APPLICATIONS OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPE STUDIES IN SINGLE-STREET HISTORIC DISTRICTS

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F.A.W. – may I one day have as great of an impact on Philadelphia as you did.

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INTRODUCTION

In January, a historic district was added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places for the first time since 2010. Called the "420 Row," it is comprised of eight contiguous buildings in West Philadelphia (**Figure 1**). While many celebrated the designation as a (small) preservation victory in the city, the moment, too, served as a reminder of the climate surrounding the protection of historic resources at the local level; over the past 13 years, the Philadelphia Historical Commission has indefinitely tabled two local historic districts – Spruce Hill and Overbrook Farms – despite these areas being listed in the National Register of Historic Places. While the average resident does not blink an eye upon learning of Philadelphia's membership in the Organization of World Heritage Cities, that same person is more likely than not to fight tooth and nail against the designation of his or her historic property, even if it meets multiple criteria for local protection. Clearly, public opinion has changed substantially since the establishment of the Historical Commission in 1955 – but why, and how?

One of the oldest arguments against the designation of historic properties is the idea that it comprises a "taking" – derived from the last clause of the Fifth Amendment, this requires the government to justly compensate a property owner for the "taking" of his private property for "public use." Historic designation has been argued in the courts as a regulatory taking, since there is no physical acquisition of the property (as would be the case in a direct condemnation, or eminent domain taking). A regulatory taking occurs when the government regulation results in a loss of economic value for the property owner. The owners of properties protected on the local historic register are somewhat limited in what actions they can undertake on their land – in Philadelphia, for instance, it is not permissible

to demolish a building, structure, or object listed in the local register unless the owner has a financial hardship or if the property cannot be used or adapted in its current state.[1]

However, historic preservation law has shown time and time again that a historic designation (and resultant local restrictions on property) is not only an appropriate function of local government and does not comprise a regulatory taking, but also that historic preservation is a public good and thus cannot be seen as a burden on property owners. In Philadelphia, concern over historic designation goes beyond the simple economic value of a regulatory taking. Numerous studies have shown that historic designation in Philadelphia, in fact, increases property values.[2] Property value rise as the result of historic designation is essentially the opposite of a regulatory taking, where economic value is deprived. However, in some cases, a rise in property value equates to a rise in taxes, and for many long-term or low-income property owners, this is not a desirable outcome – and is often conflated with gentrification, a controversial subject in deeply-segregated and socioeconomically stratified cities such as Philadelphia.

When the Spruce Hill and Overbrook Farms historic districts were initially considered by the Philadelphia Historical Commission, opponents of the designation were concerned not only that property taxes would increase, but also that the types of repairs and maintenance required of building owners would be too high a financial burden. As a result, councilpersons and other public officials successfully lobbied the Historical Commission to

[1] "City of Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 14-1000 with Pertinent Exceptions from Other Sections of the Zoning Code" (2012).

[2] Econsult Corporation, "The Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Philadelphia," 2010, http://www.preservationalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Econ_Report_Final.pdf; Prema Katari Gupta, "Preservation and Residential Property Values: The Case of Philadelphia" (University of Pennsylvania, 2005), http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=hp_theses.

table the nominations. In response to the 2004 Spruce Hill nomination, councilwoman Janine Blackwell even proposed a bill which would give final historic district approval to the district's councilperson; while unsuccessful, this bill halted Spruce Hill's momentum. While the 420 Row historic district nomination had the unanimous support of all eight property owners of the block, Spruce Hill and Overbrook Farms' approximately 2,000 and 500 property owners, respectively, were unable to reach a consensus on historic designation, despite the local nominations being written by members of the community or local historical societies. Although owner consent is not required for a property to be listed on the local register, the involvement of local politicians and the use of "councilmanic prerogative" to stall district designations signals to other neighborhood groups that such a fate could happen if they were to nominate similarly large historic districts in the future.

