2016


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Abstract
Over the course of 25 years, Pennsylvania Railroad Company executive and land developer, Henry H. Houston, amassed a real estate portfolio spanning 3,000-plus acres in northwestern Philadelphia. Houston's holdings in Germantown, an emerging Philadelphia suburb during the mid-Nineteenth century, have been overshadowed in terms of scholarly research by Houston's large-scale community development in neighboring Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia. Accordingly, this thesis aims to uncover a comprehensive development narrative for Houston's Germantown development, connecting land holdings, associated dwellings, architectural character, and social history together in order to determine if Houston's role in Germantown was simply a precursor to later development or integral to suburbanization in Northwest Philadelphia.

Key aspects of the historic narrative include: Germantown's initial period of rapid suburbanization during the 1850s and subsequent suburban growth during the 1880s; Houston's influence upon the character of the neighborhood both architecturally and demographically; and the overall significance of Houston-era development in Germantown as it relates to suburban development typologies established by scholars and preservation entities such as the National Park Service. Methodologically, this thesis utilizes archival research, field/site documentation through photography and GIS mapping, and secondary research spanning several contexts including suburban history, architectural history, and social history.

Keywords
G.W. Hewitt, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Tulpehocken Station Historic District, PARR, NPS

Disciplines
Architectural History and Criticism | Cultural History | Historic Preservation and Conservation

Comments
Suggested Citation:

HENRY H. HOUSTON’S GERMANTOWN DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO, 1860-1895:
A NICHE SUBURB’S HISTORY AND
PLACEMENT WITHIN SUBURBAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND PRESERVATION PLANNING

Joshua D. Bevan

A THESIS
In
Historic Preservation

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Dedication

To Germantown:

May your overshadowed historic fabric cast bright light on your future.
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The Hagley Museum and Archives

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List of Abbreviations

GHS  Germantown Historical Society (Used for Citations)
GWC  Germantown Water Company
PARR Pennsylvania Railroad
PGCH Philadelphia, Germantown, Chestnut Hill Railroad
PG&N Philadelphia, Germantown and Norristown Railroad
UPA  University of Pennsylvania: University Archives-Henry Houston Real Estate Papers Collection (Used for Citations)
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In 1886, Henry H. Houston left Germantown for the up-and-coming suburb of Wissahickon Heights, located in Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia. Houston developed Wissahickon Heights, a railroad suburb that appeared as an English facsimile, with architectural fabric and streets designed to create the feel of a village, and institutions such as the Episcopal Church and Philadelphia Cricket Club providing a foundation for community growth. As former General Freight Agent of the PARR, and a member of its Board of Directors, Houston was recognized as one of Philadelphia’s most successful industrialists of the second-half of the 19th century. His real estate holdings in Germantown grew from several developable parcels in the early 1860s to a diverse portfolio of residential and industrial properties, most of which remained within his estate’s possession into the early Twentieth century. Houston erected houses on most of these lots, preferring rentals to outright sales in the early stages of development.

Houston’s position as “landlord” was a critical aspect of his development in Germantown. Rather than a purely speculative developer, who perhaps would have acquired land, constructed housing or other improvements, and then sold hoping for a quick profit, Houston leased many properties in order to maintain the character of his Germantown development over the course of several decades. It was during those decades 1850 to 1900 that neighborhoods throughout Germantown were part of a broader trend of suburban development which ultimately reshaped the community and the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Architecture and community institutional development both factored into the sense of place of the neighborhood Houston was creating and simultaneously residing in. Urban historian Patricia Burgess Stach contends, “By the late 19th century those developers building upper-income suburbs were consciously trying to create particular types of communities.”1 For Houston, such efforts involved the design of buildings by reputable architects, and the careful selection of tenants and, in some cases, home buyers. In key respects, his Germantown

development resembled an idealized English village, much like its sister-community, Wissahickon Heights further northwest.

Houston spent a quarter-century of his life in Germantown, compared to less than a decade in Wissahickon Heights. Yet, compared to his role in the development of that community, his dealings in Germantown are less understood and arguably less appreciated. Historian Mark Frazier Lloyd recognizes this disconnect in his article, “The Tulpehocken Street Homes of Henry Howard Houston.” Houston biographer and historian, David R. Contosta, provides the most in-depth analysis and interpretation of Houston’s time in Chestnut Hill, but omits most details pertaining to earlier and contemporaneous Germantown development beyond the acquisition and sale of select Germantown parcels. Scholarship has yet to connect the parcels, buildings, and the people who lived in the houses Houston commissioned in Germantown to the broader story of Germantown’s suburban development. Despite the challenge incurred by limited primary and secondary source documentation of the buildings Houston constructed in Germantown, and no evidence of a single, overarching design for his holdings, sources such as atlases, deeds, and city directories enable a more thorough understanding of Houston’s dealings and ultimately his legacy in Germantown.

Buildings and landscapes associate with Houston’s development in Germantown should be assessed to determine their historic integrity, and ultimately significance to local, regional, and national history. Analyzing the architectural character of Houston’s properties allows for a robust interpretation of the neighborhood’s history. This knowledge can supplement what is already understood about Houston’s interests in land development, and may serve as a basis for evaluating the desirability of designation on local and national registers. Additionally, comparison to other neighborhoods whose developers also resided

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in them places Houston’s dealings in the proper historical context. Houston’s Germantown development can also be compared to contemporary railroad suburbs and other neighborhoods with Anglo-centric influences.

This thesis proposes that Houston’s portfolio of properties in Germantown is significant to Houston’s latter developments in Wissahickon Heights (later renamed St. Martin’s), and is significantly connected to Germantown’s mid-19th century development spatially and socially. Additionally, I aim to craft an accurate, thorough narrative of Houston’s growth as developer in Germantown, Philadelphia between 1860, when Houston moved to Germantown, and 1895, the year Houston passed away, devising his estate by will to his family’s ownership. Such research and interpretation promotes a more comprehensive understanding of the development of Nineteenth century railroad suburbs, and associated themes of historic significance incorporated in suburban historiography and preservation policies and planning.

Following a review of relevant literature, the thesis is divided into seven additional chapters. Chapter III provides a background of Houston’s personal and professional growth and is followed by Chapter IV which codifies Germantown’s initiation into suburban growth in the mid-1800s. In Chapter V, the focus shifts to Houston’s real estate holdings in Germantown which were acquired over three decades and in most cases subject to long-term ownership by Houston and/or his estate. Chapter VI will consider the use of architectural fabric as a factor in the formation of social identity and neighborhood character, exploring the transformation of the neighborhood’s built environment between 1850 and 1895, focusing on Houston-commissioned dwellings. Chapter VII profiles a sampling of renters and owners of dwellings commissioned by Houston and thus connects social history to architecture and suburbanization. Chapter VIII examines the development in light of current preservation policy and planning, aiming to determine justification for preservation of the neighborhood on a building-by-building basis or in a historic district. Chapter IX concludes the thesis, summarizing findings and providing recommendations for future scholarship.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Thorough research into Henry H. Houston’s involvement in northwestern Philadelphia’s development post-Civil War begins with an understanding of Houston himself, and expands to include additional contextual themes. Accordingly, review of pertinent literature spans the spectrum of suburban historiography bridging industrial, economic, and sociocultural realms, placing Houston, and most importantly, his real estate development portfolio in suburban Germantown, within the context of suburban historical scholarship. Obstacles relating to the succinct categorization of suburban typologies that differ from established definitions such as “railroad suburb” or “borderlands” are made apparent.

A significant portion of scholarship relating to Houston’s life and role as developer in and of suburban neighborhoods is credited to historians, David R. Contosta and Mark Frazier Lloyd. Contosta’s A Philadelphia Family: The Houstons and the Woodwards of Chestnut Hill, sets the foundation for critiquing the present understanding of Houston’s legacy, detailing Houston’s early life, his growth as an eminent industrialist in Philadelphia, and Houston’s role as visionary developer of “Wissahickon Heights.”

Contosta’s analysis goes beyond the span of Houston’s lifetime, incorporating the emergence of Houston’s son-in-law, George Woodward, as successor and progressive-era champion of early Twentieth century development in Wissahickon Heights—later renamed St. Martin’s for the Church Houston donated. Contosta’s, Suburb in the City: Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, 1850-1890, places the Houston-Woodward story

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4 David R. Contosta, A Philadelphia Family, 3-35. On role of such institutions in “community building”, see Henry C. Binford, First Suburbs: Residential Communities on the Boston Periphery, 1815-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). See also, David Contosta and Carol Franklin, Philadelphia’s Wissahickon Valley-Metropolitan Paradise: The Struggle for Nature in the City, Vol. 2.-Park, Vol. 3-Valley, (Philadelphia: St. Joseph’s University Press, 2010). Contosta and landscape architect, Carol Franklin, tie Houston and his family to the even greater scope of the Wissahickon Valley including philanthropic conservation efforts, in the four-volume series. These volumes provide a comprehensive analysis of Houston’s progression from emerging industrialist to respected philanthropist, and appropriately assess the significance of Houston’s heirs’ influence in the Wissahickon Valley through the 20th century.
into the larger Nineteenth century context of Chestnut Hill’s development beyond Wissahickon Heights, and
before Houston’s brief residency, and again briefly highlights Houston’s development in Germantown.

In terms of scholarly research focused specifically on Houston’s life in Germantown, several
articles published by Lloyd provide in-depth analysis not found in other sources. Lloyd’s work focuses on the
Tulpehocken Station neighborhood, where Houston resided between 1860 and 1886. As detailed by Lloyd’s
contributions in the Germantown Crier, attempts at speculative, suburban development in the early 1850s
were largely linked to the provision of utilities and community resources such as public water, religious
institutions embedded in the community, and relatively proximal access to rail. Houston was one of
thousands of incoming residents to Germantown during the years of its suburban boom throughout the mid-
Nineteenth century. As such, Houston took residence in a community that was still emergent. In Houston’s
twenty-plus years on W. Tulpehocken Street, the neighborhood would continue to evolve, much to the credit
of the developer, who was the largest landholder in the area. Lloyd provides a neighborhood case study for
the process of suburban development in Germantown, which is expanded upon in greater detail by historian,
Nancy Holst, most extensively in her 2005 dissertation, “Pattern Books and the Suburbanization of
Germantown, Pennsylvania, in the Mid-Nineteenth Century.”

In her dissertation, Holst examines the evolution Germantown experienced as its colonial land use
pattern interacted with, and ultimately succumbed to, suburbanization in various forms. She argues,
“Germantown’s suburban neighborhoods were not the product of a simple evolution but of a complex and

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5 See Mark Frazier Lloyd, “Germantown in the 1850s,” Germantown Crier, Vol. 31, No. 1, (Spring: 1979), 37.; Mark
Street and the Founding of Christ Church, Germantown,” (Part 1) Germantown Crier, Vol. 29, No.1, (Spring, 1977), 39-
43; Mark Frazier Lloyd, “Tulpehocken Street and the Founding of Christ Church, Germantown,” (Part 2) Germantown
6 Mark Frazier Lloyd, “Germantown in the 1850s,” 37.
7 Nancy Holst, “Pattern Books and the Suburbanization of Germantown, Pennsylvania, in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,”
Ph.D. Diss. (University of Delaware, 2008).
conflicted process of community building and cultural change.” In terms of sheer scale, Holst’s work goes beyond the scope of Houston’s story, offering a multi-faceted historical narrative that illuminates one neighborhood’s development long overshadowed by Chestnut Hill. Moreover, as Holst’s work supports, the complexity of Germantown’s development encounters turbulence when attempting to align with historiographic and preservation policy-based definitions of suburbs.

Additional scholarship relating to the development of suburbs in and around Philadelphia focuses on the social diaspora of land owners and developers of suburbs such as the Philadelphia Main Line, Chestnut Hill, and West Philadelphia during its nascent age in the mid-1800s. Nathaniel Burt’s, The Perennial Philadelphians: The Anatomy of an American Aristocracy, notes Houston’s career with the PARR, a corporation instrumental in the development of the Main Line, and in a greater sense, PARR influence in the formation of a new, moneyed upper-class, separate from the city’s founding families. Rhetorical quips such as, “Chestnut Hill was more or less the creation of one man, Henry Houston,” signal that Burt was not interested in providing a thorough historic analysis as much a socially-biased story. Houston has never failed to garner accreditation for his success in Chestnut Hill, but, as Burt’s statement suggests, scholars have placed the bulk of Houston’s significance in Chestnut Hill, despite the fact that years prior he began in Germantown, later shifting the focus of his enterprise later to Wissahickon Heights/St. Martin’s. This leaves the work of Contosta and Lloyd as the most balanced in its analysis of Houston’s real estate development. Burt’s work is effectively paired with that of his contemporary, E. Digby Baltzell in an effort to consider society linkages in the story of development.

Like Burt, Baltzell writes extensively of the Pennsylvania Railroad and its leadership. Baltzell’s approach considers social registers, club memberships, and distinguishes “elite” status from “upper-class”

and “upper-upper-class”. In *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* Baltzell posits, “The Civil War finally opened upper-class doors to the successful members of the business, industrial, and banking, elite. . .American society produced a flood of. . .railroad, mining, and traction, kings.”10 Additionally, in, *Puritan Boston Quaker Philadelphia*, Baltzell expounds upon the distinct, inward looking nature of Philadelphian elitism in comparison to more overt Bostonian, “Brahmin” leadership. Further, Baltzell brings the leadership of the Pennsylvania Railroad into the discussion, including connections between its executives and their influence in the development of communities along regional routes.11

Just as Holst and Lloyd focused in Germantown, historian John M. Groff focuses his own thesis on the growth of the Philadelphia Main Line’s “Green Country Towns”. Groff’s analysis represents a transition from the socially focused work of Baltzell and Burt to a more cohesive merger of social, development, and architectural themes, relating the emergence of “Welshified”, Anglo-centric suburbs with elements of PARR influence, and the separation of elite, major landowners from the bourgeois subscribers to the suburban existence they advertised.12 These conditions were not specific to the Main Line, and were embedded in the transition of urban merchants, a growing middle class, and members of the of upper-class who vied for separation from industrializing urban environs, in the form of suburban residence in Germantown, and later developments such as Wissahickon Heights.

In terms of architectural history, Germantown’s shift from a rural, seasonal retreat, home to the country seats for Philadelphia’s elite, to a year-round, residential suburb brings the narrative up to the point of Houston’s involvement. In *Architecture and Suburbia*, John Archer brings to bear the evolvement of the villa as a productive, residential typology to a dwelling designed to connect resident to nature during times

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of “retirement”. Archer continues his analysis, recognizing the “compact villa” as “instrumental to identity” while recalling two types of dwellings, the villa and the cottage, as types paramount in the Nineteenth century American residential landscape. Architectural preference is crucial to understanding Houston’s community planning. Shifting away from Houston and the analyses of his social contemporaries enables the incorporation of broader historical trends in suburbanization and associated housing that are relevant to Nineteenth century suburban development. Clive Aslet’s *The American Country House*, keys into the Anglo-centric leanings of Philadelphia’s elite, including the growth in popularity of the Queen Anne style, favored by Philadelphia architects including Houston’s preferred residential architecture firm of brothers, G.W. and W.D. Hewitt.

Themes of suburbanization, social history, and architectural history have been assessed in broader historical contexts, which define suburban typology in terms of chronological patterns and technological advancements, most notably the evolution of rail-based transportation. Kenneth T. Jackson’s, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, compares early suburbs in Brooklyn, New York; Germantown, Philadelphia; Boston, Massachusetts and expands upon the process of rail extension and its impacts on the development and demography of associated neighborhoods; horse car suburbs, streetcar suburbs, automobile suburbs. Undoubtedly, transportation encouraged and enabled Houston’s migration and growth as he ascended Philadelphia’s social ladder, and left an indelible mark upon the city’s crescive northwest suburbs. Such circumstances connect to themes in Germantown, Philadelphia as described by Holst, who finds “patchwork” speculation key in Germantown’s evolution from autonomous “township” in 1849 to 22nd Ward in the consolidated City of Philadelphia post 1854. As well, it recalls John R. Stilgoe’s

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“borderlands” characteristic of several expanding fringe areas ultimately shaped by the extension of various rail transportation systems. Although Germantown’s growth was tied to gradual expansion of omnibus and railroad networks by 1854, it remains distinct from many other former borderlands in that a second-coming of the railroad in 1884 created a second-wave of suburban growth, linked directly to Houston’s development. Such glimpses into areas beyond Germantown show that transportation, and housing hierarchies were integral to development, connecting speculators, architects, and incoming residents to a complex system that separated classes of people by economics of housing and commutation.

