EFAIA AWARD

of the Historic Preservation Committee of AIA Philadelphia

Anne d'Harnoncourt,  
1943-2008  
Director and Chief Executive Officer, Philadelphia Museum of Art

## Grand Jury Awards

### 1 832 Lombard Street

Masada Custom Builders, Inc.  
(Isaac Ohayon and Naomi Alter-Ohayon)  
St. Edmond's Federal Savings Bank

### 2 Arcadia University, Murphy Hall

Arcadia University  
Russell Roofing, Joseph Manero Masonry, John Byrne Painting, Thomco Inc.

### 3 Bryn Mawr Film Institute

Voith & Mactavish Architects LLP, Keast & Hood Co., QED, Bartush Signs, E. Allen Reeves Inc., Fiore Skylights, Evergreene Architectural Arts

### 4 Chinatown Friendship Gate

City of Philadelphia Department of Public Property  
Chinatown Development Corp., International Visitors Council, Yao C. Huang AIA, Sabrina Soong AIA, Watts Restoration Inc., Superior Scaffold Services, Dietz & Watson Inc., Liu Jie, Liu Jinduo, Su Jingwang, Zhang Qin, Liang Xueping, Sun Yundong

### 5 Crane Stable

Crane Arts, LLC  
Milner + Carr Conservation LLC, Continuum Architecture & Design Inc., John Milner Architects Inc.

### 6 Eastern State Penitentiary Synagogue

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Inc.  
Milner + Carr Conservation LLC, McKee's Siding Inc., Hatzel & Buehler Inc., Schneider Restorations Inc., Munn Roofing Corp.

### 7 Hargroves House

Greene Street Friends School  
Metcalf Architecture & Design, McCoubrey/Overholser Inc., Otto Honyak Masonry, ASR Stucco LLC

### 8 Hatboro Lofts

Plumridge LP  
C2 Architecture, Powers & Company Inc., BEAM Ltd., C.N. Timbie Engineers Inc.

### 9 Historic Smithville, NJ

Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders  
VITETTA, Andropogon Associates, J.S. Cornell & Son Inc., Van Sickle & Roller Ltd., ACT Engineers Inc., Hunter Research Inc., Dan Lepore & Sons Company

### 10 Hoffman Studio

David Hoffman  
MGA Partners, McCoubrey/Overholser Inc., CVM Construction, Precis Engineering Inc., Tigue Lighting Inc.

### 11 The Lippincott, DE

Market-Preservation Associates, LLC  
Preservation Initiatives Inc., Construction Services Group LLC, Runyan & Associates Architects, Keystone Preservation Group, The Kachele Group, Blake & Vaughan Engineering Inc, Landmark Engineering, Enterprise Masonry Corporation, B&M Partition Inc., Glass Orchid Studios

### 12 Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church

Atkin Olshin Schade Architects, 1:1:6 Technologies Incorporated, Keast & Hood Co., Premier Building Restoration Inc., The Temple Group, Wolf Historic Preservation

### 13 Nemours Mansion and Gardens, DE

The Nemours Foundation  
John Milner Architects Inc., Rodney Robinson Landscape Architects, Gredell & Associates, Bruce E. Brooks & Associates, Milner + Carr Conservation LLC, Wohlsen Construction Company, Ball & Ball, VanDemark & Lynch Inc., Brubacher Excavating Inc., Gooding Simpson & Mackes Inc., Connolly Flooring, Wayman Fire Protection Inc., The Tri-M Group LLC, Dan Lepore & Sons Company, Rasevic Landscape Company, Delcard Associates Inc.

### 14 The Newport

Spruce 1530 LLC  
DPK&A, Graboyes Commercial Window Co., Donald E. Reisinger Inc., Cathedral Stained Glass Studios, John Ott, Mazzamuto Contractors, Nick Caprari

### 15 Philadelphia City Hall

City of Philadelphia Department of Public Property  
Kelly/Maiello Inc., VITETTA, Marianna Thomas Architects, Keast & Hood Co., Vinokur-Pace Engineering Services Inc., Norton Art Conservation Inc., Stephen McLaughlin Roofing Consultant, C.B. Development Services Inc., Daniel J. Keating Co., Avalotis, Lepore/Mark Inc., Hamada Roofing Inc., Crescent Iron Works, Window Repair & Restoration LLC, Clad Sheet Metal LLC

### 16 Philadelphia Museum of Art

VITETTA, Keast & Hood Co., Kreilick Conservation LLC, Architectural Testing, Landmarks Facilities Group Inc., Pennoni Associates Inc., Hughes Associates Inc., L.F. Driscoll Co., Lepore/Mark Inc., Thomas Roofing Company, Warren Lightning Protection, A.T. Chadwick Co. Inc., Metalan, ThyssenKrupp Safway Inc., Historical Arts & Casting Inc., Criterion Labs Inc.