A second critique of historic designation stems from its perceived obstruction of new development. Mid-twentieth century mass migration of people and jobs to the suburbs, as well as a period of nationwide deindustrialization, crippled Philadelphia's local economy in and contributed to a decline not just in population, but also in quality building stock. Buildings of all types – from rowhouses and schools to department stores and train stations – fell into disrepair or were demolished simply because there was not a citizenry large enough to fill and maintain them. As the city recovered, the establishment of community development corporations such as the Center City District in the late 1980s and early 1990s helped facilitate reinvestment downtown. The most impactful development strategy implemented by the city has been the 10 year property tax abatement – first established in the 1970s as a 30 month abatement for new construction, modified in 1997 to include residential conversions and prolong the abatement to 10 years, and expanded in 2000 to include all types of property.

The impacts of the 10 year tax abatement are not to be underscored: a March 2017 report commissioned for the Building Industry Association (BIA) reveals that the abatement program has led to a 376% increase in homebuilding activity in Philadelphia.[3] Real estate data further show an inventory unable to outpace demand.[4] These two indicators would, theoretically, make a logical argument for the preservation of existing housing stock. However, historic preservation is inherently threatened by abatements, since there is a misguided perception – in part fueled by organizations such as the BIA – that developers receive a higher yield for building new. This same BIA report reveals that there are nearly twice as many abatements on new construction projects as those for improvements to existing buildings. While this statistic is concerning at first glance, the report further notes that there is only a $1.8 billion difference (out of a total value of $8.8 billion) in assessed value between new construction and conversions. Per capita, then, it is the rehabilitations that yield a net total greater value than new construction. Of the BIA's numerous reports touting the tax abatement, however, not one mentions the words "historic" or "preservation," despite BIA's mission to "advocate for and expand the residential building industry in Philadelphia," and despite the majority of Philadelphia's land cover zoned as RSA, RSD, and RM – attached and detached rowhouses, and multifamily dwellings (often a

[3] Kevin Gillen, "Philadelphia's 10-Year Property Tax Abatement: Updated Statistics on the Size, Location, and Distribution of Tax-Abated Properties in Philadelphia," March 2017, 22, https://chambermaster.blob.core.windows.net/userfiles/UserFiles/chambers/9394/File/BIA-AbatementFullReport_Final.pdf.

[4] Melissa Romero, "Report: Philly's Home Inventory Dropped 32 Percent in Last Five Years," *Curbed Philly*, March 23, 2017, https://philly.curbed.com/2017/3/23/15022726/philadelphia-home-inventory-affordability-2017-report.

converted rowhouse or townhouse) (**Figure 2**).[5] Again, historic preservation case law shows that property owners are not entitled to the "highest and best use" of their land, even if they own a parcel of land, zoned for a maximum building envelope, when a smaller historic building is on it.

Furthermore, no local financial incentives exist for owners of historic properties. While owners of National Register-designated properties can obtain federal and state rehabilitation tax credits if the property is to be used in a profit-generating capacity, there is no specific incentive at the local level – other than the 10 year tax abatement, which is open to all types of property – to assist in the cost of restoring a privately-owned historic house. The consequence of having no local financial benefits is that homeowners are not incentivized to maintain historic features of their property – such as façade cladding, historic windows, and wooden cornices – and could be left with no choice but to resort to quick fix maintenance solutions such as Permastone, aluminum coverings, and vinyl windows, which diminish the history property's integrity.

Although the designation of the 420 Row is a positive development for preservation in West Philadelphia, it would be unwise to view this example as a model for the future of historic district designation in the city. Larger neighborhood historic districts such as Spruce Hill or Overbrook Farms are rightly justified by the old adage, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." That philosophy is the backbone of the success of the existing Society Hill and Old City Historic Districts, where residential, commercial, and religious buildings of various ages and styles may not stand out individually, but do collectively – and this historic significance is further branded as an asset to both tourists and residents. West Philadelphia is

[5] "Building Industry Association | Home," http://www.biaofphiladelphia.com.

similarly positioned in arguing for the significance of the area as a whole rather than for slicing it into smaller pieces – like the 420 Row – which hold less weight on their own. While there may be buildings in its boundary that are significant due to its association with a person or group, or its design by a prominent architect, West Philadelphia's historical significance and charming setting stems from the density of speculative Victorian rowhouses that may not be tied to a specific person or builder, but contribute to a landscape of front porches, corbelled brick cornices, and wide, tree-lined streets.