Defining suburbia and its history into thematic eras, or social brackets remains a challenge. Dolores Hayden’s placement of suburban development progression into seven historical patterns including borderlands, picturesque enclaves, and streetcar buildouts does well to encompass a great deal of Nineteenth century suburbs, but fitting Houston’s Germantown development into one category is difficult since his ownership and his influence overlap the chronology of several of Hayden’s temporal patterns. Houston’s work in Germantown and in Chestnut Hill does not fit effectively into Hayden’s streetcar buildout category in which subdivision organized construction of lots along omnibus and streetcar lines, with houses generally of a modest scale. Extension of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s branch line through Houston’s land and the development it spurred, is more appropriately categorized as a railroad suburb, which does not appear within Hayden’s patterns. Additionally, the scale and quality of Houston’s holdings (in and beyond Germantown) was, in contrast, not entirely modest, as Houston’s reliance on the Hewitt brothers, and existing, high-end housing by the likes of Samuel Sloan and later Frank Miles Day and George T. Pearson, drew a select demographic of residents to the area, creating an enclave-like railroad suburb after the

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picturesque enclave pattern’s period. As Hayden explains: “between 1870 and 1920, at the height of industrial capitalism, developers extended their reach and promoted urban peripheries systematically, often working in partnership with transit owners, utilities, and local government.” Thus, the challenge exists in placing a neighborhood already with desirable utility connections, developed at the hands of a railroad entrepreneur, into the milieu of interpreted residential community types that have become standardized by scholarship and within preservation planning frameworks.

The characteristics of Houston’s development along Wayne Avenue in Germantown do not entirely fit established guidelines for nominating historic suburbs, which is perhaps one reason that despite the Tulpehocken Station neighborhood’s nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, a large portion of Houston’s buildings are not designated as contributing or significant on national or local registers. The National Park Service’s (NPS), *National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs*, defines suburbs as “generally platted, subdivided, and developed according to a plan and often laid out according to professional principles of design.” Houston’s properties in Germantown fill in, or append, to a larger suburban neighborhood that is not planned on paper, but rather itself the result of multiple streams of influence manifested in residential form. Thus, as an accessory development within the complex of Germantown, Houston’s development does not match with present NPS guidelines, creating an obstacle to interpretation and future management as an historic resource.

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Regarding Philadelphia’s suburban history, historian Margaret Marsh argues:

In understanding the suburbs, it is important to remember that not all of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century residential suburbs were ‘streetcar suburbs’... Much more needs to be done, but there are some good beginnings that suggest the diversity, variety, and complexity of Philadelphia’s suburban development while also adumbrating the contours of a common regional suburban experience.21

Marsh’s argument came less than five years after Jackson, Fishman, Binford, and Stilgoe published their suburban histories. Analysis of Houston’s suburban real estate in Germantown provides an opportunity to shed light on a singular group of buildings that are associated in the broadest sense with suburban Germantown, and in the most specifically, one developer’s influence on a neighborhood that keys into the variety and complexity foundational to the progression of suburban historiography and practice of preservation.

CHAPTER III: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GENTLEMAN AND A PHILADELPHIA FAMILY

Moses King’s, *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians*, published in 1902, lists Henry H. Houston under the category “Merchants, Manufacturers, Capitalists, Philanthropists (Figure 1).” Retrospectively, Houston’s ascent of Philadelphia’s industrially-driven, socioeconomic ladder, and his recognition as a benefactor to not only select institutions, but to the City of Philadelphia, took less than 50 years. Between 1849 when he moved to Philadelphia from central Pennsylvania, until his death in 1895, Houston merged a mastery of shipping logistics and a keen speculative sense to investments in oil, transportation, and land. Following rapid increases in personal income during the Civil War as a result of his position as General Freight Agent with PARR, Houston turned his budding wealth into land investment. Over the course of three decades, Houston acquired in excess of 3,000 acres of land in Northwest Philadelphia and beyond. Houston brought a distinct vision of design and community to bear on his properties which shaped the spatial and social characteristics of “suburban” neighborhoods in Germantown and Chestnut Hill between 1860 and 1895. Thereafter, Houston’s estate, managed by his son, Samuel F. Houston, and son-in-law, George Woodward, continued to manage a majority of the parcels Houston took title to.

Houston was born in 1820 and raised in Wrightsville, York County, Pennsylvania. His family’s mercantile background and Houston’s own experiential education in clerical and industrial sectors enabled his entrepreneurial talents to propel his professional growth. In 1843, Houston was recruited to a position at the Horse Creek Furnace in Venango County after having worked as a clerk at the Lucinda Iron Furnace. In 1845 Houston left Horse Creek and embarked on a recreational tour of the southern and western states,

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eventually returning to Philadelphia in 1846 to take a position at David Leech & Company, a leading canal and railroad transportation firm. These three years were pivotal in defining Houston’s future with the PARR, who in partnership with Leech & Company, hired Houston as General Freight Agent in 1851. Houston’s promotion gave him the authority to set rates, pay damage claims, and operate freight terminals, as well as solicit business. These components of Houston’s position in a railroad seeking interstate expansion, allowed for Houston to emerge from the Civil War with a salary capable of supporting a family and investment in industry and land.

Houston’s next milestone came in the form of marriage. In 1856, Houston married Sallie Sherrerd Bonnell, and one-year later converted from Presbyterianism, the faith of his family and their Scotch-Irish ancestors to Episcopalian, his wife’s own faith, and one which informed the growth of the neighborhoods Houston later developed and resided in. The Pennsylvania Railroad’s leadership was well connected to the Episcopalism, especially considering that several of its executives financed the construction of or donated land for the establishment of Episcopal Churches in suburban developments during the second-half of the Nineteenth Century.

Religion, however, was only one of several ties binding the society of Philadelphia’s industrial elite (and, potentially, connecting them to and isolating them from other elites). The separate spheres of “First

25 David Leech & Company were the most important transporter operating over the PARR’s Main Line of Public Works during the 1840s. Leech contributed several agents to the PARR including future president, Thomas A. Scott, and Henry H. Houston. See, Albert J. Churella, The Pennsylvania Railroad, Volume I: Building an Empire, 1846-1917, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 155. According to the diary of historian and former neighbor of Houston, Cornelius N. Weygandt, Houston and Scott were brought into the PARR by W.C. Patterson, the second president of the PARR. See, “Saturday, June 23, 1883,” Cornelius Nolan Weygandt Papers, 1849-1907, UPT 50 W547, Box 2, Folder 18, University of Pennsylvania Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

Family” Philadelphians and those “new” families who made fortunes during Philadelphia’s industrial prime are key to understanding Houston’s place or rank within the upper-class. E. Digby Baltzell noted:

The Civil War finally opened upper-class doors to the successful members of the business, industrial, and banking elite. In the half century between the silence of Appomattox and the roar of howitzers on the Western Front, American society produced a flood of business Titans, ‘robber barons,’ and railroad, mining, and traction kings.\textsuperscript{27}

Baltzell showed that in 1864, as Houston’s role as General Freight Agent had come into its prime during the Civil War, he was listed among “Philadelphians with Elite Incomes”, but was among the lower tier of these “proper Philadelphians,” with an income of $22,065. By comparison, Samuel Merrick, co-founder and first president of the PARR had an income of $82,704, while Baldwin Locomotives founder, Matthias Baldwin, had an income of $211,832—the highest income listed.\textsuperscript{28} Houston biographer and historian, David R. Contosta, furthers Baltzell’s argument, writing:

Houston’s wealth and success did not make him an instant member of Philadelphia’s upper upper-class. Luckily, Houston had begun making his fortune just before the end of the Civil War, a sort of unofficial deadline for the easy acceptance of one’s heirs into Philadelphia’s upper upper-class.\textsuperscript{29}

In 1860, as Houston built his wealth around the transportation demands of the Civil War, he also embarked, as many members of the mobile upper-middle class did, on a journey to the boom and beckon of suburban residence in Germantown. Over the course of the next three decades Houston established a relatively distinct reputation that combined aspects of both Philadelphian and Bostonian upper-class traditions as outlined by Baltzell. Houston matched Baltzell’s categorization of Philadelphian elites as typically guarded or inward-looking in by nature, yet was eminently generous as evidenced by contributions to community, land conservation, and institutions including the University of Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Baltzell, \textit{Philadelphia Gentlemen}, 108.
\textsuperscript{29} David R. Contosta, \textit{Suburb in the City: Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, 1850-1890}, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992), 80.
In several cases, Houston’s philanthropy contributed directly to the development of community institutions and amenities in both Germantown and Chestnut Hill. Houston financed the construction of, and donated land for the construction of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Germantown (1873), and later, St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church in Wissahickon Heights/St. Martin’s, Chestnut Hill (1889). In addition to Anglican religious associations, Houston carried the English traditions of cricket, equestrian competition, and fox hunting into Chestnut Hill, donating land to the Wissahickon Inn and Philadelphia Cricket Club adjacent to St. Martin-in-the-Fields. The Inn and Cricket Club provided recreation and enticement to potential residents of Houston’s housing and were featured attractions in other local developments designed for middle and upper class residents. Houston further contributed donations to organizations such as the Young Man’s Christian Association (YMCA), and for infrastructural improvements including the McCallum Street Bridge.31 The bridge served a more convenient connection between Houston’s own residence, nearby inn, cricket club, and church, effectively placing them in the direct service of major transportation in the form of rail (Philadelphia, Germantown, Chestnut Hill Railroad) and carriage routes (McCallum Street).

Newspaper snippets from the 1880s remarked several times of the venerable Houston’s attendance and hosting of lawn tennis tournaments and fox hunts.32 Contemporarily, these suburban amenities were found in many affluent, suburban areas; notably the Merion Cricket Club in Merion, Pa, and at the Radnor Hunt Club, located along the Anglicized “Main Line”.33 Houston’s communities were contemporaries of and designed to compete with those of the Main Line. Further, the convenient presence of commuter rail

31 “A New Bridge at Chestnut Hill. Council to be Asked to Appropriate $25,000 for the Improvement,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 30 October, 1886, 6 and “Y. M. C. A. Those Who Assisted Materially in Paying off the Floating Debt,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 8 September, 1883, 3. Henry Houston was listed among individuals who donated funds towards the elimination of the Philadelphia Y.M.C.A’s debt of $200,000. Houston donated $1,000 accorded to the article.
stations in Main Line communities likely influenced Houston’s strategic integration of such rail extensions within his own communities.

These factors ultimately served to inform the architectural development of Houston’s neighborhoods, which relied heavily on the work of firms such as Furness & Hewitt and G.W. and W.D. Hewitt, whose connections to Episcopalian clients, churches and their congregants, emphasized networks connecting architects and clients throughout Philadelphia during the Nineteenth century. In describing the role of architects within such networks, architectural historian, George E. Thomas notes:

> Furness’ ecclesiastical commissions confirm his ascribed status…nine Episcopal congregations retained his services for both alterations and new church buildings. In part, many of these jobs were received because his partner from 1868 to 1876, George W. Hewitt, had worked with and continued the practice of John Notman.34

These architects and their designs brought Victorian and Queen Anne styles into the vocabulary of Houston’s built portfolio, suggesting that the communities’ blend of church, high-quality housing, and successful residents, served as a haven for aspiring suburbanites in the early Gilded Age. In establishing an Anglo-centric aesthetic, Houston sought to fill out the neighborhood he inhabited with residents with values he approved of. This was effectively a transition or second step from the model followed by the Fallon brothers, who ten years prior to Houston’s migration from city center to suburb, established their own speculative venture inspired by landscapes and built features espoused by the likes of Andrew Jackson Downing.35

As an outsider who found success through investment and carefully cultivated business relationships in industrial Philadelphia, Houston earned praise from peers, but was subject to the criticism of at least one neighbor who took issue with Houston’s control over the neighborhood he lived in. Cornelius N.

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Weygandt, banker and former neighbor of Houston’s, wrote on several occasions of his neighbor’s quiet demeanor, once noting, “H.H. Houston sat along side [sic] of me [on the train], and was difficult to engage in general talk, as usual. A monosyllabic man, except when on a business topic in which he has an ‘interest’.”36 Weygandt’s interpretation of Houston’s interest in business as the driver of his personality manifested itself in subsequent diary entries that provide additional depth to the development narrative provided in chapter three. Despite Weygandt’s criticisms, Houston was considered by many contemporaries to be an upstanding gentleman, despite his at times reticent disposition.

Fellow PARR executive and Germantown resident, Frank J. Firth, who considered Houston to be among the “pioneers of American transportation,” wrote, “Henry H. Houston was a man who to know was to love. He was not an easy man to become intimate with, but he was a great hearted, able, generous man.”37 Houston’s legacy is heavily weighted by his generous contributions. Houston stands out, however, among many contemporary elite Philadelphians in that he managed to establish a prominent presence in what became by all accounts, the city’s most desired “suburban” enclave, despite rarely being granted membership in the clubs of highest standing.38

36 Cornelius N. Weygandt, Diary of Cornelius N. Weygandt, Friday, 23 April 1879, University of Pennsylvania Archives, Cornelius Nolen Weygandt Papers, 1849-1907, Collection UPT 50 W547, Box 2, Folder 18.
38 See, Contosta, A Philadelphia Family, 10-11.
Figure 1 Houston as immortalized in King's, *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians*, 1902.
CHAPTER IV: GERMANTOWN-PHILADELPHIA’S STREETCAR SUBURB

In the late 1790s saw Germantown, a distant township outside of the City of Philadelphia, served as a refuge for residents of Philadelphia fleeing yellow fever epidemics and for those who could afford a seasonal residence at country seats. Throughout the first-half of the Nineteenth century, Germantown became more accessible to larger portions of Philadelphia’s populace, who also sought escape from the city while living further from their places of employment as a result of increased access to transportation across the city. Houston’s move to Germantown in the summer of 1860 came in the midst of speculative development across Philadelphia’s recently incorporated twenty-second ward. In describing such development, historian Nancy Holst explains:

Growth, concentrated along the Germantown Road, had occurred gradually over time in a piecemeal fashion as a result of private efforts and speculative activity...The same laissez-faire patterns of small-scale development prevailed in the 1840s and 1850s as well, although the forms of that development broadened. New streets were opened at right angles to the main thoroughfare, providing access to much larger quantities of rectilinear lots that varied significantly in size.39

Among the developers partaking in such speculation were brothers, John and Christopher Fallon, who focused their speculative interests around Tulpehocken Street beginning in 1850, and “the Haines and Harvey families [who] opened W. Walnut and Harvey streets in 1849 and 1853 respectively.”40 The Fallon brothers not only opened streets but also provided running water to thousands of subscribers throughout Germantown via Germantown Water Company (GWC), established by the brothers in 1851. GWC infrastructure was located proximal to the intersection of Wayne Avenue and W. Tulpehocken Street, with a pumping station at the present location of Tulpehocken train station, and a standpipe located around the

present location of 266 W. Tulpehocken Street, a former Houston-owned property. 41 Northeast-southwest streets running off of Germantown Avenue literally opened playing fields to development. Germantown historian, Edward Hocker, noted that Samuel Harvey’s lot located at Wayne Avenue and W. Rittenhouse Street (one block south Harvey Street), was used for cricket and baseball games in the mid-1860s, and later, land of the Fallon’s near W. Tulpehocken Street, served local baseball players. 42 Both locations were acquired by Houston over the next decade, subdivided, and improved with housing.