### 17 Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual

Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
Schade & Bolender Architects, Gallini Hemmann Inc., James S. Russell, The Steering Committee

### 18 Please Touch Museum Memorial Hall

Please Touch Museum  
Northstar Advisors LLC, Kise Straw & Kolodner, Bala Consulting Engineer Inc., Design + Communication Inc., Keating Bittenbender McCrae, Grenald Waldron Associates

### 19 Spreter Studio

Michael and Karen Spewak  
Martin Jay Rosenblum AIA & Associates, Cooke/Chachkes Associates P.C., Robert Vermillion Builders, Carter van Dyke Associates, Pebble Pools Inc.

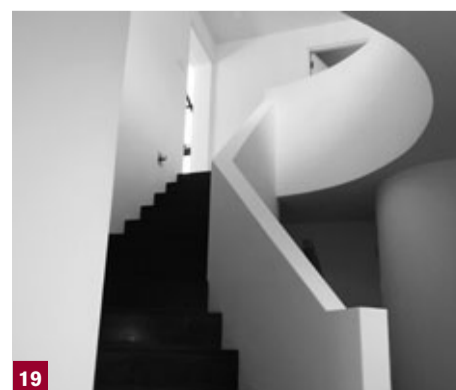
### 20 Van Amringe Building, DE

The City of Delaware City, DE  
Philip E. Franks & Associates, Commonwealth Construction Co. Inc., 1:1:6 Technologies Incorporated, Keast & Hood Co.

# The 16th Annual Preservation Achievement Awards

For more information about all of the 2009 Preservation Achievement Award winners, visit [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com).

## GRAND JURY AWARDS



# FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

by Inga Saffron

Philadelphia Inquirer *Architecture Critic Inga Saffron delivered the following remarks at a recent panel discussion in memory of community activist Judith Eden. (See Executive Director's Message on page one.) The Alliance is grateful to Inga for writing out her thoughtful remarks and allowing us to publish them.*

**I**want to start with two statements that may sound obvious, but which are easy to overlook in the blizzard of bad headlines. The first is, Philadelphia did extremely well in the boom of the last decade. And second, I have no doubt that there will be another boom.

I can still vividly recall the savings and loan collapse at the end of the eighties and the subsequent real estate crash. Philadelphia went into a deep freeze, which lasted the better part of a decade. And then—it was over.

Today's Philadelphia offers a better quality of life, more vibrancy, more hope, more resilience than it did 20 years ago, before the last bust.

What did Philadelphia accomplish in the boom?

We know the city expanded the boundaries of Center City, its stable, successful core. The ring of successful neighborhoods around the center, like Northern Liberties, Fairmount, Queen Village, South of South and SoWa, came into their own. The density is greater in that enlarged core, which has translated into more shops, restaurants, nightlife, cafes and people on the street. And that has translated into a greater sense of safety and confidence in the city's future.

During the boom we built new schools, museums, a theater district and an important new park. Obsolete older buildings found second lives. Parking lots were filled in. We even built two or three interesting works of architecture. All those improvements made Philadelphia attractive to artists and innovators and small businesses, which we hope will become bigger

businesses and provide jobs to those who benefited least from the boom.

There was, however, an interesting disconnect during this period. The system for guiding development in Philadelphia couldn't have been worse. And yet the results were actually rather good. This suggests the importance of being clear about your values and sticking to them, in good times and bad.

Of course, it would be better if Philadelphia could streamline the approval process for development and root out pay-to-play. A lull like this is the perfect opportunity for revamping the zoning code, for planning the waterfront, for developing new amenities. It's also the time for taking stock, for clarifying and restating the values that should always guide the city's development priorities.

I simply don't get the suggestion that a city would respond to development any differently in hard times than in good.

Especially a city like Philadelphia, whose true wealth resides now in its urban fabric, its collections of streets and neighborhoods. Philadelphia remains one of the last humanly scaled, walkable, inherently pleasant places to live. Livability is an increasingly desirable asset in America. Why we would ever want to do anything to compromise that asset? I think of the city's fabric as a trust or endowment. You never want to touch the principal.