Even by looking at numbers alone, it is clear that historic districts are an important tool in protecting the regional, character-defining architectural identity of neighborhoods. As of February 2017, there are 11,073 properties, listed either individually or as part of a historic district, in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Of this number, 3,303 are listed as individual properties while the remaining 7,770 are contributing resources in local historic districts – a nearly perfect 70-30 ratio.[6] The data thus show that designating in smaller increments is less efficient in creating a survey and narrative of the city's historic resources. However, Jonathan Farnham, the current Executive Director of the Philadelphia Historical Commission is in favor of smaller districts like the 420 Row as a successful solution to the administrative and political difficulties that attach to hundred-to-thousand-building district nominations, which place a burden upon an agency with a limited budget, staff, and resources.[7] For now, it seems, mini districts will be the touted model for "mass" designations

[6] Properties on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as of February 2017. Compiled by Laura DiPasquale Zupan, Historic Preservation Planner II, Philadelphia Historical Commission.

[7] Jake Blumgart, "420 Row and a Way Forward for Historic Districts," *PlanPhilly*, January 27, 2017, http://planphilly.com/articles/2017/01/27/420-row-and-a-way-forward-for-historic-districts.

of any kind in Philadelphia.

The full implications of this de facto policy shift remain unclear. Given the pace of gentrification, property development, and institutional expansion in West Philadelphia, what does the designation of the 420 Row mean for the two undesignated churches across the street or the ornate, turreted and gable-dormered rowhouses up the block, which were (designed by the same architect and) built around the same time, and are also not protected on the local register? If historic preservation in West Philadelphia will proceed without the existence of traditional, neighborhood-wide historic districts, what does this mean moving forward for other areas in the city where historic resources are threatened by demolition, institutional and corporate expansion, and insensitivity to historic fabric? On the one hand, to designate individual blocks such as the 420 Row as "micro-districts" omits an understanding of their context in the area's history of development, expansion, and architectural taste of that particular period in time – which one could argue is not a historically comprehensive approach. On the other hand, this strategy reinforces the values of high-style architecture and contributes to an oversaturated historical narrative of Elite Philadelphia. According to the nomination of the 420 Row, the building's architects, the Hewitt Brothers, described in their advertisement for the property that "the block should be considered a single and whole streetscape."[8] But who is to say that a streetscape can or cannot go beyond a single designed element?

An overlooked alternative to nominating part of a street such as the 420 Row – instead of as part of a larger historic district – is to use the entire street length as a historic

[8] Justin McDaniel, "Nomination of Historic District, Philadelphia Register of Historic Places: '420 Row'" (Philadelphia Historical Commission, July 10, 2016), 5, http://www.phila.gov/historical/Documents/420-434-S-42nd-St-district-nom.pdf.

district. In this thesis, I will argue for this approach and, in doing so, aim to underscore the benefits of integrating historic preservation policy with cultural landscape theory and practice. Streets and cultural landscapes provide complementary lenses to look beyond the artificial boundaries of a neighborhood to understand patterns of movement, changes in architectural style and taste, and transformations in urban form over time. Language set forth by the National Park Service and local city ordinances tends to limit significance to high-style architecture and/or aesthetically cohesive, homogenous neighborhoods. As such, future local historic districts should adopt tenets of cultural landscape theory by recognizing areas that defy contiguous architectural patterns or "high style."

Using Philadelphia as a case study for this hypothesis raises further questions: is it possible for a historic district extending far along a street to exist? Is it, conceptually, possible to designate a single historic district along a corridor where significant resources have been eliminated? Is it possible for a single historic district along a street or corridor to reconcile "high integrity" pockets and those with little to no integrity, when a street is intrinsically linked from one end to the other? How do we preserve these places in the long run if there are few policies in place to define and protect such a sprawled region? Ultimately, the integration of cultural landscape theory can help answer these questions, or at least to constructively reframe them. Just as neighborhood districts can contain a mix of building types and sites, ranging from religious, to residential, to commercial and industrial, a historic district along a street should be able to encompass all building types; no matter their physical condition or surrounding context, all contribute to the street's landscape as a corridor. Furthermore, historic district and cultural landscape designation provide complementary tools for not just arguing for a resource's significance, but also in their protection in the long run. While a local historic district designation would provide

regulation of alterations to significant properties, a nationally-designated historic district can qualify for tax credits and grants while national cultural landscape status brings new planning tools to the table that may be different from but important to maintaining the integrity of a historic district.