Houston’s arrival in 1860 was likely encouraged by several factors. First, between 1832 and 1851, Germantown benefitted from several major upgrades relating to its connectivity with Philadelphia’s downtown. The Philadelphia, Germantown, and Norristown Railroad (PG&N), began serving Germantown in 1832, allowing passengers to debark at Price Street and Germantown Avenue. Civil Engineer, G.M. Hopkins’, Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia, 1871, shows dense development focused around the PG&N depot at Price Street, just north of Chelten Avenue. 43 In addition to this major rail extension, horse cars and streetcars further enabled the borough’s growth in the years leading up to Philadelphia’s consolidation in 1854. Suburban historian Kenneth T. Jackson notes:

By 1859, more than forty trains were making commuter stops in the northwestern suburb of Germantown. The usual pattern was for tracks to be laid radiating outward from the [city center]. The horsecar tracks followed the main roads and generally were developed toward the emerging wealthy neighborhoods. 44

41 Mark Frazier Lloyd, “Tulpehocken Street and the Founding of Christ Church, Germantown,” (Part 1), 40. Lloyd further details the foundation of the Fallon brothers’ development along W. Tulpehocken Street. The Fallon’s had connections to the Queen of Spain whose funding was critical in providing investment capital. Christopher Fallon’s background in law and John Fallon’s engineering background combined to inform their development in Germantown. See also, Edward W. Hocker, Germantown: 1683-1933: The Record That a Pennsylvania Community Has Achieved in the Course of 250 Years-Being a History of the People of Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill, (Philadelphia: Edward W. Hocker, 1933), 218.
42 Edward W. Hocker, Germantown: 1683-1933, 242
In fact, the neighborhood Houston encountered in 1860 was emerging as a home for merchants,
gentleman, and business owners, as well as “laborers” and gardeners. According to Jackson: “In most rural
suburbs, about thirty percent to fifty percent of the heads of households in the late nineteenth century were
affluent businessmen who traveled at least five miles to work.” As early as 1860, such was the case on
Tulpehocken Street as gentleman merchants such as Edwin R. and Jacob J. Cope, broker Charles F. Graff,
shipping agent James H. Harrison, and merchant Ebenezer Maxwell resided on W. Tulpehocken Street,
while commuting to places of employment that were, with few exceptions, east of Broad Street and South
of Market Street; Philadelphia’s antebellum commercial hub (See Appendix IV).

Of W. Tulpehocken Street residents with city directory-listed employment and residential
addresses in 1860, only those with “white collar” occupations commuted outside of Germantown to their
workplace. Farmer Elijah Haupt, laborer Edward McCloskey, and coachmen, including Conrad Miller (who
lived at the corner of Tulpehocken Street and Wayne Avenue-Houston’s future residence) lived and based
their work in the same community (See Appendix IV). Further, these laborers were part of a local economy
tied to the operation of suburban bourgeois estates that utilized gardeners and coachmen on a day-to-day
basis. Those who moved to Germantown and maintained employment in Philadelphia proper, were able to
do so because they could afford costs of daily commutation, including the use of personal carriages to and
from transit hubs.

Horsecar rail extensions grew rapidly in downtown Philadelphia and continued to increase
commuter convenience in areas gaining density such as Germantown and West Philadelphia. With
improvements in transportation came implications for real estate development in the regions opened by

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rail. Germantown resident and noted diarist Sidney George Fisher, elucidated on Germantown’s changing environs on several occasions between 1851 and 1859:

December 31, 1851-The love of country life is rapidly increasing here as elsewhere. Very many large & handsome houses costing from 10 to 30 or $40,000 have been built in the neighborhood of Germantown this year & others are projected. The value of land has risen immensely.48

February 1, 1859-A beneficial effect of [horse-powered streetcars railroads] will be to enable everyone to have suburban or villa or country home, to spread the city over a vast space, with all the advantages of compactness and the advantages, moreover, of pure air, gardens, and rural pleasures.49

Fisher’s entries bookend transportation turning-points within Germantown during the 1850s that impacted the city at large while connecting vehicular mobility to residential mobility, providing insight into another factor in the lure of Germantown as a desired commuter suburb. Supposed “advantages…of pure air, gardens, and rural pleasures” were key in drawing new residents to emerging elite suburbs during the mid-1800s. Germantown began changing rapidly from a semi-rural township of country seats for seasonal residents, separate from the City of Philadelphia, into a suburban community of villas and cottages housing permanent residents within the consolidated City. The villas and cottages built in suburbs during the 1850s and 1860s signaled a transition in culture and architecture stemming from Roman traditions and English precedents. The culture of “retirement”, meaning an escape from business or politics, in Roman tradition, morphed into retirement defined by leisurely pursuits which focused around the compact bourgeois villa.50 These compact villas brought models of bourgeois domesticity from England to the U.S. over the course of the Eighteenth century, and further evolved to influence permanent, suburban residential architecture for the American bourgeoisie in the Nineteenth century.

For residents such as Houston who could afford the cost of train travel and the additional cost of hiring a carriage driver to complete a journey home, recently built-out streets such as W. Tulpehocken, W. Walnut, and arteries such as Wayne Avenue provided opportunity for a stake in suburban living. Houston’s arrival in 1860 came after the initial allocation of subdivided lots were purchased from developers such as the Fallon brothers. Many lots such as those belonging to Samuel Harvey, and the large, vacant lot at the northeast corner of W. Tulpehocken Street and Wayne Avenue, owned by Francis M. Drexel, remained vacant, and consequently developable.

Houston spent his first three years in Germantown as a tenant, renting half of a semi-detached house owned by industrialist, Lewis Taws, at present day 223 W. Tulpehocken Street.\(^5^1\) In 1863, Houston acquired the former residence of William T. Ferriday at sheriff’s sale for $15,000.\(^5^2\) The Italianate villa, attributed to architect John Riddell, located at the northwest corner of W. Tulpehocken Street and Wayne Avenue, remained Houston’s residence until 1886 and stood until its demolition in 1922 (Figures 2 and 3). While Houston was not at this point especially wealthy, his financial foundation was strengthening due to his position as General Freight Agent for the PARR. By 1865, as the Civil War drew to a close, Houston’s income was recorded at $114,152, roughly five times the year prior. Clearly, Houston’s position as General Freight Agent, which placed him in charge of the transportation of soldiers and munitions throughout the Union during the War, had a major impact on the growth of his income during the years of the war. As Germantown grew around the streetcar’s omnipresence, PARR was in the midst of increasing its own


\(^5^2\) Philadelphia Department of Records, Deed Book ACH 129, 309.
network beyond Philadelphia, all the while elevating self-made men such as Houston to new socio-economic
tiers.

In the 1860s and 1870s, PARR began the process of buying out land-owning farmers along its Main
Line of Public Works to the west of Philadelphia. The growth of the “Main Line” suburbs, focused at PARR
stations from Overbrook, Philadelphia to Paoli in Chester County, showcased the influence of PARR and its
leadership on the continued spread of suburb-bound populations. For example, the borough of Wayne
along the Main Line was developed by and marketed by publisher George W. Childs, and Anthony J. Drexel,
a financier with ties to PARR. Development occurred through the 1880s, but unlike Houston’s work in
Germantown, Wayne was planned on paper from the start. The 1882 engraving of the site’s development
plan featured vignettes of Louella Mansion, Bellevue Hotel, and Wayne’s post office which portrayed a
place home to successful residents, and amenities tied to quality of life. The engraving is not unlike
Rogerson & Murphy’s 1851 map, which included similar vignettes, while attempting to showcase all
Germantown offered during its suburban boom.

By 1892, what were empty lots ten years earlier had filled out with mostly single-detached
dwellings in a community developed around the train station. Houston used his standing with the PARR to
define rail-driven real estate development in Germantown and Chestnut Hill a decade later. Just two years
after establishing permanence in Germantown, Houston began to acquire many of the vacant lots
surrounding his one-and-a-half acre lot. This process continued through the 1880s, as Houston’s influence

54 Kenneth T. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier, 91.
55 See, Wayne on the Pennsylvania Rail Road Main Line 30 Minutes from Philadelphia: The Property of Drexel & Childs,
56 See, Map of Wayne, Delaware County, Pa., (Philadelphia: E.W. Smith & Co., 1892), Radnor Historical Society,
flourished in the fabric of the neighborhood. Chapter III examines Houston’s development strategy between 1865 and 1895, and connects his role as an influential real estate developer in Germantown with his established significance in Wissahickon Heights/St. Martin’s, Chestnut Hill.
Figure 2 279 W. Tulpehocken Street (demolished 1922), Houston’s residence 1863 to 1886. GHS

Figure 3 Former location of Houston’s home at 279 W. Tulpehocken Street. Photo by Author, 2015.
CHAPTER V: HOUSTON’S LONG-TERM REAL ESTATE STRATEGY

Acquisition

Over the course of two decades, Germantown’s “Tulpehocken Station” neighborhood incorporated its first generation of development and the residents associated with such. Houston focused his interest within the boundaries of Greene Street (North); W. Rittenhouse Street (East); Wissahickon Avenue (South); W. Washington Lane (West) (Figure 4). Wayne Avenue, running roughly parallel to Germantown Avenue, bisected the area. The northern-half of this area was mostly flat, and consequently already home to residential development by 1860. The southern-half sloped downhill between Wayne Avenue and the Monoshone Creek Valley where present day Lincoln Drive cuts through.57

Beginning in 1865, Houston transitioned his role in the neighborhood from new neighbor, to long-term investor. A comparison of Rogerson and Murphy’s, Map of the Township of Germantown, 1851, with G.M. Hopkin’s, Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 1871, shows how this development spread from the spine of Germantown Avenue along streets opened during the early 1850s (Figures 5 and 6). Those lots that were still vacant or, perhaps by a real estate investor’s standards, “under-developed,” were often inhibited by topographic obstacles such as streams running through lots, or steep grading incompatible to economically viable land improvement. Such was the case in areas south of Wayne Avenue, namely the location of the former Germantown Waterworks, and just west of Washington Lane.58 In addition to these obstacles, large lots belonging to established landowners such as the Harvey’s, Haines’, and Francis M.

Drexel were within years from being sold off as family patriarch’s passed on and the potential to sell off profitable land emerged.

The topography of the neighborhood is important in considering Houston’s residence and its location within the neighborhood. Although not the highest point in the surrounding area, Houston’s residence, complete with cupola for observation, gave Houston a commanding view of the Wissahickon Valley, and most importantly, a clear view of the Wayne Avenue axis. Considering the opposite perspective, Houston’s home would have been in view of many of his neighbors, and certainly within a half-mile walk to or from any rental property he owned, emphasizing his presence as neighbor, but also as landlord to a great deal of those neighbors. Despite the opportunity of surveillance derived from the location of the Houston home, Houston only resided in the neighborhood for approximately three years after the first dwellings he commissioned were constructed in the 5000 block of Wayne Avenue. Most of the dwellings Houston had built were constructed after the Philadelphia Germantown and Chestnut Hill Railroad (PGCH) branch of the PARR was brought through his land in between 1883 and 1884, meaning that after 1886, when Houston moved to Wissahickon Heights, he remained a landlord, but not a neighbor.

The two decades leading up to the PGCH extension through Germantown were the formative years of Houston’s holdings in Germantown and Chestnut Hill. Acquisition began in 1865, but reached a zenith between 1879 and 1885. It was during this five-year period that Houston acquired over 3,000 acres of land between Germantown and southeastern Montgomery County. Study of the Houston Estate’s personal deed books, Philadelphia deed indices, and atlas maps enable the discovery of the covert nature of these transactions which enabled future development by the Houston estate during the first quarter of the Twentieth century.
1865-1872: Adding Acreage

In August of 1865, Houston acquired the first of two parcels from James McHenry, a British Merchant “residing in London, England,” followed by an additional parcel in September 1865. These parcels were located directly across Wayne Avenue from Houston’s home and were bound by Wayne Avenue and (proposed) Pulaski Avenue between W. Washington Ln. and W. Walnut Ln.59 Houston acquired additional parcels from John Littell, conveyer of the Fallon brother’s former holdings, in two additional purchases that same year (Figure 7).60 Also related to the acquisition of these parcels was the closure of the GWC after the consolidation of the City of Philadelphia in 1854, which resulted in the City’s assumption of control of water systems of the districts and boroughs that had been incorporated.61 In February 1869, Samuel T. Bodine, Gentleman, sold his one acre lot at the southwest corner of Wayne Avenue and W. Walnut Lane to Houston. Houston rounded out his first phase of purchases in 1870 and 1872, acquiring two additional large tracts that comprised the former land of the Germantown Water Company south of Wayne Avenue and west of Harvey Street.62 These acquisitions placed over forty acres of largely undeveloped land under Houston’s ownership.

With the exception of Bodine’s lot, the acreage acquired by Houston immediately after the Civil War was not entirely suitable for development considering the steep grading that comprised a sizeable portion of the land. Frontages along Wayne Avenue provided enough ground, however, to construct housing. Such construction was not undertaken until after the extension of the PGCH railroad in 1884, roughly two decades after Houston’s acquisition of land from McHenry, Bodine, and Littell. Thus, Houston acquired land with future development potential, but an already established view shed of the Monoshone Valley, providing

60 Philadelphia Department of Records, Deed Book LRB 109, p. 182 and LRB 127, p. 200. These deeds show that Littell retained ownership of the subject properties as a result of the Fallon brothers’ inability to satisfy a mortgage, meaning interest in the land reverted back to Littell.
62 Philadelphia Department of Records, Deed Book JAH 41, p. 54 and JAH 259, p. 338.
Houston with incentive to utilize his home’s cupola, and making him one of the neighborhood’s largest landowners.63

1873-1881: A Second Episcopal Church, A Stable Neighborhood

Beginning in 1873, holdings on Harvey Street in particular became an important piece of Houston’s Germantown portfolio and his connection to the surrounding community. In 1873, Houston mortgaged the construction of the Furness & Hewitt designed, St. Peter’s Episcopal Church on land he owned at the southwest corner of Wayne Avenue and Harvey Street (Figure 8). Houston’s land and capital contributions were worth approximately $75,000 in 1873.64 This process resulted from controversy at nearby Christ Church (Episcopal) regarding the sermonic practices of Reverend Theodore S. Rumney. Houston had attended Christ Church from the time of his move to W. Tulpehocken Street until 1872, and was a supporter of Rumney as a religious leader and in friendship.65 Houston, fellow vestryman Edmund A. Crenshaw, and others sympathetic to Rumney’s practices found the solution involved placing Rumney in a new church, the second Episcopal Church in the neighborhood.66 Such controversy was also noted in Boston suburbs during the same time period as new congregants and established congregants quarreled over decisions made by their

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63 Houston’s aspirations for land ownership in the Wissahickon, and the anecdotal role his home’s cupola played are detailed in David R. Contosta, Suburb in the City: Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, 1850-1890, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992), 82.
64 S.F. Hotchkin, Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mount Airy, and Chestnut Hill, (Philadelphia: P.W. Ziegler & Co., 1889), 160. and Mark Frazier Lloyd, Interview with Author, 8 Feb 2016, University of Pennsylvania, University Archives, Philadelphia, PA. Lloyd notes that in requiring a mortgage for the construction of the church, which was ultimately forgiven, Houston signaled that he was not financially sound to the point where he could afford to pay-in-full for the church’s construction in 1873.
church’s Rector. Reverend Abiel Holmes was dismissed from his duties at Old Cambridge Church in Cambridge, MA for “refusing to invite Unitarians to preach from his pulpit,” and later formed a new church.67

The establishment of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church allowed Houston to place an amenity and a symbol of protestant standing within the community he lived in.68 The Episcopal Church flourished institutionally in the decades after the Civil War. Holding influential, and powerful positions, Episcopalians were often at the forefront of economic and intellectual change, while significant numbers of wealthy Americans were attracted to the stability of a denomination that still represented English customs and ecclesiastical tradition. The Episcopalian faith gained a following and geographic connectivity with many upper class Philadelphians, and those that aspired to live in stable, affluent communities. Accordingly, in funding an additional Episcopal Church within the same community, Houston invested in an institution that he identified with and recognized as an attractor of future residents with similar values, regardless of any perceived redundancy.

The remainder of the 1870s were a time of relative quiet in Houston’s enterprise. Nationwide financial panic in 1873 may have impacted Houston’s development horizon. The lag between 1873 and the period of rapid acquisition beginning in 1879 gave Houston’s investments outside of real estate time to grow. Historian David R. Contosta notes, “By 1865… Houston had amassed a substantial sum of capital. He subsequently invested in mines, oil, shipping, various other railroad ventures…”69 Since Houston held onto his land after improving it, it was capital from such non-real estate investments that funded large-scale acquisition.

69 David R. Contosta, Suburb in the City, 80.
Houston’s acquisitions in Germantown were focused almost exclusively on improvable, vacant tracts. Such large tracts became available as landowners passed on or subdivided and looked to sell off land. Samuel Harvey, Jr. and executors of his estate, as well as the estate of Francis M. Drexel were two such owners. Analysis of Houston’s deed books shows that land owned by Harvey and Drexel did not become available until 1883 at the earliest. Meanwhile, smaller parcels such as those acquired from Pauline Henry in 1880 and Martin Nichols in 1881 were already improved with a dwelling, meaning Houston strayed from his typical pattern of acquisition to accomplish other goals, namely and most likely, acquiring additional land proximal to impending rail extensions. During the early 1880s, Houston began to acquire the bulk of his holdings in Chestnut Hill as evidenced by transactions executed through middlemen documented in his estate’s deed books. The majority of these transactions experienced a recording delay of two-to-four years, which shielded the transactions from public attention during the railroad’s thirteen-month construction period.