I don't want to give the impression that nothing should ever change here. Quite the contrary. Cities need to stay relevant—they can't be frozen in time. But it's important that changes are made

consistent with the city's values and with regard for the patrimony. It's about balance.

Recently I ran into a developer from the Related Companies at a party in Manhattan. Related is the company that has built many of the bland condo towers on Manhattan's East side. We were standing at the window, looking out over the city at several newly rising towers, and talking about how skyscrapers change a city. Almost matter-of-factly, he said to me: "We've wrecked this neighborhood." And you know what he said after that? "We're moving into the west side now."

This reveals something interesting about developers. They know a good, charming attractive neighborhood when they see it. But they don't always know how to insert buildings that keep it that way.

That's no surprise, really. After all, developers just create one building at a time. They don't usually build whole communities, so they don't think out the long-term consequences of how their current project, and the one after that, and the one after that, will alter the qualities that attracted them to the neighborhood in the first place. That's why we need our planning and zoning commissions to do it for them.

Similarly, there are times when neighborhood groups have pretty blinkered vision and only think about their little piece of turf. They figure, "It's nice enough now. Why should we let anyone change anything?" I remember one of my neighbors telling me we should fight a developer who was building a dozen high-end townhouses on an empty lot. Why? Because it might be harder to park.

So, instead of asking, "Is this project good for our little neighborhood?" civic groups also need to ask, "Is this good for the whole city?" Like developers, they need to take a broader perspective. It doesn't matter whether times are bad. For me, it's never merely a question of giving in or standing firm, but finding the right balance.



*In mid-2008, the Preservation Alliance began work on the first phase of planning for a Preservation Plan for Philadelphia and a citywide survey of historic resources. Each Preservation Matters newsletter will include an update on our progress.*

The Preservation Plan now has its own website, [www.PreservePhiladelphia.org](http://www.PreservePhiladelphia.org), where you can learn more about the project, track progress and participate in an online survey to share your views about historic preservation in Philadelphia.

Most significantly, the site has the ambitious goal of serving as a citywide clearinghouse for information about Philadelphia's historic neighborhoods. Beyond Center City, only a few neighborhoods and recently nominated historic districts have been adequately surveyed for their historic resources. Yet many neighborhoods contain outstanding houses, churches, libraries, schools, commercial buildings and parks.

The website offers an interactive feature at the "neighborhoods" tab. Each Philadelphia neighborhood has its own page that will eventually include a short historic description and photographs, posted by residents, of those buildings and sites that convey its history and distinctive character. You can contribute to the development of this part of the website by submitting information about the history of your neighborhood or by posting photographs of buildings that you love and are important to your neighborhood.

## The Henry J. Magaziner, EFAIA Award Honors Anne d'Harnoncourt

**T**he Henry J. Magaziner, EFAIA Award is given by the Historic Preservation Committee of AIA Philadelphia in recognition of an individual or organization outside the normal circle of preservation and design that has made a significant contribution to the preservation of the built environment. This year's honoree is the late Anne d'Harnoncourt, director and chief executive officer of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Anne d'Harnoncourt, 1943-2008, an internationally respected art historian and museum leader, served as The George D. Widener Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art from 1982 and as both director and chief executive officer of the Museum from 1997 until her death. As director, Anne fostered the growth and distinction of the Museum's professional staff and encouraged a sequence of major exhibitions and publications by Museum curators and scholars, including several that focused on Philadelphia's historic landmarks.

Anne championed the restoration of the Museum's historic building and other landmark structures under the museum's care. Between



1992 and 1995, she oversaw a massive project to reinstall all of the European collections in more than 90 galleries; renovation of 20 galleries of modern and contemporary art followed in 2000. Also in 2000, the Museum achieved a long-term goal by acquiring the Reliance Standard Life Insurance Building, a neighboring historic landmark, which opened as the Ruth and Raymond G. Perelman Building in September 2007. The restored building and new addition greatly expanded the Museum's facilities for collections, library, archives and administrative offices.

During this same period, the Museum completed an extensive restoration of Mt. Pleasant in Fairmount Park, and, more recently, initiated restoration of the Rodin Museum and its historic landscape.

Anne d'Harnoncourt recognized that the architectural treasures of the Philadelphia Museum of Art were as valuable works of art as the collections they house. She worked tirelessly to ensure both the preservation and appreciation of the Museum's properties and the appreciation of Philadelphia's great architectural heritage.