I will attempt to answer these questions in five parts. The first, a literature review, examines the ways in which we view streets, historic districts, cultural landscapes, and architecture of all types – from the high style to the vernacular – and how they interact in cities and are viewed in the public eye. The following two sections analyze historic district data in Philadelphia at large: first, in how local and national register language impedes the designation of areas that could otherwise be interpreted as cultural landscapes, and secondly, how architectural type is used, or not used, in Philadelphia's historic districts. Ultimately, these two chapters will argue for a more nuanced use of language and historic preservation practice among professionals in the field as well as the amateur citizen historian.

The fourth part models a hypothetical test of this methodology along a specific Philadelphia street: in this case, I have chosen Chestnut Street, between 40th and 63rd Streets. Chestnut Street had long been one of the gateways to West Philadelphia: through the last decades of the nineteenth century, the only bridges connecting West Philadelphia to mainland Philadelphia were Market Street, Chestnut Street, and South Street. As institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania have expanded their reach westward, historic buildings have fallen victim to the wrecking ball. 40th Street provides a logical eastern boundary as this corridor, as the Philadelphia City Planning Commission identifies 40th Street as the "western boundary of Philadelphia's metropolitan center."[9] Chestnut Street naturally

[9] PennPraxis and Penn Project for Civic Engagement, "Civic Goals and Urban Design

runs until 63rd Street, when Cobbs Creek Park and its namesake highway are reached. This stretch of street comprises approximately 2.5 miles of frontage – which is about the same size as the width of mainland Philadelphia, river to river.

Using an architectural analysis, inventory, and history, this section will show how the street is both a historic district and a cultural landscape. Ultimately, applying cultural landscape theory augments the significance of Chestnut Street, while using purely architectural criteria would limit its scope of significance. My final section synthesizes the previous four in a set of recommendations for future ways of applying cultural landscape planning methodology to historic districts.

Strategies for the 40th Street Corridor," 2011, 3, https://issuu.com/pennpraxis/docs/final10_25.

Figure 1. 420 Row, looking northwest. Photo Source: Author.