1882-1885: Railroad Extension

Bringing a second commuter rail line through Germantown and Chestnut Hill was a costly ambition. Historian Alfred R. Churella explains:

Between 1881 and 1884, the PRR board authorized the construction of several lines paralleling the Reading [Railroad]. One irritant to the Reading was the Chestnut Hill branch in suburban Philadelphia, less than seven miles long and, on a cost-per-mile basis, one of the most expensive stretches of track that the PRR ever constructed.

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70 Deed Book 1 and 2, Title Papers Relating to Coded Properties, 1698-1953, Ledger: Deed Book Record (2 Volumes), Oversize 1-2, UPT 50 H483, Henry Howard Houston Estate Papers, 1698-1989, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania.
71 Philadelphia Department of Records, Deed Book LW 89, p. 459 (Henry) and Deed Book LW 138, 277 (Nichols).
The PGCH was envisioned first as the Philadelphia, Germantown, Norristown, and Phoenixville Railroad, but was hindered by cost concerns, limiting its construction between 1883 and 1884 to its terminus in Chestnut Hill. Documents of the PARR Board show that the 6.75 mile extension sought after by hundreds of residents in Germantown, including an abundance of residents with homes on W. Walnut, W. Tulpehocken, Wayne Avenue, and W. Rittenhouse Streets; Houston’s neighbors. In a petition likely arranged by Houston and received by PARR President, George B. Roberts on August 5, 1880, residents argued in support of the rail extension:

We, the undersigned residents of Germantown, Chestnut Hill, and the neighboring country, earnestly desire the completion of the proposed line of the Germantown and Chestnut Hill Railroad and the operating of the same by your Company, so that we may have the advantage of your terminal facilities at Broad and Market Streets, and also may be enabled to conveniently use the New York Division of your road both to New York and to the various sea-shore resorts. We respectfully request that you will give a committee of five, composed of Messrs. John Welsh, Amos R. Little, Charles H. Miller, James A. Wright, and Alfred M. Collins, an early opportunity to meet you and a committee of your Board, in order to more fully explain the necessities for the construction of this road, and the advantages which we believe your Company will surely derive therefrom.

At least thirteen W. Tulpehocken Street residents signed the petition, including Weygandt, dentist Stephen T. Beale, and stock broker S. Harvey Thomas. Although his signature does not appear, Houston’s neighbor, Von Schaick would have also benefited from the “road’s” provision of connection “various sea-shore resorts”, as evidenced by Weygandt’s recordation of Von Schaick’s vacationing in Long Branch, NJ.

Among other notable signees were Houston’s friend, railroad executive Frank J. Firth, multiple W. Walnut


75 Ibid. See also Contosta, A Philadelphia Family, 26. Contosta notes that Houston invited fellow residents to join him in petitioning for the railroad.

76 Cornelius N. Weygandt, Diary of Cornelius N. Weygandt, Friday 2 May 1880, University of Pennsylvania Archives, Cornelius Nolen Weygandt Papers, 1849-1907, Collection UPT 50 W547, Box 2, Folder 18
Street residents, a mix of residents along Seymour, Price, Wakefield, and School Lane in Germantown, and many living in Chestnut Hill. 77 Thus, support was found along the length of the proposed route.

This petition was followed up by correspondence between Roberts and the “Special Committee of the Pennsylvania Railroad Board (Special Committee) on the subject of the Germantown and Chestnut Hill Railroad.” On this committee sat, the aforementioned Welsh, Wright, and Little, as well as H.H. Houston and George W. Carpenter, Jr. Carpenter, the son of famed Philadelphia chemist/druggist G.W. Carpenter, and later Houston, controlled much of the land the line cut through during the second-half of the Nineteenth century. The Special Committee argued to Roberts on Nov. 9, 1880:

> We feel convinced that if you consider on addition to the profit on the local trade of the line, the gain to your main line, and New Jersey divisions, by securing the traffic of this region, you will at once put the road under construction. 78

Additionally, the Special Committee included a detailed list of ownership along the proposed right-of-way. The cost of paying damages to owners for the acquisition of the right-of-way between Nicetown and Chestnut Hill terminals was a key issue in the final approval of the line’s construction. In the document the Committee noted:

> From Chelten Avenue to Johnson Street, the following properties are not released: Margaretta Longstreth 160 feet.; Poor House property 600 feet.; Samuel and Jas. W. Harvey 550 feet., J.W. Moffly 50 ft.; Jacob H. Backius about 500 feet. The damages here we consider to be $15, 500. 79

The parcels belonging to the Germantown House for the Poor (Poor House), Samuel, Jr. and James W. Harvey, and J.W. Moffly were within the bounds of Houston’s neighborhood, and excepting Moffly’s land, were within five years acquired by Houston and improved after the construction of the railroad. The railroad’s impact on Houston’s development horizon in Germantown paralleled that of his early efforts in

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77 “Petition from Businessmen of 22nd Ward,” and “Petition from Members of Councils from the Twenty Second Ward (May, 1881),” Pennsylvania Railroad Company Records.
78 “Germantown & Chestnut Hill RR: Cost of Road from Connecting Ry. To Chestnut Hill (Dec. 6, 1880)” BF 8 and BF 9, Pennsylvania Railroad Company Records
79 Ibid.
Chestnut Hill. In mid-March, 1882, Houston held a meeting at his W. Tulpehocken Street residence to gather support from:

a number of wealthy and public spirited citizens of Germantown…toward having erected in that beautiful suburban ward a first class clubhouse, with wings that will provided an auditorium…a commodious apartment for the playing of tennis…another for a riding ring…the whole structure to be modeled generally upon the plan of the Newport Casino.80

The proposed Casino, although never constructed in Germantown, likely emerged in the form of the Wissahickon Inn and the Philadelphia Cricket Club, constructed in Wissahickon Heights in 1883 and 1884 respectively on land given by Houston. The meeting was attended by both neighbors and professional colleagues of Houston’s, including Samuel Chew of Germantown’s “Cliveden,” as well as Amos R. Little and Herbert Welsh of Houston’s Special Committee on the PGCH Railroad. The meeting occurred just two-and-a-half months prior to the commencement of the railroad’s construction, and further emphasizes the importance of the railroad within Houston’s neighborhood, and imminent transition to Chestnut Hill.

1879-1884: Contemporaneous Acquisitions in Chestnut Hill

As Houston acquired several parcels subject to right-of-way in Germantown during the early 1880s, acquisition in Chestnut Hill was undertaken concurrently. Examining each deed involving Houston’s transactions, however, goes beyond limits of time and scope in terms of this thesis. Understanding the larger patterns of Houston’s acquisitions is most effectively accomplished through the connection of the Houston Estates deed books with coded maps corresponding to those transactions. The maps, compiled by The Real Estate Trust Company of Philadelphia, presided over at the time by Houston’s son, Samuel F. Houston, indicated parcels with alphanumeric labels. These labels correspond to acquisitions is the Estate’s deed books (Figure 9).

Records indicate that Houston utilized delayed recordation and third-party purchasers over the course of five years, beginning with the purchase land along Creishem Creek in 1879, and along the north side of Allens Lane beginning in 1880 with additional acreage between Mermaid Lane and Willow Grove Avenue. These acquisitions led Houston toward Gravers Lane and ultimately to Evergreen Avenue, the future location of the terminus of the PGCH railroad, in 1882. By and large, Houston had acquired those parcels adjacent to the route of the railroad prior to the initiation of construction in late spring 1883.81

By October 24, 1884, four months after the railroad’s inaugural run, the railroad’s role in the marketing of properties in Chestnut Hill was considered advantageous, as described in an advertisement in the Philadelphia Inquirer:

For Sale: Desirable Property - 3 Minute walk to PA or Phila & Reading Depots; 25 min ride to Philadelphia; a few minutes walk from Wissahickon Hotel and Philadelphia Cricket and Tennis Clubs…and having the benefit of Wissahickon Drive…the only place within 60 mile radius of Philadelphia composed entirely of residences reached by both [railroads], competition ensuring the quickest and best railroad service…42 trains each way daily.82

1885-1895: The Final Stage

Houston acquired a parcel from Samuel Harvey, Jr. and later two parcels from his estate, in September 1883, June 1885, and November 1885, respectively (Figure 10).83 The land acquired in 1883 extended from Wayne Avenue to the middle of Pulaski Avenue between Harvey and W. Rittenhouse Streets. This land was improved with “twelve, 2-story stone and brick houses with gable roofs” along Wayne Avenue shortly thereafter, with additional housing constructed 1889-1890 along W. Rittenhouse Street, just south of Wayne Avenue. Land acquired in 1885 had been previously subdivided by the Harvey Family, but

81 Deed Book 1, Title Papers Relating to Coded Properties, 1698-1953, Ledger: Deed Book Record (2 Volumes), Oversize 1-2; and Index Map of Coded Properties, Oversize 1-3, UPT 50 H483, Henry Howard Houston Estate Papers, 1698-1989, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania.
83 Philadelphia Department of Records, Deed Book JOD 135, p. 281 (S. Harvey-1883); GGP 37, p. 503 (Estate of S. Harvey, Jr.-1885); GGP 94, p. 80 (Estate of S. Harvey, Jr.-1885). Samuel Harvey, Jr. passed away on Nov. 29, 1884, leaving land to his estate, see Deed Book GGP 37, p. 503.
was not improved as of the sale of the seven lots. The Harveys, however, did convey to Houston their Italianate villa at the northwest corner of Wayne Avenue and Lafayette Street. Houston, the ever devout Episcopalian, donated this property and its lot to the Episcopal Diocese to serve as the House of Rest for the Aged in 1891.84

In addition to the Harvey Estate’s remaining land holdings, Houston also purchased ground owned by Francis M. Drexel at the northeast corner of Wayne Avenue and W. Tulpehocken Street (Figure 11). Not only was this land prime for development in 1883, but it was also a source of discontent among Houston’s neighbors, namely Cornelius N. Weygandt and next-door neighbor, tobacco merchant, Benjamin A. Van Schaick. Part of the controversy concerning this parcel alludes to Houston’s business operations conducted behind closed doors, or more effectively, Houston’s utilization of a system of using third-party purchasers and delayed deed recordation to disguise land acquisition.

According to deed records of the Houston Estate, Houston utilized the services of attorney, and nearby resident, Horace Fritz, in his acquisition of Drexel’s parcel.85 Fritz paid $40,000 to acquire the five-plus acre parcel in 1883, but then sold the property to Houston in 1886 for $40,000, in effect breaking even, and leaving Houston as the official buyer of the lot.86 Despite Houston’s efforts at keeping his operation under cover, Weygandt in May of 1886, just two months before Fritz “sold” to Houston, wrote:

Horace Fritz came in [to the bank] today… and I asked him for the use of the pasture lot opposite our house, as usual, and was surprised to find he declined it. Fritz is the agent of the owner, probably Houston; and we have been having it without any contract or rent, ready to give it up at any moment; but now, without any reason, he declined… either he is unusually fidgety and nervous about getting us out… or Houston has ordered him to refuse us the accommodation; and Houston is disagreeable enough to have done so. A very wealthy man like Houston is a nuisance to the neighborhood, in many ways; and especially by putting up the price of land, and by making pasture lots very scarce; as he will not rent his land for pasture, as poorer owners are willing to do. He has

84 Contosta, A Philadelphia Family, 33.
85 The 1880 U.S. Census lists Fritz’s residence as 247 W. Walnut Lane.
a great deal of money, made; some [of] it, in very questionable methods; in Standard Oil rings & Penna. R.R. rings etc; he thinks that real estate is a safe harbor for his ill-gotten gains!\textsuperscript{87}

Weygandt’s interpretation of Houston’s “very questionable methods” was precisely what Houston’s operation was trying to avoid (Figure 12). Examining Houston’s personal deed books shows that more than a majority of his purchases in Chestnut Hill between 1879 and 1882 were conducted by middlemen including his brother-in-law, and real estate agent, George B. Bonnell, agent Frederick R. Geiger, attorney Walter D. Allen, and Weygandt’s mutual acquaintance, Fritz.\textsuperscript{88}

Many of the parcels Houston acquired in both Germantown and in Chestnut Hill were subject to right-of-way for the incoming Chestnut Hill Branch. Houston, however, saved the PARR an estimated $500,000 by “donating” right-of-ways for all parcels he owned on Oct. 9, 1884 for $1.\textsuperscript{89} The donation was officially recorded five months after the line’s opening on June 1, 1884 (Figure 13).\textsuperscript{90} A single donation required Houston’s officially recorded ownership prior to the rail’s completion. Comparison of Houston’s deed books to site plans they are coded to shows that Houston acquired all necessary land south of Wayne Avenue, and along what would become the PGCH Railroad prior to this date. Therefore, it is highly likely that Houston, a member of the PARR board of directors from 1881 until his passing in 1895, knew that providing an enormous savings to the PARR in acquisition of rights-of-way would ensure the rail would go through at least to its terminus at Evergreen Lane and Germantown Avenue. Contosta writes:

As a railroad man and as a resident of a railroad suburb like Germantown, Houston well understood that a commuter rail line was crucial to developing his land on the West Side of Chestnut Hill. He persuaded the Pennsylvania directors to build a subsidiary commuter line.\textsuperscript{91}  

\textsuperscript{87} Cornelius N. Weygandt diary, Saturday May 1, 1886. See also G.M Hopkins, Atlas of the 22nd Ward, 1885, plate 17, Germantown Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

\textsuperscript{88} In A Philadelphia Family, Contosta notes that George B. Bonnell, was both a trustee to Houston’s estate and a confidential partner. Bonnell eventually found his way into the Houston estate’s rental ledger as a tenant at one of Houston’s Wayne Avenue single-family homes after Houston’s passing.

\textsuperscript{89} Deed Book 1 and 2,Title Papers Relating to Coded Properties, 1698-1953,Ledger: Deed Book Record (2 Volumes), Oversize 1-2,UPT 50 H483, Henry Howard Houston Estate Papers, 1698-1989, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{90} Contosta, Suburb in the City, 82-3.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 82.
Demand for the convenience of rail commutation was evidenced by previously submitted petitions from residents in Houston’s neighborhood, and the issue of right-of-way cost was significantly mitigated by Houston’s shrewd donation. With the exception of the two-story twin dwellings constructed along the 5000 block of Wayne Avenue in Germantown, parcels under Houston’s ownership were developed after the railroad extension was completed. Houston relied on the firm of G.W. and W.D. Hewitt to design residences in Germantown and in the emerging suburb of Wissahickon Heights, Chestnut Hill. Over the next decade, Hewitt’s designs placed the Queen Anne style among Italianate, Carpenter-Gothic, and Second-Empire styles that had come to define the neighborhood’s architectural palimpsest, while providing new opportunities for ownership and tenancy to mobile middle class and upper-class residents.