# PRESERVATION MONTH CALENDAR

History and preservation come alive during May, National Historic Preservation Month, with a full range of special events in the region. Take a walking tour, learn how to repair your historic windows, celebrate achievements in preservation or view original artwork in a 19th-century factory building. The calendar below is only a sampling; view a full calendar of May events at [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com). Events marked with the Alliance's logo are either Alliance-sponsored events or are available to Alliance members at a discount.

## SATURDAY May 2

### Preservation Alliance Architectural Walking Tours

\$10 (Preservation Alliance members: \$5)

Info: [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com)

10 a.m. Victorian Philadelphia West of Broad, Meet at NW corner, 9th & Spruce Sts.

2 p.m. Littlest Streets East of Broad, Meet at center of Kahn Park, 11th & Pine Sts.

### **Sepulchre Sculpture: Laurel Hill's Outdoor Gallery**

2 p.m.

\$15

Info: [www.thelaurehillcemetery.org](http://www.thelaurehillcemetery.org)

Explore the monuments at the historic cemetery.

## SUNDAY May 3

### Preservation Alliance Architectural Walking Tours

\$10 (Preservation Alliance members: \$5)

Info: [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com)

2 p.m. Chestnut Hill West, Meet at St. Martin's Station, SEPTA R8, St. Martins Lane & Springfield Avenue.

### Overbrook Farms Open House Tour and Tea

1- 5 p.m.

\$25 (Preservation Alliance members: \$20)

Reservations and info: [www.overbrookfarmsclub.org](http://www.overbrookfarmsclub.org) or 215-477-9250.

Visit unique, lovingly restored or preserved homes and a recently renovated, historic church in Overbrook Farms, a neighborhood that was recently listed on the roster of Classic Towns of Greater Philadelphia. Enjoy a formal tea at Ivy Hall, a Federal-style mansion with paired chimneys, Palladian windows and a grand ballroom.

## TUESDAY May 5

### Building Philadelphia Lecture Series

6-8 p.m.

Center for Architecture, 1218 Arch St., Philadelphia

\$30 (Preservation Alliance members: \$25)

Registration and info: [www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org](http://www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org)

"Going on Stilts: The Tall Building in 19th c. Philadelphia," Paula Spilner, PhD, Drexel University.

## WEDNESDAY May 6

### Homeowner Workshops

7 p.m.

Weccacoe Playground Building, 400 block of Catharine Street (south side)

FREE

Presented by the Preservation Alliance and the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust

Info: [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com)

Reservations required: [Melissa@preservationalliance.com](mailto:Melissa@preservationalliance.com) or 215-546-1146 x6

"Repairing Historic Windows and Replacement Options"

### Preservation Alliance Architectural Walking Tours

\$10 (Preservation Alliance members: \$5)

Info: [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com)

6 p.m. Old City, Meet at the benches, N. 2nd St. at Elfreth's Alley.

## THURSDAY May 7

### Homeowner Workshops

6 p.m.

Calvary Center for Culture and Community, 801 S. 48th St.

FREE

Presented by the Preservation Alliance and the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust

Info: [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com)

Reservations required: [Melissa@preservationalliance.com](mailto:Melissa@preservationalliance.com) or 215-546-1146 x6

"Traditional Roof Repairs"

## SATURDAY-SUNDAY May 9-10

### **Annual Mercer Museum Folk Fest**

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Mercer Museum, Doylestown, PA

\$9 adults/seniors; children 12 and under, FREE

Info: [www.mercermuseum.org](http://www.mercermuseum.org)

Fun-filled family event features live entertainment, costumed craft demonstrations, children's activities, picnic foods and more. Rain or shine.

## MONDAY May 11

### 16th annual Preservation Achievement Awards Luncheon *(See pages 2-3)*

11 a.m.

The Park Hyatt at the Bellevue, Philadelphia

\$80 and up

Tickets and info: [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com)

The Alliance honors extraordinary achievement in historic preservation throughout the region at its annual luncheon.

## TUESDAY May 12

### Building Philadelphia Lecture Series

6-8 p.m.

Center for Architecture, 1218 Arch St., Philadelphia

\$30 (Preservation Alliance members: \$25)

Registration and info: [www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org](http://www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org)

"The Hidden City: Archaeology of Philadelphia," Rebecca Yamin, PhD, John Milner Associates, Inc.