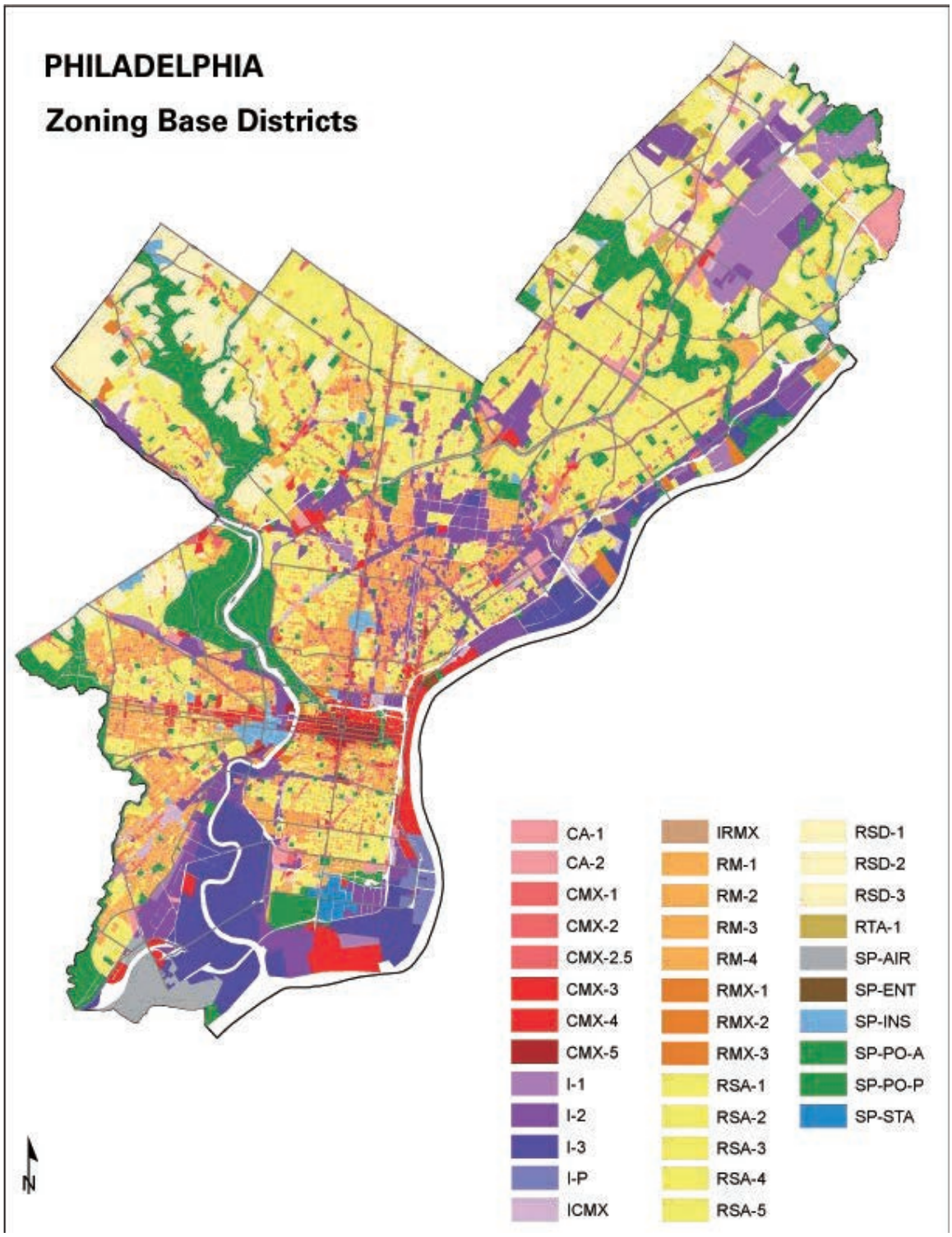

Figure 2 Map of zoned parcels in Philadelphia. Image Source: Laurel Schwab, Harvard University, Graduate School of Design, Community Service Fellowship Program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The architectural fabric of Chestnut Street varies in style and scale from 40th Street to 63rd Street, and includes elite suburban townhouses, block long apartment buildings, two story working-class rowhouses with pressed aluminum bays, car washes, and schools. In arguing for this street as both a historic district and cultural landscape, an interdisciplinary literature review must be established. Since my argument falls within literatures of architectural history, cultural landscape studies, urban history, sociology, ecology, urban planning, and historic preservation, it is important to analyze the literature and bring any variations in definition to the surface before moving forward with my analysis.

Architectural History and Vernacular Studies

The primary means of assessing Chestnut Street's historic significance will be through its architectural fabric. Historically, the study of classical architectural forms, prominent architects, and the buildings of the middle to upper-class once dominated the field of architectural history, and as such, the literature on such buildings in Philadelphia is plentiful.[10] A publication encompassing mostly high-style, architect-designed buildings in

[10] Examples include William Gray, *Philadelphia's Architecture* (Philadelphia: City History Society of Philadelphia, 1915); George B. Tatum, *Penn's Great Town: 250 Years of Philadelphia Architecture Illustrated in Prints and Drawings* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961); Williard S. Detwiller, *Chestnut Hill: An Architectural History* (Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill Historical Society, 1969); George Thomas, Jeffrey Cohen, and Michael Lewis, *Frank Furness: The Complete Works,* rev. ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996); Mark E. Reinberger and Elizabeth McLean, *The Philadelphia Country House: Architecture and Landscape in Colonial America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015). Less academic in nature are architectural guidebooks, such as John Gallery's *Philadelphia Architecture: A Guide to the City*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2016), which highlight, in the publisher's words, "the city's most architecturally significant buildings."

Philadelphia is Richard Webster's *Philadelphia Preserved: Catalog of the Historic American Buildings Survey* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), a listing of all those buildings in the city that have been documented through the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) as of 1976. While some vernacular building types appear in this survey, its content is bent towards those monumental or extraordinary types.