Beginning in 1886, Houston resumed construction of dwellings in Germantown, after beginning initial developments in Chestnut Hill in 1884.92 G.W. Bromley & Co.’s, Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Volume 7, 22nd Ward, 1889 shows the Germantown dwellings constructed between 1886 and 1887. Four single-detached homes were constructed at 6202, 6208, 6214, and 6220 Wayne Avenue in addition to five single-detached dwellings on the former Francis M. Drexel lot comprising: 6129, 6135, 6141 Wayne Avenue; 258, 266 W. Tulpehocken Street (Figure 13). The first quartet of Wayne Avenue homes remained rentals, whereas the five across Wayne Avenue and on the east side of W. Tulpehocken Street were sold to new owners within the span of a decade. Additional housing was placed along W. Rittenhouse Street both north and south of Wayne Avenue and along Lafayette Street north of Wayne Avenue, on land formerly owned by the Harvey estate. These semi-detached “twin” houses provided a second residential typology and were

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92 Chestnut Hill Historic District Files, Collection 142, Box 15, 288-2308; see also, Deed Book 1 and 2, Title Papers Relating to Coded Properties, 1698-1953, Ledger: Deed Book Record (2 Volumes), Oversize 1-2, UPT 50 H483, Henry Howard Houston Estate Papers, 1698-1989, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania. See also, “Building Permits: Oct. 20, Building Improvements,” Germantown Telegraph, 5 May 1886. This listing advertises permitting of 2 three-story dwellings, 40’x60’, on Tulpehocken Street, east of Wayne. It is likely that these dwellings were present day 258 W. Tulpehocken and 266 W. Tulpehocken, constructed on property owned by Houston since 1883.
rented with few exceptions through the 1940s according to the Houston’s estate’s property assessment records.93

Throughout the 1890’s, Houston sold smaller parcels along 6100 block of Wayne Avenue but did not develop this stretch with the same density as applied to other parcels. One reason for leaving the area open considers that by the early 1890s Houston had shifted his focus to Chestnut Hill. Additionally, after 1895 his son, Samuel, and son-in-law, George Woodward, took the helm of the estate’s real estate portfolio and pursued continued development in Chestnut Hill.94 A third possibility concerns evidence of a never-constructed design for a hotel that was undertaken in 1906 by architect, Addison Hutton, of the firm Savery, Scheetz & Savery. The design called for a six-story Jacobean Revival structure that was adjacent to Tulpehocken Station and fronted Wayne Avenue.95 G.M. Bromley’s 1901 and 1910, Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, show that this ground was under the ownership of the Houston estate during the time of Hutton’s draft. Perhaps Houston’s estate was looking to construct a hotel following the logic of the Wissahickon Inn which served as an attraction in a community, but also, would be easily served by the PGCH Railroad. Unfortunately, the design is not officially linked to a named client through additional documentation or Houston Estate records examined. The ground was among the last of large, vacant parcels available for development in the neighborhood as of 1910.96

In the twenty-six years he spent in Germantown, Houston established a family, financed the construction of a high-design church, and brought additional high-quality, architect-designed housing into the neighborhood in which he lived and later oversaw (Figure 14). Houston moved to Chestnut Hill before

93 Property Appraisals, 30 July 1940, Boxes FF-5, 9-11, 18-19, Appraisals: 1913-1940 (Massey), UPT 50 H483, Henry Howard Houston Estate Papers, 1698-1989, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania.
many of the tenants he personally approved for tenancy moved in, however. Chestnut Hill offered to Houston a more expansive frontier to develop in terms of establishing a larger community, and a long-term legacy to benefit his family. Additionally, Houston had by 1886, long-retired from regular employment, and emerged in Chestnut Hill as an established leader within Philadelphia’s upper class who served on the PARR Board of Directors and as Rector’s Warden at St. Peter’s Church Germantown. After moving to Chestnut Hill, Houston encountered new opportunities to inform implementation on a community scale in comparison to the neighborhood scale he was limited to working within in southwest Germantown. Houston’s dealings in Germantown real estate were integral, however, to ensuring that rail extension would not be impeded upon approaching Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill.

By acquiring such vast amounts of land, Houston created a diversified investment portfolio that balanced his financial interests in oil, coal, and other enterprises. His choice to maintain ownership while leasing properties to tenants connects to historical ownership patterns in Europe, in which ownership was often tied to social status or derived directly from connections to nobility.97 Throughout the Nineteenth century, speculative construction of Philadelphia’s housing stock was often subject to the ground rent system. Historian Donna J. Rilling describes ground rent as a process in which “the ground lord or land owner sold the lot to a ‘grantee’, subject to a [perpetual] rent…most ground rents required the grantee to build a house within the first year.”98 Houston purchased parcels that were previously subject to ground rent in a few cases in Germantown, however, his strategy differed from Philadelphia’s distinct speculative model that “most estates, institutions, and prominent families” were attracted to.99 Houston had amassed enough capital during his early career to buy into a desirable neighborhood, but acquired land at pace with his own

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97 See Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier, 53.
99 Rilling, Making Houses, Crafting Capitalism, 46.
wealth’s growth. Much of his purchasing power was derived from other investments, not from the sale or ground renting of property.

Based on Houston’s move to Chestnut Hill prior to the construction of most of the Germantown housing he owned, retirement in Germantown was not an end goal. In moving to Germantown in 1860, Houston conformed to emerging trends in which those who could afford to move away from the bustle of downtown industrial cities did so. Architectural historian, John Archer, argues that the proliferation of a bourgeois economy acted as part of a “simulacrum of self” in which American’s embraced individualism and sought to achieve distinct identities associated with home and land ownership.100 Houston, and neighbors including tobacco merchant Benjamin Von Schaick, who moved to Germantown in 1874, formed a new contingent of upper class suburbanites in Germantown. Von Schaick acquired his property from Mary Stanton, widow of Edwin T. Stanton, Secretary of War during the Civil War.101 Houston’s Chestnut Hill ambitions, however, signaled further desire to separate himself from the upper class mass he co-founded in Germantown a quarter-century earlier. In Chestnut Hill, Houston acquired land, commissioned a new mansion from Hewitt, and distinguished himself as an eminent member of the “upper upper-class,” as Contosta describes. Germantown’s developed lots, no matter how well landscaped, or proximal to Tulpehocken Station, could not accomplish such by 1886 (Figure 15).

Urban historian Patricia Burgess Stach found Houston’s venture similar to that of Short Hills, NJ developer, Stewart Hartshorn, as each “had similar visions, selling and renting architect-designed homes.” Stach added, “In particular, profit was not a major factor…Buildings complemented one another in appearance and were of uniformly high quality.”102 Further, the Houston Estate’s ownership of many Germantown parcels through the 1940s and Houston’s careful selection of tenants deemed capable of

100 Archer, Architecture and Suburbia, 176-183.
101 Philadelphia Department of Records, Deed Book FTW 170, p. 28.
property stewardship provided a buffer to future development in the neighborhood. As apartment buildings and commercial mixed-use infill penetrating select portions of the neighborhood, those under Houston Estate ownership were maintained. This is seen most noticeably along W. Rittenhouse Street where former Houston-owned parcels and their associated residences form a noticeable neighborhood edge against fabric east of W. Rittenhouse Street.
Figure 4: Houston's development in Germantown. Area shaded red indicates extent of streets containing at least one Houston-commissioned building or fabric otherwise connected with Houston. Data Source: PASDA.org. Map by Author, 2016.
Figure 5 A.E. Rogerson and E.J. Murphy, Civil Engineers’ Map of the Township of Germantown: Philadelphia County, 1851 shows Tulpehocken Street and W. Walnut Lane as proposed streets. In 1851 these streets began to be developed as Germantown’s suburban boom began. GHS.
Figure 6 G.M. Hopkins, C.E., Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia, 1871, Outline Plan. Area of future Houston development is contained within blue rectangle. GHS.
Figure 7 Acquisitions 1865 to 1872. G.M. Hopkins, C.E., *Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia, 1871*. GHS

Figure 8 St. Peter’s Church, designed by Furness and Hewitt. Houston’s capital contributions were instrumental in its formation and construction. In 2015 the church was adaptively reused to operate as the Waldorf School. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 9 Coded plan linking parcels with deeds recorded in Houston’s deed books. This plate shows holdings focused just blocks from the terminus of the Philadelphia, Germantown, Chestnut Hill Railroad at Evergreen and Germantown Avenues. UPA, photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 10 Land acquired by Houston from Samuel Harvey, Jr. and his heirs between 1883 and 1885. G.M. Hopkins, C.E., Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia, 1871. GHS.
Figure 11 Lot acquired by Houston in a series of transactions between 1883 and 1886 that Weygandt attempted to use without success. G.M. Hopkins, C.E., Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia, 1871. GHS.

Figure 12 Houston’s Deed Book details the “straw purchase” conducted in 1883 between Drexel, Fritz (third-party purchaser), and Houston (H.H.H.). UPA.
Figure 13 G.W. Bromley & Co.’s, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Volume 7, 22nd Ward, 1889, plate 11*. Houston placed his single-detached housing west of W. Walnut Ln along Wayne Avenue and built to the limit of the typography of the area while allocating space for the PGCH Railroad. Boxes indicated parcels owned west of Harvey Street. Dots indicate houses owned by Houston with or parcels that would be developed with housing after sale by Houston. GHS. Photo by Author 2016.
Figure 14  G.W. and W.S. Bromley, G.W. Bromley & Co.’s, Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Volume 7, 22nd Ward, 1899, plate 11. The majority of dwelling constructed or owned by the Houston Estate remain as of 2016. This map shows the clustering of housing types favored by utilized by Houston. Single-detached above Harvey Street and semi-detached between Harvey and W. Rittenhouse Streets. GHS.
Figure 15 G.W. Bromley & Co.’s, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Volume 7, 22nd Ward, 1889*, plate 20. Houston’s residence in Wissachickon Heights was placed immediately south of the Wissahickon Inn, Philadelphia Cricket Club, and St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church. GHS.
Figure 16 Statue of Houston at Harvey Street and Lincoln Drive, erected by Fairmount Park Commission in 1900 as Houston had donated significant amounts of parkland to the city. Photo by Author, 2016.
CHAPTER VI: ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER IN HOUSTON’S GERMANTOWN

The kaleidoscopic nature of the Tulpehocken Station neighborhood’s architectural fabric is the result of numerous developers, architects, and builders contributing to the built environment over half a century. Prior to Houston’s arrival in 1860, Wayne Avenue, W. Tulpehocken, W. Walnut streets were dominated by a mix of Italianate, “bracketed”, and Gothic Revival cottages and villas forming the area’s initial architectural identity. Over the course of the next fifty years, however, great changes in Philadelphia’s demography and its impact on the lifestyle preferences of many of its residents affected where people lived, and the design of buildings they lived in.103 By the turn of the Twentieth century, the same neighborhood gained population, while continuing the process of incorporating new housing and existing fabric adapted to new uses, while awaiting additional automobile-influenced changes over the following quarter-century.

Examining Houston’s mid-1880s development provides a valuable case study of a select yet integral portion of Germantown during its second stage of railroad suburbanization. Showcasing the fabric tied to such a context brings the built fabric beyond 1860 into a more balanced narrative of place, while serving as a building block in the reinterpretation of the neighborhood’s significance.

Attempts at finding information specific to the construction of the dwellings Houston commissioned in Germantown during the 1880s turned up no direct, primary evidence. It has been well established by prior scholarship and documentation, however, that Houston relied on the firm of G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for the design of dwellings in Chestnut Hill, as well as for institutional buildings such as The

103 See Groff, “Green Country Towns,” p. 4-5. Groff posits that older Philadelphia families attempted to separate themselves from the nouveau riche, those Philadelphian’s such as Houston who had built their wealth through industrial during and after the Civil War. The Main Line was thus, ground for such separation where “older families surrounded themselves with the trappings of the country squire: fox hunts, gentleman’s farms, cricket clubs, golf courses, etc.” These aspects were also found in Houston’s Wissahickon Heights, which ultimately separated Houston himself from many of his nouveau riche contemporaries.
Wissahickon Inn and St. Martin-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church. Historian Jefferson M. Moak credits the Hewitt firm exclusively for designing Houston’s dwellings through the 1880s, however, Moak’s research focused on Chestnut Hill commissions and did not directly credit the Hewitt brothers for dwelling designs in Germantown. Houston was not only a client to the Hewitt firm, but a patron. Therefore, based upon comparable properties in Chestnut Hill including the Houston-Saveur House, several Hewitt-designed residences along Seminole Avenue, and three pairs of Hewitt-designed, semi-detached houses on W. Springfield Avenue, as well as distinct detailing common to additional Hewitt-designed residences, it is probable that the Hewitt firm designed all dwellings related to Houston’s portfolio in Germantown that were commissioned during Houston’s lifetime (Appendix II).

Houston’s properties were constructed between 1883 and 1892 after he had acquired land that was in some cases, subdivided by previous owners, and in select cases improved with a dwelling and outbuildings. The majority of dwellings Houston commissioned were semi-detached “twins”, with ten identified single-detached dwellings constructed in the same period. These houses offered opportunities to aspiring suburban residents to find housing in what was at the time, one of Germantown’s most sought after neighborhoods; “very popular with the better class of merchants and brokers…as fine edifices are to be found anywhere in this country are to be seen on Walnut Lane, Morton Street, Talpehocken [sic] Street,” as witnessed by writer Chandos Fulton in the mid-1870s.


alluring quality. The Hewitt firm incorporated the Queen Anne style into their designs commissioned by Houston and several other local residents, perhaps best showcased in five three-story stone houses that stand along the northeast intersection W. Tulpehocken Street and Wayne Avenue.

These homes were constructed roughly a decade after the English style, which blended Jacobean, Elizabethan and Artisan Mannerist styles was showcased at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, and advocated in H. Hudson Holly’s, *Modern Dwellings in Town and Country*, published in 1878. The Queen Anne came into popularity during an era of continued migration out of urban centers by middle and upper class residents. Architect, Robert A.M. Stern, argues that during the same era, industrialization caused an overall increase in prosperity for middle and upper classes, better public transportation systems, and accordingly, less desirable urban living conditions that were detrimental to family life.

Philadelphia was no exception. Those who could afford to move away from the industrialized city sought amenable housing opportunities in suburban locales such as Germantown, which offered “rural residence with city facilities [where] former gardens have been turned into building lots, and farms cut up into squares.” The “Anglo-American suburb”, categorized by Stern, and such housing supplied by Houston in Germantown and Chestnut Hill, relied on English precedence to capture new residents seeking social legitimacy and elevated suburban identity. Just as the Italianate villas owned by Samuel Harvey, Jr. and Henry Houston in Germantown linked their status to architecture in the 1860s, so did Queen Anne dwellings

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constructed on Houston’s land in the late 1880s. Architectural historian Mark Girouard adds to Stern’s interpretation, “America, or at least a section of the American middle class was in revolt against contemporary values. Revulsion moved in two directions, backwards into the past and sideways into the country.”

A decade after the Centennial Exhibition, held in Philadelphia in 1876, fervor for Colonial Revival combined with well-established Anglo-centric leanings of a great deal of Philadelphia’s moneyed populous. The addition of English influence in domestic architecture further molded the identity of Houston’s neighborhood, and served as a beacon to those aiming to separate domestic and industrial spheres. The Queen Anne in America, however, was not tile-for-tile reproduction of its English ancestor as wooden shingles replaced tiles and wooden glazing substituted leaded lights. As well, the Queen Anne was highly compatible with the porch, bridging the earlier gothic piazza or veranda as espoused by A.J. Downing, and the sleeping porch often connected to arts and crafts era housing.

Such features certainly manifested in the design of the Hewitt firm, as seen in the steep roofs, gabled dormers, and signature fish scale shingling. In particular Hewitt favored shingling as means of cladding and accenting key architectural features such as projecting bays, gable ends, and using fish scale patterns to Porches were also key to the Queen Anne as evidenced in Houston’s developments, particular in wrap-around or stacked configurations that provided access to scenic views and fresh air, while extending


113 Mark Girouard, *Sweetness and Light*, 208. See also “Queen Anne Cottages,” *The Decorator and Furnisher*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Apr., 1885), p. 20. Additionally, just as Japanese architectural traditions influenced the American Arts and Crafts movement leading into the 1900s, portions of the English Queen Anne were adapted in the former British colony. Regarding such see Vincent Scully, *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Downing to the Origins of Wright*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971).

rooms from outdoors in. With an absence of primary documentation such as building plans, or contracts between client and builder, establishing Hewitt as Houston’s architect is difficult, but is further suggested through comparison of other documented, Hewitt-designed houses, most effectively those Houston commissioned in Chestnut Hill during the same period. Hewitt’s details, massing, and combination of porches, bays, gables and dormers, among other elements, form the basis for attribution. Hewitt & Hewitt’s work in Germantown was, with few exceptions, void of ostentatious ornamentation, and was instead dependent upon distinct pairing of gables and incorporation bay or oriel windows at various elevations. Similar to their housing in Chestnut Hill, the Hewitt’s favored the material combination of wooden shingles, bracketing that verged on Stick style in terms of direct, utilitarian shape, and locally quarried, rusticated Wissahickon schist masonry. Moreover, their Germantown commissions appear, in specific cases, void of select details or features found on similar properties in Wissahickon Heights/St. Martin’s. This suggests that Houston may have desired more intricate design for houses in Wissachickon Heights than in Germantown, effectively delineating two different markets for housing under the same ownership.