## FRIDAY May 15

### A Sense of Place: Preserving Philadelphia Neighborhoods

8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Temple University Center City Campus, 1515 Market St., Philadelphia

\$20

Presented by the Preservation Alliance

Registration and info: [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com)

The first citywide conference for community leaders about preserving and celebrating Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

## SATURDAY May 16

### The Atglen and Susquehanna Railroad (The Low Grade Line)

8 a.m. - Dinner

\$30 (Preservation Alliance members: \$25)

Sponsored by the Philadelphia Parks Alliance

Registration required: 215-879-8159

An all-day tour of this abandoned, former Pennsylvania Railroad Line across southern Lancaster County.

## SUNDAY May 17

### Queen Village Annual Open House Tour

Noon - 4 p.m.

\$25 (Preservation Alliance members: \$20)

Info: 215-339-0975

Self-guided tour of historic houses, churches and gardens begins at Old Swede's Church, Christian and Water streets off Christopher Columbus Ave.

## MONDAY May 18

### **Historic Wills Presentation**

12:30 p.m.

Mercer Museum, Doylestown, PA

FREE

Info: [www.mercermuseum.org](http://www.mercermuseum.org)

Join the Friends of Bucks County Historical Society for a presentation of historic wills and the information they provide by Rebecca Kiefer, deputy director of wills for Bucks County.

## TUESDAY May 19

### Building Philadelphia Lecture Series

6-8 p.m.

Center for Architecture, 1218 Arch St., Philadelphia

\$30 (Preservation Alliance Members: \$25)

Registration and info: [www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org](http://www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org)

"Planning the Modern City: The Parkway and Society Hill," David Brownlee, PhD, University of Pennsylvania.

## TUESDAY-FRIDAY May 19-May 22

### **2009 Statewide Conference on Heritage**

Commonwealth Keystone Building, Harrisburg, PA

Info: [www.pennbyways.org](http://www.pennbyways.org)

Conference focuses on transportation, heritage and the environment.

*(Continued on opposite side)*

TUESDAY **May 26**

(SERIES CONTINUES TUESDAYS THROUGH JUNE 9)

**Building Philadelphia Lecture Series**

6-8 p.m.

Center for Architecture, 1218 Arch St., Philadelphia

\$30 (Preservation Alliance members: \$25)

Registration and info: [www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org](http://www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org)

“Looking Down on William Penn: Philadelphia’s Modern Skyline,” Amy Slaton, PhD, Drexel University.

THURSDAY **May 28**

**Hard Hat Tour** (Exclusively for Preservation Alliance Corporate and Professional Partner members)

10 Rittenhouse Square

5 p.m.

FREE

Registration and info: 215-546-1146 x. 3

A special behind-the-scenes tour of one of Philadelphia’s highest-profile new residential projects under construction, combining new construction with adaptive reuse. An exclusive benefit for Alliance Corporate and Professional Partner members. Visit [www.PreservationAlliance.org](http://www.PreservationAlliance.org) to join.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY **May 30-31**

(CONTINUES WEEKENDS THROUGH JUNE 28)

**Hidden City Philadelphia**

Various locations

Full schedule and info: [www.hiddencityphila.org](http://www.hiddencityphila.org)

A summer festival with site-specific original artworks and performances at lesser known historic sites throughout the city. This weekend, visit installations at:

- Disston Precision Saw Works, 6795 State Road
- Founder’s Hall, Girard College, 2101 South College Ave. (Co-producer, Preservation Alliance)
- German Society of Pennsylvania, 611 Spring Garden St. (Co-producer, Preservation Alliance)
- Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, 419 S. 6th St. (Co-producer, Preservation Alliance)
- The Philadelphia Inquirer, 400 N. Broad St. (Co-producer, Preservation Alliance)
- Shiloh Baptist Church, 2040 Christian St. (Co-producer, Preservation Alliance)

SATURDAY **May 30**

**Antiques Appraisal Day**

1-5 p.m.

Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion, 200 W. Tulpehocken St., Philadelphia

\$20; \$30 for two

Info: [www.ebenzermaxwellmansion.org](http://www.ebenzermaxwellmansion.org) or 215-438-1861

Admission includes appraisal of two items by Freeman’s, America’s oldest auction house, refreshments and self-tour of mansion and garden.

SUNDAY **May 31**

**Society Hill’s Annual Open House and Garden Tour**

1-5 p.m.

\$30 (Preservation Alliance members: \$25)

Advance purchases are encouraged: [mattdejulio@aol.com](mailto:mattdejulio@aol.com) or 215-629-1288. Tickets can also be purchased on the day of the tour at Old Pine Street Church, 412 Pine St.