The Philadelphia rowhouse, arguably the most common building type in the city, receives some academic attention, but the literature is by no means comprehensive. William Murtagh provides an overview of the earliest dwellings built by the English in his 1957 publication, giving rise to the terms "London house," "City house," "Bandbox house," and others.[11] In "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," Roger Miller and Joseph Siry expand upon later types but remark that "The unified architectural effect of the street corresponds to the extraordinary sameness of the families who moved in during the 1860s," perhaps implying that residential status along a street was important in West Philadelphia this early on.[12] In the case of Chestnut Street, the subject of a case study later in this thesis, most of the rowhouses built west of 40th Street were constructed between 1900 and 1930, a time period rarely explored by architectural historians, let alone historians of urban vernacular architecture.

Many contemporary architectural historians and historic preservation scholars see the traditional architectural historical approach as outdated – Richard Longstreth, for

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[11] William John Murtagh, "The Philadelphia Row House," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 16, no. 4 (1957): 8–13, doi:10.2307/987872.

[12] Roger Miller and Joseph Siry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 47, no. 2 (April 1980): 120.

instance, calls this phenomenon a "style fetish."[13] Similarly, Thomas Carter and Elizabeth Cromley assert that vernacular architecture studies counter the "hierarchies of aesthetic merit" of early architectural historians.[14] Indeed, this critique is due in part due to the acceptance of vernacular architecture studies as a legitimate field within architectural history discourse.

The academic study of American vernacular architecture began more than 100 years ago. Dell Upton defines vernacular architecture as "mass produced, middle-class housing such as one might find in any nineteenth- or twentieth-century speculative development, industrial buildings, the architecture of fast-food and other commercial franchises—virtually anything not obviously the product of an upper-class, avant-garde, aesthetic movement."[15] Upton's article "Outside the Academy" provides an excellent overview of the evolution of vernacular architecture studies.[16] Initially, it fell into the realm of material culture, geography, and folklore studies, with these disciplines never fully embracing the topic as their own. Geographers such as Fred Kniffen (the creator of the "windshield survey" method used heavily today for historic preservation work) later observed that "There was no thought that the study of folk houses should be come the exclusive prerogative of geography, though it is

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[13] Richard Longstreth, "Architectural History and the Practice of Historic Preservation in the United States," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58, no. 3 (1999): 328, doi:10.2307/991525.

[14] Thomas Carter and Elizabeth C. Cromley, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes*, 1st ed, Vernacular Architecture Studies (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 3.

[15] Dell Upton, "The Power of Things: Recent Studies in American Vernacular Architecture," *American Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (1983): 262–63.

[16] Dell Upton, "Outside the Academy: A Century of Vernacular Architecture Studies, 1890-1990," *Studies in the History of Art* 35 (1990): 199–213.

true that in the America of the 1930s neither architect nor folklorist had the slightest interest in them."[17] To many in the academy, these buildings became a type of material culture to be examined as a part of folklore studies.

However, folklorist Henry Glassie sees a difference between vernacular buildings and folklore studies. He writes, "We call buildings "vernacular" because they embody values alien to those cherished in the academy. When we called buildings "folk," the implication was that they countered in commonness and tradition the pretense and progress that dominate simple academic schemes."[18] Ultimately, Glassie believes that "The study of vernacular architecture drives toward better historical procedures, ones that focus existentially on action and lead to the construction of a multiplex idea of time…It favors completeness, recognizes diversity, and seeks ways to use buildings as evidence in order to tell better version of the human story."[19] Glassie's approach is rarely used within historic districts, despite being used to argue for the significance of individual resources.

Similar to the emphasis of high-style architecture in the literature of early architectural historians, the country's earliest historic districts were, as David Hamer remarks, seen as distinct "for the quality and integrity of their architectural legacies and their associations with major episodes and significant people in American history," not for everyday American experiences or middle-class life.[20] This is true to a certain extent in

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[17] Fred Kniffen, "The Study of Folk Architecture: Geographical Perspectives," in *Cultural Diffusion and Landscapes: Selections by Fred B. Kniffen*, ed. H. Jesse Walker and Randall A. Detro, vol. 27, Geoscience and Man (Baton Rouge: Department of Geography & Anthropology, Lousiana State University, 1990), 37.

[18] Henry Glassie, *Material Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 230.

[19] Ibid., 231.