As George E. Thomas suggests, Hewitt clients, many of whom were upper-class Episcopalians, likely found English-inspired housing as an ideal value-based match to their domestic needs. Moreover, Houston likely relied so heavily on an architect, connected as Hewitt was, for residential design in an attempt to attract a specific clientele; a first step in providing for community growth which incorporated individuals Houston approved of as tenants capable of maintaining his properties, and in some cases, becoming owners of the properties; carrying a larger stake in the community in general. Houston’s housing provided variety, but through Hewitt, homes with similar floor plans were often distinguished by a mixing of exterior character, providing residences that gave residents both their own address and a specific presence

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115 See Appendix, 6135 W. Tulpehocken Street Details.
116 For example, a comparison of semi-detached houses along the 300 block of W. Springfield Avenue in St. Martin’s, Chestnut Hill and properties of the same type along the 200 Block of W. Rittenhouse Street in Germantown shows that a wrap-around porch was only placed on Chestnut Hill dwellings.
within the neighborhood. The Hewitt firm operated among other local architects during the 1870s and 1880s who Aslet explains, “favored boldly eclectic architecture, full of vigor, a little whimsical, often with towers hinting at Scotland.” In Germantown the Hewitt design spectrum extends from the simple two-story, brick cottage with subtle half-timbered detailing to the castle-like 6013 Wayne Avenue, designed in 1887 for businessman Henry Listar Townsend, which represented at the time, a great diversion from the Queen Anne houses designed for Houston, but not a far cry from Houston’s personal residence, Druim Moir built in 1886.

Druim Moir was essentially a thirty-room castle built for the manager of the city’s largest land barony, a compilation of parcels that had expanded exponentially over the course of five years. In Germantown, an epicenter turned satellite of Houston’s realm, houses provided variety, but equally as importantly, they established a hierarchy based upon size, ornament, and their location within the neighborhood, including proximity to the rail station. In his history of Germantown, Mount Airy, and Chestnut Hill, published in 1889, Rev. S.F. Hotchkin provided what is likely the only surviving documentary evidence of what Houston’s Germantown housing appeared as in the years immediately following its construction. Hotchkin walked the reader through the strata of Houston’s neighborhood, which in an atlas and on the ground was arranged, by likely by plan, if not by default, much like a mini-estate:

The writer of the Times’ article, which I have followed, runs back to Tulpehocken, and finds ‘four houses, all of stone on elevations varied in architecture, and with graded terrace and low stone walls, occupied by Mr. William Brockie, Miss Scott, Charles H. Scott, and Naval Officer Henry B. Plumer.’ Four more houses are ‘at the same pretty station, facing the woods.’ They are ‘charming houses, not so large as some of the others, but all exquisitely arranged and of stone, with decorated shingles and slate roofs.’ General Passenger Agent James R. Wood, of the Pennsylvania Railroad, occupies one of these houses. Twelve new houses of brick and stone on Wayne [Avenue], above Walnut [Lane], are in pairs in somewhat of the cottage style, and light similar houses are opposite. At the corner are two ‘gray stone houses, with tiled roofs, finished in mahogany, and altogether very fine. They are occupied by Mr. Davis and Mr. Grove. Beyond these are three very picturesque single houses, each different, overlooking the bluff. Several other striking new houses

117 Clive Aslet, American Country House, 115.
are close by, notably that of Edward T. Coxe, of gray stone and tiles, with terraces, porches, stained glass windows, and a fine approach, and beyond it that of Henry L. Townsend. This has a striking ‘porte-cochere, massive stone arches, terrace, porch and conservatory.119

A breakdown of Hotchkin’s account of the neighborhood and comparison with Houston’s Germantown property records shows that Charles H. Scott (6214 Wayne), James R. Wood (6135 Wayne), Henry L. Davis (6102 Wayne), and Henry S. Grove (258 W. Tulpehocken) were among tenants and buyers of Houston’s houses. Coxe resided at present day 280 W. Walnut Ln and was a next-door-neighbor to Townsend at 6013 Wayne. Comparing the description of the arrangement of notable houses in the neighborhood to period atlases shows that several clusters of Houston-commissioned houses are described in Hotchkin’s history.120 The first ”four houses, all of stone on elevations varied in architecture,” were likely 6202, 6208, 6214, and 6220 Wayne Avenue. These houses no longer stand, having been replaced by apartment complexes, however, the description of their landscape is quite valuable as it is the only description associated with this former Houston-era fabric. The second quartet, ”at the same pretty station (Tulpehocken- PGCH Railroad),” likely comprised 258 and 266 W. Tulpehocken Street in addition to 6141 and 6135 Wayne Avenue based upon the reference to Wood as a resident. These houses along with 6129 Wayne Avenue are elevated to a height that indeed would have provided a view to what were c. 1888/1889 woods south of Wayne Avenue.

The ”twelve new houses of brick and stone on Wayne Avenue had to have been those located along the south side of the 5900 block of Wayne. These twelve houses, in pairs, where the only such semi-detached cluster in the neighborhood at the time. The writer’s description of them as new likely places their construction after the completion of the PGCH. Rounding out the description, the semi-detached dwelling containing the residence of Messrs. Davis and Grove stood at the southwest corner of Wayne and W. Walnut Lane. That Houston properties along the 200 and 400 blocks of W. Rittenhouse Street were not

120 Bromley, 1889, plate 11.
mentioned likely occurred for two reasons. First, those along the 400 block were not constructed as of 1889, and those along the 200 block were not within the most desirable location of the neighborhood, near the railroad station, on high ground.121

These dwellings occupied the lowest-tier in Houston’s portfolio, along with those “new, paired” houses along Wayne Avenue. Single-detached homes such as those of Henry L. Davis and Charles H. Scott were within the second-tier, but lacked the presence of the five single-detached homes set above the rest of the neighborhood wrapping around W. Tulpehocken and Wayne; first-tier properties. It is likely that Edwin T. Coxe’s residence was also a Hewitt design based on comparisons to other Hewitt commissions. Architects and builders of these properties are not mentioned by Hotchkin, however, confirmation that Hewitt designed both institutional and residential structures for Houston in Wissahickon Heights supports attribution to Hewitt for Germantown commissions during the same period.

**Extant Houston-Era Dwellings**

| 5900/02 | 5904/06 | 5908/10 | 5912/14 | 5916/18 | 5920/22 | 5927/9 Wayne Avenue |

Seven semi-detached dwellings, built between 1883 and 1885, provided the first opportunity for rental of semi-detached Houston commissioned dwellings in Germantown.122 Six of these twins remain in their original two-story form, with the exception of 5912/5914 Wayne which stands at three stories (Figure 17 and Appendices I, III). Far less ornate than other Houston dwellings, these residences remained rentals...

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121 See Stilgoe, *Borderland*, 56-64. Stilgoe notes in his chapter, “Heights,” “Over and over again, mid-Nineteenth century illustrators depicted cities from surrounding heights”. Heights essentially elevated those living upon them in two ways. First, in an age of miasmatic fear, residents could escape the heat of the city, and diseases thought to be associated with living in close proximity to others. Second, the placement of select housing above other housing in an area providing a view of surroundings, and placed select residents above “lower” inhabitants in the same vicinity. Contosta connects elevation to the placement and lure of the Wissahickon Inn as it was located around the highest point along a ridge topography running from New Jersey through Chestnut Hill. See, Contosta, *A Philadelphia Family*, 27.

122 These dwellings first appear on paper in G.W. Bromley’s, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Complete in One Volume, 1885*, and were not listed as standing present in deed transactions between Houston and the Harvey Estate. Bromley’s 1885 Atlas was viewed at GHS.
longer than many other properties within Houston’s Germantown portfolio. It is likely that Houston relied on Hewitt to design these dwellings, however, the absence of details such as often utilized, simplistic bracketing or cross gabled roofs makes uncontested attribution to Hewitt challenging. Houston’s Wayne Avenue twins do, however, contain faceted bay windows with wood paneling and doubled sash windows opposite each faceted bay, which show a close similarity to those placed at the first story of Hewitt attributed designs, namely 258 W. Tulpehocken (Figure 18 and Appendix I).

These cottage-like dwellings share the same use of symmetrical façades used to create one cohesive unit from two dwellings that the Hewitt’s utilized in a similar cluster of semi-detached houses along the 300 block of W. Springfield Avenue in Wissahickon Heights. These houses, without porch and trademark gables akin to many Hewitt designs, may have served as a designer’s initial offering to a new client, namely Houston. In an age where English influence was resurgent, dwellings such as these twins would have fit neatly into British garden suburbs such as Bedford Park, just as they had along Wayne Avenue. Historian George Bryant argues, “word of the first garden suburb spread far and wide and it was clearly on Henry Houston’s mind when [planning Wissahickon Heights] in 1885. In 1885, Houston has already acquired land, had begun construction of dwellings, and was likely incorporating multiple English-inspired housing types into his community to ensure it was received well by a variety of potential renters and prospective buyers. These buildings were remodeled and rebuilt in 1934 according to property appraisals conducted in 1940. Their interiors were subject to “modern” plumbing upgrades. Records show that there interior spatial arrangement did not change drastically, providing reception hall, living room, dining room and kitchen on the first floor, and four additional rooms on the second.124

124 Massey, appraisal, 1940
6135 Wayne and 266 W Tulpehocken are noticeably alike in their arrangement of gables on the façade, which are balanced by faceted double-dormers with hipped roofs that project out of the main, steep-pitched side-gabled roof (Figures 21, 22 and Appendix I). 258 W. Tulpehocken and 6141 Wayne are likewise, mirror images, excepting variations in porches. Additionally, each house contains a projecting, three-story bay; 258 W. Tulpehocken a curved bay with five-fronted windows at the first and second stories with a jerkin head cross gabled third story; 6141 Wayne a faceted three-story bay with three 1-over-1 sash windows at the first and second level, including four, pedimented dormers. These windows contain leaded glass and/or square glass panels in upper sashes. 6141 Wayne in particular appears to have undergone renovations as evidenced by square doubled columns and masonry label moldings above the windows in its faceted two-story bay.

Smaller, more intricate details, attest to Hewitt’s combination of various stylistic touches into his designs. For instance, at 258 W. Tulpehocken, fluted mullions separating windows are capped with ionic scrolls which rest under a cornice with dentils. 6135 and 6129 Wayne as well as 266 W. Tulpehocken contain square, paneled third-story bays that terminate into cross gables (Figure 23 and Appendix I). Wood details may have been enhanced by polychromatic, contrasting finishes by Hewitt, as current owners...
have done. Bays and oriel clad in imbricated, fish scale shingles with half-circle or cove butts, add texture to these American Queen Anne exteriors as tiles did in England.

Houston’s five premier dwellings share similarity with what is considered one of Hewitt’s greatest achievements in residential design, the Houston-Saveur house, located in St. Martin’s, Chestnut Hill. Houston-Saveur is essentially a blend of elements found in the Tulpehocken/Wayne quintet and 431 W. Walnut houses with a projecting, three-story bay at the left third of the façade with: tripartite bay window (first story); Palladian window with broken pediment (second story); and tripartite, rectangular sash windows capped by a bracketed gable (third story).125 Opposite this bay, lattice work within the ornate, third-story side gable recall similar, albeit less complex, details in Germantown. While the bracketed double-deck, wrap-around porch with turned wood, Eastlake balusters and spindled balustrade exemplify the complex, multi-level porches Hewitt favored in Germantown. Interior plans for these dwellings likely incorporated additional rooms such as billiard rooms, studies, libraries that provided additional private space beyond living, dining, and kitchen spaces placed around a grand stair hall. Additionally, these houses feature porches at multiple levels, providing expansion or opening of interior spaces to the outside.126

423/425 & 431 W. Walnut Lane

A third group of Houston commissioned dwellings is located along the 400 block of W. Walnut Lane, just south of Wayne Avenue (Figures 24 and 25 and Appendices I, III). These Queen Anne houses were built c. 1884, according to the Tulpehocken Station Historic District Nomination update completed in 2001, with attribution to Hewitt. Comparison of Houston Estate photos from 1941 and photos taken in 2016 show that the two-and-a-half story twin located at 423/5 once featured a porch along its east elevation. The structure’s cross gabled roof, turned wood columns, bracketed cornice, and ornamental bracketing under

125 See, Appendix: Comparable Properties in Chestnut Hill.
shed roofed dormers add to the stylistic vocabulary found in Hewitt’s commissions in the area. The interiors at each residence were arranged to provide hall, library, pantry, kitchen, and dining room, and a living room with fireplace on its first floor, with fours room on each the second and third floors; more specialized spaces in comparison to the semi-detached houses along W. Rittenhouse Street. At 431 W. Walnut, shed roof dormers, pierced brick chimneys and gables within gables continue Hewitt’s mixing of geometries and textures. A similar assortment of rooms and amenities were provided in this single-detached residence, but were provided for the use of one family, rather than scaled to two as in 423/425 W. Walnut.128

269/271 | 275/277 W. Rittenhouse Street

Of dwellings erected along W. Rittenhouse Street, the eastern border of Houston’s real estate domain, those along the 200 block were among the most restrained in their detailing. At 269/271, the most intact of the two 200 block houses, coursed, rusticated Wissahickon schist and steep-gabled dormers with extended eaves project out of the four-bay façade’s mansard roof (Figure 26 and Appendices I, III). A center-gabled porch extends the length of the façade providing shade and an outdoor living space to both dwellings. Soldiered, schist voussoirs form lintels that blend into the façade above what are now and were likely double-hung sash windows. These dwellings appear more utilitarian than their counterparts westward along W. Walnut and W. Tulpehocken. In terms of quality, these homes were a step up from Houston’s entry level residences along the W. Rittenhouse Street south of Wayne Avenue. Interior plans included living, dining, and kitchen spaces on the first floor; three bedrooms on the second floor; and two additional rooms or quarters on the third floor. These twins are similar to those designed by Hewitt for Houston along the 300 Block of W. Springfield Avenue in Chestnut Hill, but were designed with porches that extended the width of the façade, unlike the wrap around porches of their Chestnut Hill counterparts.129

127 Massey, Property Appraisal, 1940. UPA
128 Massey, appraisal, 1940. UPA
The remainder of Houston’s rental properties were located along the 400 block of W. Rittenhouse Street. These brick twins with slate tiled mansard roofs provided the closest option to the traditional Philadelphia row house to potential tenants. A combination of gabled and shed roofed dormers, bracketed porches, and corbelled brick extending to the cornice of each property along the party wall brought Hewitt flare to a common housing typology (Figure 27 and Appendices I, III). Interior plans included living, dining, and kitchen spaces on the first floor; three bedrooms on the second floor; and two additional rooms or quarters on the third floor.130

5901 | 5909-19 Wayne Avenue

5901 and 5909 Wayne were formerly a pair of single-detached, Queen Anne style houses constructed between 1886 and 1889 with design attributed to Hewitt and Hewitt (Figures 28, 29 and Appendices III). 5909 has been attached to 5919, formerly the home of Samuel Harvey, Jr., via a hyphen. Although stylistically these two structures differ greatly, both were rented without fee to the Home for Aged Episcopalians. 5909 is distinguished from other Hewitt designs for Houston in Germantown by its basic, L-shape plan. Notable features include a cross-gabled roof with Hewitt’s signature triangle with the peak of the cross gable end. As in other designs by Hewitt, fish scale shingles provide textural contrast with the schist stone used in the main block. 5901 has been altered, and does not retain its historic integrity beyond a few upper-story details. As of 2016 5901 was a mixed use property; part dwelling, part auto-repair store.

130 Massey, appraisal, 1940. UPA
**Figure 17** Semi-detached dwellings commissioned by Houston along the 5900 Block of Wayne Avenue. Third-story addition added.

Photo by Author, 2016.

**Figure 18** One of six semi-detached dwellings along the 5900 Block of Wayne. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 19 6141 Wayne Avenue. Former residence of Charles W. Porter. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 20 258 W. Tulpehocken Street. Former Residence of Henry S. Grove. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 21 266 W. Tulpehocken Street. Former home of Malayan Kline. Photo by Author, 2016.
**Figure 22** 6135 Wayne Avenue. Former residence of John R. Wood, General Passenger Agent, Pennsylvania Railroad. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 23 6129 Wayne Avenue. Former home of Orlando Crease. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 24 423/425 W. Walnut Lane. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 25 431 W. Walnut Street. Former home of Robert C. Lippincott. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 26 269/271 W. Rittenhouse Street. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 27 400 Block of W. Rittenhouse. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 28 5909-19 Wayne Avenue. The former home of Samuel Harvey, Jr. Purchased by Houston in 1885. Note the hyphen addition that connects this building to 5909 Wayne. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 29 5909-19 Wayne Avenue. Formerly 5909 single-detached property. Photo by Author, 2016.
The architectural fabric representative of Houston’s Germantown portfolio serves as one aspect of the changes that occurred in Germantown and other railroad suburbs of the age. Prior to 1884, when the PGCH connected the 22nd Ward to central Philadelphia, the neighborhood Houston resided in was home to mostly upper class residents with occupations in mercantile and industrial sectors. With the PGCH came a second major commutation channel and increased accessibility to Philadelphia’s northwestern reaches as a growing middle class developed; making an ex urban residence achievable. Such incoming residents likely encountered several housing options during their search, but chose housing that fit the needs of their families and remained convenient in terms of daily commutation.