Self-guided tour of over 10 private homes and gardens, ranging from the 18th century to the most contemporary, in one of our nation’s most historic neighborhoods.

## Hidden City Philadelphia



Everyone knows Independence Hall, but there are other landmarks that have been lost to general knowledge or even abandoned over time. From May 30 through June 28, Peregrine Arts is presenting a rare opportunity to experience site-specific original works of art at the city’s lesser-known architectural and historical treasures.

The Hidden City locations include Disston Precision Saw Works in Tacony, Founder’s Hall at Girard College, the Metropolitan Opera House on North Broad Street, the Royal Theater on South Street, Shiloh Baptist Church and Mother Bethel A.M.E Church.

The Preservation Alliance is proud to be a co-producer of some Hidden City events and is included in the Hidden City Philadelphia card game, in which players develop neighborhoods, incorporate landmarks and become familiar with city leaders and events.

Visit [www.hiddencityphila.org](http://www.hiddencityphila.org) or call the box office at 267-597-3808 for the full schedule and more information.

## Spring Blossoms with Neighborhood Open House Tours, Discounted to Alliance Members

Some of Philadelphia’s most beautiful historic homes will open their doors to the public during May, Preservation Month—and members of the Preservation Alliance can visit them at a discount! **Make sure to show your Alliance membership card, or just say that you are a member.**

Alliance members get \$5 off the price of a ticket to the Overbrook Farms Open House Tour & Tea, Sunday, May 3, the Queen Village Open House Tour, Sunday, May 17 and Society Hill’s Annual Open House and Garden Tour, Sunday, May 31.

In Overbrook Farms, this year’s tea will be held May 3 at Ivy Hall, an elegant Federal style mansion with paired chimneys, Palladian windows and a grand ballroom. This year’s event also features a garden walk. Overbrook Farms was recently listed on the roster of Classic Towns of Greater Philadelphia. **Tickets are \$25 to the public—\$20 to Alliance members. To reserve your spot, visit [www.overbrookfarmsclub.org](http://www.overbrookfarmsclub.org) or call 215-477-9250.**

The Queen Village event, sponsored by the Queen Village Neighbors Association, runs from noon to 4 p.m. May 17 and features six homes and three historic churches—Old Swede’s, St. Philip Neri and St. Stanislaus. As Philadelphia’s oldest neighborhood, Queen Village has a fascinating mix of homes, ranging from tiny 18th-century trinities to 19th-century row homes and converted warehouses to contemporary, postmodern dwellings. Explore homes featuring meticulous historic restoration, sophisticated contemporary design and décor and a range of art and craft collections. Participants can also enjoy glimpses of beautiful courtyards and gardens, quaint alleys and an annual art fair in the neighborhood park.

The self-guided walking tour begins at Old Swede’s Church (Christian and Water streets, off Christopher Columbus Ave.) with free, light refreshments. **Tickets are \$25 to the public—\$20 to Alliance members. To reserve your spot and purchase a ticket, call 215-339-0975 or email [info@qvna.org](mailto:info@qvna.org).**

In Society Hill, tickets are on sale now for the self-guided tour from 1-5 p.m. May 31 of more than 10 private homes and gardens in one of the nation’s most historic neighborhoods.

Sponsored by the Society Hill Civic Association, proceeds from the tour are used for neighborhood improvement projects. Society Hill takes pride in its charming brick sidewalks, many of which have been uneven over the years. A beneficiary of this year’s tour will be the leveling of loose or uneven bricks throughout these historic streets. **Tickets are \$30 to the public and only \$25 for Alliance members. Advance purchases are encouraged. To purchase your ticket or to receive more information, call the Society Hill Civic Association at 215-629-1288 or email [mattdejulio@aol.com](mailto:mattdejulio@aol.com). Tickets can also be purchased on the day of the tour at Old Pine Street Church, 412 Pine Street.**

## Walk the Walk, Talk the Talk: Architectural Walking Tours and Lecture Series

Philadelphia’s long-running and much-loved architectural walking tours and lecture series are presented this year by, respectively, the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and the Center for Architecture.

The Preservation Alliance’s guided architectural walking tours for residents and visitors throughout the region run from the first weekend in May through October. *Tours are only \$5 for Alliance members all season long.* Just show the tour guide your Alliance membership card. Visit the Alliance’s website at [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com) for the tour schedule and other information or email [tours@preservationalliance.com](mailto:tours@preservationalliance.com). (For May tours, see the accompanying Preservation Month calendar.)

