



# PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

*for greater philadelphia*

## PROTECT PHILADELPHIA'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE Oppose Bill No. 251030

### THE ISSUE

For decades, the Historic Preservation Ordinance has reflected a fundamental policy commitment that protecting historic buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods is a matter of public good for the citizens of Philadelphia. This bill proposes significant changes to Chapter 14-1000 of the Philadelphia Code, which governs the designation and protection of historic buildings and districts.

The bill has since been revised following feedback and stakeholder discussions since its introduction in November. While some changes represent meaningful improvements, significant concerns remain, and the Preservation Alliance opposes the bill as written.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Philadelphia's preservation ordinance is a core planning tool that helps to:

- Guide responsible development
- Ensure transparency in decision-making
- Give communities a voice in shaping their neighborhoods

### KEY CONCERNS

#### 1. Changes to Historic Designation Process

- New procedural steps could delay or discourage designation
- Property owners would be able to make alterations that remove character-defining historic building features after receiving notice of a historic nomination, but before full review occurs
- A three-year restriction on reconsidering nominations limits flexibility as conditions change

#### 3. Weakened Review Standards

- Removal of context-based review limits the ability to evaluate how projects affect surrounding properties
- Require approval of permits where an owner demonstrates "material commitments" to development plans, standards that are not publicly transparent and difficult to evaluate

#### 4. Cumulative Impact

- Taken together, these changes are not minor adjustments, they are structural changes that weaken the City's ability to protect historic resources and manage growth effectively.

**WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PHILADELPHIA**

- Greater risk of irreversible loss of historic buildings
- Reduced community input in development decisions
- Less predictable and transparent review processes
- Shifting the balance toward private development interests

**OUR ASK**

We respectfully urge City Council to oppose Bill No. 251030

**QUESTIONS? Contact the Preservation Alliance:**

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