Houston-owned dwellings provided options to residents of various occupations and several career stages. Young professionals, “white collar” workers in their prime earning years, and retired merchants all found their way into the homes Houston commissioned; some as buyers and more as tenants. Analysis of census records, and city directories shows that many of these individuals were newcomers to Germantown who migrated from areas such as Fishtown, Kensington, and Old City, while their places of employment remained in the city proper. Given that U.S. Census data for 1890 is with few exceptions unavailable, data from 1900, 1880, 1870, and city directory data from 1865 to 1890 was culled to attempt to pinpoint movement of a sampling of Houston’s resident’s and neighbors over the course of several decades; showcasing their journey to Germantown.
Home Buyers

Houston Estate records show that of the homes constructed in the late 1880s, single-family detached residences were the first to be sold outright in lieu of leasing over several decades. Among first buyers was Henry B. Curran and his wife, Lillie, who purchased 6110 Wayne Avenue in 1890. Henry, a coal dealer, had previously resided with his wife at 1716 Master Street in North Philadelphia. Curran’s place of employment was located at 308 Walnut Street in Old City, a street cars ride away from his Master Street home. In addition to these early purchasers of Houston dwellings, English émigré and retired merchant, Orlando Crease, and second wife, Mary, owned and resided at 6129 Wayne Avenue beginning in 1897. Crease built a successful career in carpet manufacturing, and contributed to St. David’s Protestant Episcopal Church in Manayunk. Like Houston, Crease’s legacy was tied to success in business and benevolence to the Episcopal Diocese. Houston’s benevolence including providing facilities for the operation of the Episcopal Diocese’s, Home for Aged Episcopalians at 5919 Wayne Avenue, the former home of Samuel Harvey, Jr. In 1900, the home provided shelter for ten “inmates,” all of whom were females between forty and sixty years old, overseen by Matron, Mary Rowbothom.

Beyond owners of properties once or concurrently owned by Houston, key members of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, namely Edmund N. Crenshaw (420 W. Walnut), and Robert S. Peabody (NW corner of Wayne and W. Walnut), lived within the community and served along with Houston as vestrymen. Houston’s neighborhood, however, was not comprised entirely of merchants such as Peabody, Crenshaw, and next-door neighbor Von Schaick. Rather, the neighborhood also housed laboring and skilled-labor residents, many of which gained long-term residence through leasing dwellings from Houston. Census data

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131 Deed Book 1 and 2, Title Papers Relating to Coded Properties, 1698-1953, Ledger: Deed Book Record (2 Volumes), Oversize 1-2, UPT 50 H483, Henry Howard Houston Estate Papers, 1698-1989, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania.
133 U.S. Federal Census Records, 1900, accessed through Ancestry Library Online.
from 1900 shows that these residents had families of multiple children, were in several cases multigenerational, and were in all cases White. Further research is needed to determine if these residents were among congregants at local churches, especially an Episcopal church that would have been favored by Houston himself. Contosta and Franklin note that Houston favored White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant tenants for his properties throughout his administration of the portfolio, which “allowed Houston to control the types of residents within his community while making sure properties were maintained well.” Maintenance was likely a factor in the gradual, and notably more expedient sale of larger, single-detached properties to residents in Germantown and in Chestnut Hill after Houston’s move in 1886. Regardless of the sale of a property to a new owner, Houston’s impact, manifested through Hewitt’s designs, remained tangible in Germantown.

**Tenants**

Homes along W. Rittenhouse Street and Wayne Avenue provided three options for tenants of varying financial capacities. The smallest of these dwellings were two-and-half-story brick twins along the 400 block of W. Rittenhouse Street, south of Wayne Avenue. These properties were home to a range of middle-class residents which occupations ranging from fireman to painter, to grocery clerk. Interestingly, three of the houses, 425, 429, and 431 were headed by single mothers or widows. At 431, head of house, Kate O’Brien, who emigrated to the U.S. in 1862 from Ireland, housed three daughters, all of whom had jobs in weaving trades. O’Brien was joined along the block by grocery clerk, Howard Patterson, who resided at 427 W. Rittenhouse. Patterson worked for Wilson & Bradbury, dry goods merchants at 217 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia’s 5th Ward.

Across Wayne Avenue, Houston rented two twin houses at 269/271 and 275/277 W. Rittenhouse Street. Customs auditor and former coal dealer, George W. Harmer found his residence in Germantown after

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having lived at Broad and Chestnut Streets circa 1865. Harmer at that time listed employment at 1511 Pennsylvania Avenue in Philadelphia’s Fairmount neighborhood. Harmer and his next door neighbors, Edward and Urcina Zimmerman, a couple composed of a music teacher and vocalist, also employed servants in their homes. Many servants of these renting families hailed from Ireland, which was not uncommon in the neighborhood, however, in the case of the Harmer, Zimmerman, and select other households, servants of other nationalities were present. Zimmerman employed one Welsh resident, and Harmer, a servant from South Carolina.

Along the south side of the 5900 block of Wayne Avenue, six twin dwellings housed twelve additional tenant families. At 5900, Amelia Robinson and her sons John, an architect, and Albertus, a coal dealer, lived with one servant. At 5908, lawyer Robert D. Maxwell and his family employed two Irish servants. Maxwell worked at 615 Walnut Street in downtown Philadelphia and had previously resided at 4021 Locust Street in West Philadelphia (1878). These tenants, and those along W. Rittenhouse Street formed a significant portion of the emerging middle class population in Houston’s Germantown.

Further west along Wayne Avenue, single-detached houses located along the 400 block of W. Walnut Ln, the 6100 and 6200 blocks of Wayne Avenue (with the closest proximity to Tulpehocken Station of any rentals) housed larger families, and were led by heads of household with occupations that afforded them the financial capacity to employ two or more servants, and in some cases additional service staff. These single-detached houses located along the 400 block of W. Walnut Lane and the 6100 and 6200 blocks of Wayne Avenue (with the closest proximity to Tulpehocken Station of any rentals) represented the upper end of housing stock provided by Houston in Germantown. Houston’s brother-in-law, third-party property purchaser, and future estate trustee, George B. Bonnell, listed the same location for employment in Gopsill’s 1890, Philadelphia City Directory, while renting at 5154 (later addressed 6208) Wayne Avenue. Bonnell joined fellow Houston “straw man”, Horace Fritz in Germantown residency. In 1865, Bonnell listed 775
Wood Street, near Franklin Square in Old City, as his place of residence, while commuting to work at 12th and Market Streets.136 By 1900, Bonnell’s block also housed banker Samuel Moore, insurance agent Charles W. Scott, and paper manufacturer Edward Hamilton. Families in these four “sister” homes were arguably more established financially and socially than those renting smaller housing stock from Houston. Heads of these households were at least forty years old (Bonnell, 70) and each housed at least six co-tenants, considering both family members and servants.

Many of these tenants had moved from the city core and neighborhoods surrounding commercial or industrial hubs out to Germantown, where renting in a desirable, yet convenient neighborhood became possible in the mid-1880s. Between 1883 and 1900, the neighborhood surrounding 279 W. Tulpehocken Street, Houston’s residence until 1886, grew to around a new generation of Germantown residents. This tide brought stable, if not emergent middle class and upper middle class residents into the Wayne Avenue corridor west of Chelten Avenue as part of southwest Germantown’s second stage of suburbanization, largely enabled by the extension of the PGCH railroad, a venture spurred on by Houston’s ambitions for the successful development of nascent Wissahickon Heights, Chestnut Hill.

The neighborhood centered on Wayne Avenue and extending along its perpendicular streets remained, however, an area predominantly upper class. Beyond Houston’s own posthumous listing in King’s Views in 1901, several of Houston’s Germantown neighbors at one time or another were listed among King’s most “notable” Philadelphians. Among such residents, those with closest connection to Houston and the neighborhoods day-to-day life were Rev. Theodore S. Rumney of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, former tenant E.T. Stotesbury, neighbor John W. Moffly, and Charles Mathews, one time tenant at 423 W. Walnut Lane.

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Examining a sampling of residents who resided Houston’s properties, and among his tenants provides a greater connection to the neighborhood dynamic than simply considering built fabric or a few select individuals of high standing. Consideration of the layers of historic significance, tangible and intangible, informs the history of the neighborhood of focus, while encouraging future scholarship to apply the same approach elsewhere.
CHAPTER VIII: PRESERVATION PLANNING FOR HOUSTON’S GERMANTOWN

Standing at the southwest corner of W. Rittenhouse Street and Wayne Avenue while looking eastward toward Chelten Avenue provides an immediate sense of disconnection from the neighborhood existing westward. The auto-centric, mixed-use development that dominates the intersection of Chelten and Wayne Avenues stands in stark contrast to the Wayne Avenue corridor westward. Wayne Avenue’s perpendicular northeast-southwest streets such as W. Rittenhouse, W. Walnut Ln, and W. Tulpehocken Street, serve as connectors to Germantown Avenue, and as the framework for development past and present in the neighborhood. This area sits within the Germantown Central West neighborhood and is included with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission’s “Upper Northwest” planning area. Houston’s Anglo-centric railroad suburb, which appends to the “Tulpehocken Station” neighborhood, is anchored by Wayne Avenue and SEPTA’s regional rail line known as the Chestnut Hill West, which grew out of the PGCH, two blocks south.

The area forms its architectural identity from a variety of styles and typologies. In terms of the presence of Houston-era fabric, the dwellings designed by, or at the very least attributed to, G.W. and W.D. Hewitt, form a cohesive, intact collection of 1880s and early-1890s historic fabric within the inventory of dwellings south of Greene Street; the northern boundary of the area that once contained all parcels within Henry H. Houston’s Germantown real estate portfolio. Essentially, these buildings stand on their own in terms of their correlation as a “district” of thematically and geographically related historic resources. Their connection to significant individuals or designers in Henry H. Houston and the Hewitt brothers provides one aspect, while the combination of aesthetic and historic values provides another.
National Register of Historic Places: Tulpehocken Station Historic District

Houston, the Hewitt firm, and their role in shaping each other’s legacy while simultaneously that of a relatively undocumented niche neighborhood in Germantown supports future study of other understudied neighborhoods that potentially bear similar narratives and at the very least specific historic significance. Buildings that remain standing represent the preferences of client and designer, and ultimately those of their residents; past, present, and future. With a greater understanding of the social, economic, and architectural values leading to the construction of such buildings and their historic significance, nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places is merited and recommended. Additionally, the cluster of Houston Era dwellings serves to provide a necessary update to the Tulpehocken Station Historic District, National Register nomination, completed in 1984, and last updated in 2001.137

In 1984, the nomination for “Tulpehocken Station Historic District” was completed, recognizing 155 contributing and 13 non-contributing structures within a period of significance ranging from 1851 to 1925. This nomination recognized the neighborhood’s origin as a picturesque, Downing-inspired suburban development, and briefly, its transitions during the 1880s and early Twentieth century to railroad suburb and automobile suburb respectively. These historical transformations are accurate, but even after an update in 2001, the neighborhood’s complex mid-to-late 1800s history was not most accurate. Most notably, the nomination incorrectly credited the PGCH as “attracting new institutions such as St. Peter’s Episcopal Church” to the neighborhood.138 More accurately, as evidenced by the procession of church, railroad, housing, the process of building a community around amenities or resources has been re-established. In the thirty-plus years since the nomination’s completion additional buildings have been recognized as

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137 “A historic district is a collection of historic resources that are linked geographically or thematically. Every resource within a historic district is classified as Significant, Contributing, or Non-Contributing.” See, Philadelphia Historical Commission, “Philadelphia Historic Districts,” Philadelphia Historical Commission Website, URL: http://www.phila.gov/historical/register/Pages/districts.aspx, accessed 16 March 2016.
contributing to the district, including garden court apartments built in the 1920s and 1930s. Further, these nominations selected Criteria (C) when justifying national historical significance on the district scale. Although merited, this broad stroke at establishing significance fails to completely define the neighborhood’s comprehensive historic significance. An additional update is required to correct inaccuracies and to effectively incorporate a more thorough narrative of the district’s development during its transition from nascent, picturesque suburb to railroad suburb. Accordingly, an updated nomination requires the inclusion of additional buildings along the 200 and 400 blocks of W. Rittenhouse Street, and the 5900 block Wayne Avenue that were “significant” to Houston’s development, and thus integral to the neighborhood’s growth during the 1880s and 1890s (Figure 31).

National Register nominations and inventories have provided a great amount of narrative and fabric-based detail, but have fallen short of providing social context that this thesis has codified. The inventory includes the quintet of three-story Queen Anne’s at Tulpehocken and Wayne Avenue as “significant”, and those along the 400 block of W. Walnut as “contributing”. These buildings are the most proximal to W. Tulpehocken and W. Walnut Streets, which understandably provides geographically-based association, but unfortunately negates more distant buildings that were equally as important to the neighborhood’s historic context after 1884. It is easy to fall into the trap of attempting to nominate every building within a specific boundary that was constructed during a certain era. Those buildings related to the Houston’s development in the area allow for the addition of fabric with immediate, thematic connection to key figures who informed the neighborhood’s transformation.

Other properties that Houston did not own or commission within the neighborhood are listed as contributing or significant to the National Register District, namely the Henry Listar Townsend House, at 6013 Wayne Avenue (Significant-Designed by Hewitt), and what was the home of John W. Moffly at 6024 Wayne Avenue (Contributing-Architect Unknown). 6024 Wayne has been altered noticeably, but retains
historic details including its decorative bargeboard beneath is eastern gable and faceted, center-ranked bay. It, along with 6141 Wayne, further retain historic value as a result of the scarcity associated with their design; 6024 a twin-gabled Gothic house, and 6141, a Queen Anne with a full, wrap-around, double deck porch. Buildings such as 5909-19 Wayne Avenue, the former residence of Samuel Harvey, Jr. and subsequently, the Home for Aged Episcopalians under Houston’s ownership, still stand. Further research into this property’s origin and that of 6024 Wayne is encouraged. In the case of 5909-5919 Wayne, its use as a single-family residence, which likely began around 1850, lasted approximately thirty-five years. Its adapted use as a multi-unit institutional building has remained intact since, representing a second significant theme in its own history. Neither of these homes are on the Philadelphia Register, but nomination is recommended.

Houston’s role in Germantown’s suburban development over two-plus decades began prior to his Wissahickon Heights venture, but was completed in concert with the PARR executive’s noteworthy role in the formation of the PGCH Railroad. These geographically separate neighborhoods coexist within the same historical context. Further, Houston’s influence in Germantown is a strand within a thicker cable, manifested as a related set of buildings forming a key portion of the Tulpehocken Station neighborhood.

As suggested by the existing National Register District’s name, the Tulpehocken Station stop on the PCGH Railroad remains symbolic of the neighborhood’s transformation between 1850 and the turn of the Twentieth century. The extant footprint Houston’s development effectively extends the Tulpehocken Station neighborhood’s boundaries southward and eastward, incorporating historic fabric that was constructed with the coming of railroad. By adding additional Houston-associated fabric to the Tulpehocken National Register District, the connection between its fabric and historic narrative is made more comprehensive.
Philadelphia Register of Historic Places: Local Designation

Local designation for individual buildings, and as a historic district, may provide greater protection to historic fabric, and is an additional method of maintaining future stewardship of locally significant historic resources. Designations are not necessarily appropriate for every significant historic property as owners may or may not desire the addition of design review concerning additions and alterations to a building’s fabric. One benefit to such regulation is that buildings with a shared significance to a historic context such as Houston’s development in Germantown can be reviewed to insure their historic integrity is sustained, especially given the impact of design and material on the character of the neighborhood.