Tour the delightful “littlest streets” of Center City or experience the civic landmarks along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Step back in time to the Jewish Philadelphia of Colonial times or ponder skyscrapers, old and new. Stroll Society Hill or visit Victorian Germantown. Check out “new” old neighborhoods like Fishtown and old “new” suburbs like Media. The tours are led by a lively group of highly-trained volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds who share their passion and knowledge of the region’s built environment.

Both the lecture series – now known as Building Philadelphia and underway at the Center for Architecture – and the architectural walking tours originated at the Foundation for Architecture in 1986. Last presented by the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks, the tours and lectures have enhanced understanding of the region’s architectural heritage for thousands of participants and have received awards and accolades. *Philadelphia* magazine honored the walking tours with a “Best of Philly 2008” Award, noting they are “the best reason to take a walk.”

The Building Philadelphia lecture series covers a broad range of topics relating to Philadelphia’s 300 years of architecture, urban planning and political/social history. Not only are movements and styles of architecture discussed, but also important city plans and the influences of social and economic events relating to the architecture of Philadelphia. Lectures are given by a selection of architects, urban planners, art historians and social historians from local universities and architecture firms. Building Philadelphia lectures are given from 6-8 p.m. Tuesdays through June 9 at the Center for Architecture, 1218 Arch St. *Preservation Alliance members get a discounted price of \$25 per lecture.* **For the full schedule and to register, visit [www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org](http://www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org). For May lectures, see pages the accompanying Preservation Month calendar.**

# ADVOCACY

Many of the current advocacy issues of concern to the Preservation Alliance were scheduled for actions during April. The following is a summary of key issues; check the "Current Advocacy" section of [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com) for the latest information.



## Dilworth House

In November 2007, the Philadelphia Historical Commission approved demolition of nearly half of the Dilworth House, the home of former Mayor Richardson Dilworth facing Washington Square, to allow for the construction of a 16-story condominium to the rear. The Commission called this demolition an "alteration" of the Colonial Revival house. Nearby neighbors and the Society Hill Civic Association appealed the decision to the Board of License and Inspection Review, arguing that the extent of demolition was greater than an "alteration." John Gallery, executive director of the Preservation Alliance, testified in support of the appeal.

The Historical Commission gave approval for the demolition during the Street administration. However, the appeal was heard in September 2008 after Mayor Nutter had appointed new members to the Board of License and Inspection Review. In the Alliance's opinion, Mayor Nutter's appointments broadened the expertise of the board, making it better suited to consider appeals of Historical Commission decisions. After extensive testimony by the developer and appellants, the board voted unanimously to reverse the decision of the Historical Commission.

In an interesting turn of events, the administration has now decided to support the developer in an appeal of the review board's decision to the Court of Common Pleas. This action sends a curious message: if the administration does not feel that its own review board can make fair and objective decisions on historic preservation matters, why should anyone else have confidence in the board's decisions?

## Hillman Medical Center

At its January meeting, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission received an informational presentation of a proposal by the John Buck Co. of Chicago to demolish the Sidney Hillman Medical Center on the 2100 block of Chestnut Street in order to build a 30-story apartment building. The project was presented to the Planning Commission because zoning variances are required. The Medical Center is a contributing building in the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District and as such cannot be demolished without approval by the Historical Commission.

At the January meeting, Planning Commission Executive Director Alan Greenberger reminded the owner of the historic status of the building and advised the applicant not to come back to the Planning Commission until the demolition issue had been resolved with the Historical Commission. Nevertheless, the project was scheduled for review by the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment in April even though no action by the Historical Commission will have occurred by that time. At the informational presentation, representatives of the First Unitarian Church expressed concern about the possible negative impact of the project on the church, which was designed by Frank Furness.

The Sidney Hillman Medical Center was one of eight similar medical centers constructed around the country by an apparel trade union, all of which were named in honor of Hillman, an important labor leader. It was built in 1951 and is considered to be the first facility of its kind in the United States. Designed by Louis Magaziner and Herman Polss, the building originally provided

medical, recreational and rehabilitation services for garment workers. It still functions as a medical center, although no longer exclusively for the apparel industry.

The Hillman Medical Center is a distinctive example of mid-century modern architecture. The orange, limestone-covered façade angles away from the street, while a reddish-brown, polished-granite base and end wall follow the street line. The diagonal organization of the plan allowed additional wall surfaces for a large number of windows to provide natural light.

The development plan proposes complete demolition of the building for a 30-story, glass residential tower set on a parking garage with retail space along Chestnut Street and a four-story building for the medical clinic and union offices on Sansom Street.

To receive approval for demolition from the Historical Commission, the property owner is required to demonstrate financial hardship preventing preservation of the building or that the proposed project is "necessary to the public interest." It was anticipated that a financial hardship application would be submitted to the Historical Commission in April.

## Church Of The Assumption

Upon hearing that the current owner intended to demolish the Church of the Assumption at 12th and Spring Garden streets, neighborhood resident Andrew Palewski quickly prepared and submitted a nomination to the Historical Commission to list the property on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Commission staff acted promptly to review the application and notify the owner, thereby placing the property under its jurisdiction.

The Church of the Assumption is notable as the place where Saint Katharine Drexel was baptized and also for its architect, Patrick Charles Keely, who designed more than 600 churches in North America. The Church of the Assumption is the oldest surviving structure designed by Keely. Built in the Gothic Revival style that Keely favored, the church has lancet windows, two square masonry towers with arched openings and dramatic, copper-clad spires. Many of the interior features were removed when the Archdiocese of Philadelphia sold the church to the Siloam Institute, a nonprofit, social-service agency.

A study for Siloam by the Community Design Collaborative suggested that the church was structurally sound and could be used for some of the Institute's larger programs. The nomination was scheduled for review by the Designation Committee of the Historical Commission in April.

## Modernist Masterpiece Added To Philadelphia Register

The Hasserick House, one of Philadelphia's outstanding examples of mid-century, modern residential architecture, was added to the Philadelphia Register at the Historical Commission's February meeting.

The house, located in the East Falls section of the city, was designed by Austrian-born architect Richard Neutra (1892-1970), hailed in a 1949 *Time* magazine cover story as "one of the world's best and most influential moderns." Born in Vienna, Neutra

received his architectural schooling under Adolph Loos and worked briefly in the Berlin office of Erich Mendelsohn and the Chicago office of Holabird & Roche after arriving in the United States following WWI. In 1924, Neutra worked briefly with Frank Lloyd Wright before moving to Los Angeles in 1925 at the encouragement of fellow Austrian architect R.M. Schindler, who settled there while working on the Hollyhock House with Wright.

Neutra is regarded as one of the founders of the Los Angeles School of modern architecture. Neutra's work is characterized by its lack of ornamentation, use of simple, box-like forms to create complex geometries, thinness and lightness of structure, integration with the natural landscape and extensive use of glazing and openings to blur the distinction between indoor and outdoor space. One of the best-known examples of his work is the Kaufman House in Palm Springs, California.

In the words of the staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission: "The Hasserick House is an outstanding example of a typical Neutra home from the late 1950s, yet it is unique in its genuine attempts to harmonize with its southeastern Pennsylvania setting. Despite later alterations, it survives as one of Philadelphia's greatest mid-century modern houses."

The house has recently been acquired by a new owner who intends to restore it to its original condition.

## Distinctive Spruce Hill Property Demolished

Despite efforts by the Spruce Hill Community Association and other residents, a handsome Second Empire building at 4224 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia was demolished in March. The structure, which was built in 1860, had served as a residence, a private school and most recently as a shelter for abused women.

The community learned of the proposed demolition through a notice from the Department of Licenses & Inspections. Calls to the property owner and developer were unsuccessful in stopping demolition and opponents of the demolition protested at the site, hoping to gain a reprieve for the 150-year-old building, which is located in the West Philadelphia Street Car Suburb National Register District and a proposed Spruce Hill local historic district.

The loss of the building is a reminder that many distinctive historic properties are not protected from demolition because they are not listed on the Philadelphia Register. The demolition of 4224 Baltimore Avenue is particularly unfortunate because residents of Spruce Hill have been trying for nearly 10 years to have their neighborhood designated as a local historic district. The community's last district nomination was submitted in 2002, but it has never been reviewed or acted on by the Historical Commission due to a lack of staff capacity.

This is a reminder that community character is lost one building at a time. If you are concerned about a historic property in your neighborhood, let us know by sending information to [sabra@preservationalliance.com](mailto:sabra@preservationalliance.com). Or consider nominating the building to the Philadelphia Register yourself by following the Alliance's guide, *How to Nominate a Building to the Philadelphia Register*, which can be found under "publications" at [www.PreservationAlliance.com](http://www.PreservationAlliance.com).

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