As of 2016, there is not a locally designated “Tulpehocken Station Historic District”. Updating of the 2001 National Register inventory to include extant buildings with sufficient historic integrity that connect to Houston and the Hewitt & Hewitt firm encourages the same designation process be considered locally. A local nomination’s inventory should incorporate all fabric significant and contributing to the Houston development era, 1860 to 1895 that retains sufficient historic integrity. The Philadelphia Register has nominated small clusters of buildings as districts that are within neighborhoods, or in the case of the Greenbelt Knoll development/neighborhood, function as a distinct residential subdivision. This grouping of historic, single-detached and semi-detached residences offers the opportunity to designate resources most likely designed by one architect for one client outside of the Philadelphia Row House or a common subdivision typology; a rare development type in the city. A “Houston-Hewitt Historic Housing” district provides a platform to educate the public and engage an overshadowed grouping of dwellings that connect to the story of a community’s growth, while at the same time showcasing an example of how Philadelphia’s own growth during the late 1800s was the sum of many factors relating citizens to economic, social, and technological forces.
Houston’s Germantown development is in essence, the manifestation of its developer’s personal values, tastes, and given Houston’s role as landlord who personally approved of tenants, the values of residents. Such a neighborhood is, as fellow Philadelphia neighborhoods Greenbelt Knoll and Awbury Arboretum are, tied to a specific, temporal narrative. In the case of Houston’s development, historic fabric constructed between 1873 and the early 1890s emerged through the turn of the Twentieth century as suburban housing for middle and upper-class tenants and owners; signifying the neighborhood’s connection to broader trends of suburban growth intertwined with sociocultural, technological/transportation, and architectural themes.

**Defining Historic Suburbs**

As evidenced by the work of scholars of suburban history including Kenneth T. Jackson, Dolores Hayden, and David L. Ames, and Margaret Marsh, suburban historiography has evolved repeatedly in an attempt to appropriately define various types of suburbs, and ultimately, the methodologies associated with their interpretation. A niche neighborhood such as Houston’s proves challenging to define according to the standards of the National Park Service, and furthermore, encounters obstacles in being placed within the categorical diaspora posed by prior scholarship. Houston’s real estate development in Germantown was focused within an early railroad suburb, but resulted in the redefining of a significant portion of that neighborhood as an Anglo-centric railroad suburb, largely comprised of rental housing. These architectural and social factors must be considered along with transportation systems in defining historic suburbs.
Figure 30 Extant fabric associated with Houston’s Germantown development lies entirely within the Germantown Central-West Neighborhood, which is located in Philadelphia City Planning Commission’s “Upper Northwest” planning area. Map by Author, 2016.
Figure 31 A locally registered historic district would both overlap and append fabric associated with Houston’s Germantown real estate portfolio to the existing National Register District. Map by Author, 2016.
Upon his passing on June 21, 1895, Henry H. Houston was considered among Philadelphia’s leading industrial entrepreneurs. A self-made gentleman, Houston navigated industrial spheres throughout his early life, gaining a thorough understanding of the movement of freight and people beyond his native York County, Pennsylvania. Houston’s emergence as a pivotal figure in the American freight industry during the early 1850s enabled his future involvement with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, arguably the nation’s most dominant industrial corporation during the second-half of the Nineteenth century. Houston’s success as General Freight Agent provided him with an increasingly impressive fortune, and combined with a variety of investments in oil, coal, and lumber to make his ventures in real estate development possible.

Houston’s guarded demeanor was at times perceived as an unfriendly affront, but is challenged by a legacy connected to charitable contributions that were key to the development of the communities he lived in after he transitioned from downtown Philadelphia residence, to suburban living in 1860. Details remain to be uncovered, and no plan exists on paper describing Houston’s ultimate ambitions in Germantown, Chestnut Hill, or beyond, in Philadelphia locales such as Roxborough. Evidence that has been left behind has proven helpful in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of how cards were played, and by whom. Within deed books, and rental ledgers maintained by Houston and his estate, the names of tenants, home buyers, “straw men,” and transportation companies manifest in an complex web that enables myriad details to be sifted through contextual filters, informing the interpretation of Houston’s significance in his suburban oasis, Wissahickon Heights, and moreover, his “proving ground” in southwest Germantown.

By 1863, when Houston attained residential ownership in Germantown, prior speculative ambitions of developers keen to connect their land’s potential to the growing number of transportation connections in the City’s Twenty-Second Ward welcomed an influx of streetcar suburbanites. Houston’s ascension and
migration northwestward echoed the ambitions of thousands of Philadelphian’s native, and Philadelphian’s incoming, to establish an existence of retreat, away from an increasingly dense, bustling urban world. Houston encountered in Germantown a grid-addition suburb, separated from the downtown by rolling topography along the Wissahickon Valley and miles of rail that required commuting and often prohibitive associated costs.

As Houston’s career thrived in the aftermath of the Civil War, other merchants, industrialists, and capitalists followed their peers to Germantown, among other suburban destinations including Philadelphia’s Main Line. Houston was not at this time an eminently elite Philadelphian, but surely benefited from his being embedded in the corporate hierarchy of the PARR, and consequently its position within Philadelphia’s financial and social strata. Houston was quick to solidify his suburban identity during his formative years as a Germantown resident. Most obviously his involvement with Christ Church, Germantown and later, St. Peter’s Church, provided one aspect of community building in the years that Houston began his earnest acquisition of land west of Chelten Avenue and east of W. Johnson Street. Surely, Houston realized that a community desired for its amenities from its earliest imagining in 1851, would derive additional benefit from convenient transportation service. Houston’s home in Germantown functioned as a residence, and by 1882, a headquarters for drumming up demand for continued development within the community. Historian David Contosta posits in, Suburb in the City, that real estate development in Germantown served as a “laboratory” in which Houston honed his skills before shifting his focus to land in Chestnut Hill.

Findings of this thesis show that although Houston’s development in Germantown began before his large-scale enterprise in Chestnut Hill, the bulk of development in Germantown coincided with rail extension through southwest Germantown to Chestnut Hill, each acting as catalysts in Houston’s venture. Based upon

139 A.E. Rogerson & E.J. Murphy, Civil Engineers. Map of the Township of Germantown: Philadelphia County, 1851.
140 Contosta, Suburb in the City, 83.
the two-plus decade timeframe between first acquisition and final improvement, Houston’s impetus in Germantown likely concerned controlling land in an effort to prevent otherwise speculative development from occurring in what was at the time, still a semi-rural suburb. By 1886, however, an exponentially larger collection of parcels awaited Houston’s imprint in Wissahickon Heights/St. Martin’s, as the neighborhood surrounding the two-year old Tulpehocken Station had largely filled in, with “pasture lots” few and far between as lamented by Houston’s observant neighbor, Weygandt.

Based upon Houston’s involvement in petitioning for the railroad, widespread support by fellow residents, and Houston’s choice to construct the bulk of his housing after the PGCH railroad was constructed, the railroad was the pivotal factor in Houston’s strategy. Had financial gain been paramount, improvement of the parcels in Germantown would have occurred more quickly, bearing homes fit to potentially increase property income streams. Houston left Germantown in 1886 with a vast fortune, a testament of his ability to acquire over 3,000 acres of land in over four years. His twenty-six years spent in Germantown saw him ascend Philadelphia’s class structure, resulting in his surpassing of middle and upper-class residents living in the neighborhood in terms of social standing.

Houses designed by or attributed to G.W. and W.D. Hewitt were among the first houses constructed in the neighborhood during the 1880s, after the eras of Italianate, Gothic, and Second Empire design gave way to fashionable revival styles of the dawning Gilded Age. None of these dwellings commissioned by Houston are designated as historic on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as of 2016. The majority of these properties uphold high historic integrity, and most of those with less integrity or overt alteration have not suffered from irreversible renovation. These properties form a collection of architect-designed fabric with justified significance in the history of the Tulpehocken Station neighborhood’s development, signifying a common thread representative of suitability for representation as a historic district, or if perhaps in a city utilizing other means of thematic designation, a historic zoning overlay.
As his Germantown parcels were built up, Houston’s move to Chestnut Hill represented a logical progression of providing an opportunity for a self-made, newly-moneyed Philadelphian, to further guide the community he lived in. In Germantown, institutions like the Cricket Club, and the Episcopal Church were already established when Houston set up shop; development in Wissahickon Heights offered the chance to appropriate former farms for the creation of a Philadelphian haven. A full-scale crafting of community in which church, destination inn, and high-quality housing led to qualifying tenants, or conveyed to optimal buyers, laid the foundation for its growth which occurred under Houston’s direction until 1895.

Recommendations for Future Scholarship

The Houston Era in Germantown has been largely neglected by prior scholarship as it occupied a middle ground between Germantown’s suburban boom in immediate antebellum years, and the remarkable success of Chestnut Hill towards the turn of the Twentieth century. This thesis connects broader historic themes with locally significant Nineteenth century development narratives in Germantown. Future research is necessary to continue the Germantown story beyond the Houston Era, which conveniently ends during the turn of the Twentieth century. By the time of the Great Depression, many of the parcels, properties, and people significant that era were released from the guidance of the Houston Estate.

The neighborhood also provides an opportunity to consider a broader cultural landscape approach that incorporates the built and the natural environment, providing a more palpable connection between Germantown as it lives and breathes in 2016 and remnants of its storied past. This thesis greatly benefited from access to the Houston Real Estate Papers Collection housed at the University of Pennsylvania’s Archives as well as materials held at the Philadelphia Athenaeum and Hagley Museum. This was in large part to due to the fortunate bequest of materials from the Houston Estate, and recordation of immense amounts of information, too much in fact to analyze within the scope of this thesis, relating to the Pennsylvania Railroad. Continued research in Germantown should look to rely on similar primary evidence,
but must consider that the significance of a place, its character, and its history deals with the vernacular and
the designed, as well as the famous, the infamous, and the common. Even a neighborhood such as
Tulpehocken Station, a National Register Historic District since 1984, has other stories to tell.
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Figure 32 6135 Wayne Avenue. Quintessential Hewitt combination of gables and materials. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 33 6135 Wayne Avenue. Porch Detail. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 34 258 W. Tulpehocken Street. Faceted Bay Details-Plaster cast motifs. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 35 258 W. Tulpehocken Street. Detail of Gable with jerkin roof, fanlight, and fish scale siding. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 36 258 W. Tulpehocken Street-Detail of porch and canted square bay at second story. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 37 258 W. Tulpehocken. Detail of Porch brackets common to designs of the Hewitt firm. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 38 266 W. Tulpehocken Street detail. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 39 Corner of Wayne Avenue and W. Tulpehocken Street. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 40 Rear view of 6100 Block of Wayne Avenue. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 41 6100 Block of Wayne Avenue-Looking NW from Pastorius Street. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 42 423 and 425 W. Walnut Lane-Gable Detail. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 43 St. Peter’s Episcopal Church (Land and Construction Financed by HHH). Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 44 300/302 W. Springfield Avenue-Comparable to 265/267 W. Rittenhouse Street in Germantown. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 45 330/332 W. Springfield Avenue has a wider porch than comparable properties at 269/271 W. Rittenhouse Street. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 46 8635 Seminole Avenue, comparable to 258, 266 W. Tulpehocken and 6129, 6135, 6141 Wayne Ave. Photo by Author, 2016.

Figure 47 8205 Seminole Avenue-“Houston-Saveur House”. Comparable to single-detached dwellings in Germantown, notably 431 W. Walnut Ln. Photo by Author, 2016.
Figure 48 5902 Wayne Avenue c. 1940. UPA.

Figure 49 5912 Wayne Avenue c. 1940. UPA.
Figure 50 423 W. Walnut c. 1940. UPA.

Figure 51 431 W. Walnut c. 1940. UPA.
Figure 52 421 W. Rittenhouse Street c. 1940. UPA.

Figure 53 275 W. Rittenhouse Street c. 1940. UPA.
Figure 54 5909 Wayne Avenue c.1940. UPA.

Figure 55 Benjamin Von Schaick’s Italianate Villa c. 1900. Von Schaick, acquired the home in 1874. GHS.
Figure 56 Home of Henry B. Curran. One of the few houses Houston sold to a buyer that was existing upon Houston’s purchase. GHS.
# Table I:
Sample of Tenants of Houston-Commissioned Properties
c. 1890 Houston Estate Rental Ledger* | 1900 U.S. Federal Census**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5906 Wayne*</td>
<td>John Hayman</td>
<td>Clergyman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5908 Wayne**</td>
<td>Robert D. Maxwell</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5912 Wayne*</td>
<td>William F. North</td>
<td>Real Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5914 Wayne*</td>
<td>William Gilchrist</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5920 Wayne*</td>
<td>Harry Lawson</td>
<td>Stock Broker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275 W. Rittenhouse*</td>
<td>George W. Harmer</td>
<td>Auditor Port of Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277 W. Rittenhouse*</td>
<td>Edward Zimmerman</td>
<td>Musician (Wife was a vocalist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>417 W. Rittenhouse*</td>
<td>Louis J. Roop</td>
<td>Fireman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>425 W. Rittenhouse**</td>
<td>Mary Lukens</td>
<td>Bookkeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>427 W. Rittenhouse**</td>
<td>Howard Patterson</td>
<td>Clerk for Grocer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431 W. Rittenhouse**</td>
<td>Kate O'Brien</td>
<td>3 Daughters worked in Weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>266 W. Tulpehocken**</td>
<td>Malayn Kline #</td>
<td>Druggist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>423 W. Walnut*</td>
<td>Charles J. Mathews</td>
<td>Manufacturer-Shoe Leather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6135 Wayne*</td>
<td>J.R. Wood</td>
<td>General Passenger Agent PARR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6141 Wayne*</td>
<td>Charles W. Porter</td>
<td>Woolen Manufacturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6208 Wayne*</td>
<td>George B. Bonnell</td>
<td>Real Estate (Relative of HHH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6220 Wayne*</td>
<td>Edward Hamilton</td>
<td>Paper Manufacturer</td>
</tr>
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Table II:
Sample of Buyers of Houston-Commissioned Properties
Houston Estate Deed Books* | 1900 U.S. Federal Census**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>258 W. Tulpehocken*/**</td>
<td>E.T. Stotesbury #</td>
<td>Banker-Drexel &amp; Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>258 W. Tulpehocken*/**</td>
<td>Henry S. Grove #</td>
<td>President-Mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431 W. Walnut*/**</td>
<td>Robert C. Lippincott</td>
<td>Lumber Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6139 Wayne</td>
<td>Orlando Crease</td>
<td>Retired Merchant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6102 Wayne</td>
<td>Henry L. Davis</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6110 Wayne</td>
<td>Henry B. Curran</td>
<td>Coal Dealer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# According to 1990 U.S. Census, Henry S. Grove, owned and resided at 258 W. Tulpehocken Street. The Houston Estate’s Deed Book indicates that E.T. Stotesbury purchased a property from “H.H.H. & Wife” in 1894. This property was in fact 258 W. Tulpehocken Street according to G.M. Bromley’s, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, 1895*, Plate 36. In 1900 Stotesbury resided at 253 W. Tulpehocken Street, two doors down from Houston’s former residence at 279.
Table III:
Sample of Houston’s W. Tulpehocken St. Neighbors: c. 1860
Houston’s 1st Year in Germantown
Listed in McElroy’s Philadelphia City Directory, 1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Employment Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry Atherton</td>
<td>Builder</td>
<td>Germantown Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwin R. Cope</td>
<td>Paper Manufacturer</td>
<td>17 S 6th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob J. Cope</td>
<td>Gentleman</td>
<td>110 Chestnut St.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Fetter</td>
<td>Coachman</td>
<td>Tulpehocken St. &amp; Greene St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles F. Graff</td>
<td>Broker</td>
<td>Merchant’s Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Gress</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>Germantown Ave. n. Tulpehocken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hadkins</td>
<td>Weaver</td>
<td>Germantown Ave. n. Tulpehocken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Hallahan</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>Germantown Ave. n. Tulpehocken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James H. Harrison</td>
<td>Shipping Agent</td>
<td>4th and Chestnut Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah Haupt</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Germantown Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebenezer Maxwell</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>123 Chestnut St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conrad Miller</td>
<td>Coachman</td>
<td>Tulpehocken St. &amp; Wayne St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.S. Robinson</td>
<td>Engravings</td>
<td>910 Chestnut St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles W. Robinson</td>
<td>Conveyancer</td>
<td>2111 Chestnut St.**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Harvey Thomas</td>
<td>Dry Goods/Stock Broker</td>
<td>120 Chestnut St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Shoemaker</td>
<td>Manufacturer</td>
<td>809 Front St.</td>
</tr>
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*McElroy’s Philadelphia City Directory, 1855.

**McElroy’s City Directory, 1865
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