[20] D. A. Hamer, *History in Urban Places: The Historic Districts of the United States*, Urban Life and

Philadelphia: painter Charles Willson Peale's Belfield estate, and Germantown Avenue, are among some of the earliest historic districts to be added to the National Register of Historic Places. However, this initial push also included Elfreth's Alley, whose nomination states "none of these little houses were the dwellings of wealthy merchants or prominent members of society."[21] And yet, today these "vernacular" dwellings are part of the Philadelphia tourist circuit and can sell for upwards of $800,000.[22] Indeed, urban historian Dolores Hayden has identified this paradox in authenticity, writing that "the recent history of a district and indeed all other phases of it are ignored and it is taken back as far as possible to a pristine moment in time with all traces of intervening occupation removed."[23]

According to Hayden, Elfreth's Alley is an example of what she terms "the power of place." She observes that typically, "The power of place – the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens' public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory – remains untapped for most working people's neighborhoods in most American cities."[24] Often, these ordinary landscapes do not meet the aesthetic standards set forth by traditional architectural history discourse, which highlights buildings intended for the wealthy or designed by architects. This is the very concept that I have set out to prove.

Urban Landscape Series (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 8.

[21] Patricia Heintzelman, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Elfreth's Alley Historic District," January 29, 1975.

[22] Lauren Mennen, "Third Elfreth's Alley Home Hits the Market in One Month," *Philly.com*, July 9, 2014, http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/philadelphia-real-estate/Third-Elfreths-Alley-home-hits-the-market-in-one-month.html.

[23] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 33.

[24] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995), 9.

Cultural Landscapes

Around the time that vernacular architecture studies became studied by various fields, cultural landscape studies emerged as its own discipline. In 1925, Carl Sauer famously postulated, "Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result" (**Figure 3**). Can a street be a landscape? John Brinkerhoff Jackson would say yes, as he explores the etymology of the word in *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*.[25] So would Peirce Lewis, who remarks that "When geographers talk about the term *landscape*, they are not usually talking about mountains or rivers or forests, but instead about *human* landscape – the total accumulation of things that human beings have built for themselves to make the world habitable and agreeable, roughly equivalent to what folklorists and anthropologists call "material culture.""[26]

Paul Groth's writing on landscape alludes to historic district significance as he states "landscapes reveal the effects of individuals and local subcultures as well as national, dominant cultural values."[27] Indeed, Jackson suggests places like Philadelphia when assessing these man-made values, mentioning "the grid system is, in fact, one of the most ambitious

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[25] John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984).

[26] Peirce Lewis, "Taking Down the Velvet Rope: Cultural Geography and the Human Landscape," in *Past Meets Present: Essays about Historic Interpretation and Public Audiences*, ed. Jo Blatti and New York Council for the Humanities (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 23.

[27] Paul Erling Groth, "Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Paul Erling Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 7.

schemes in history for the orderly creation of landscapes."[28] From Groth alone, the value of combining historic district and cultural landscape theory along Chestnut Street – in the form of both the street itself and the buildings along it – is understood. Groth also links cultural landscapes to vernacular architecture, in writing that "Cultural landscape studies focus most on the history of how people have used *everyday space* – buildings, rooms, streets, fields, or yards – to establish their identity, articulate their social relations, and derive cultural meaning."[29] His student, Fred Kniffen, wrote that "the landscape is not a plastic mode, but rather is a living, moving, changing scene."[30] This statement immediately brings to live the energy of a street, which embodies transience and movement along the actual road but a sense of permanence of the buildings that front it.

The *urban cultural landscape* is a term that has surfaced as the realm of cultural landscape studies expanded beyond the relationships between man-made elements and natural settings. If a city, as a man-made intervention on land, can be considered a cultural landscape, then an urban cultural landscape would be an apt term to both describe and differentiate it from more rural human settlements. Hayden further argues for the significance of urban cultural landscapes as part of a broader vernacular tradition, suggesting that "Restoring significant shared meanings for many neglected urban places first involves claiming the entire urban cultural landscape as an important part of American history, not

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[28] John Brinckerhoff Jackson, "By Way of Conclusion: How to Study the Landscape," in *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America*, ed. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), 310.

[29] Groth, "Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study," 1.

[30] Kniffen, "The Study of Folk Architecture: Geographical Perspectives," 39.

just its architectural monuments."[31] What urban cultural landscapes also imply is their layeredness; eventually, over time, man is not building on top of nature but on top of the city itself – the surface itself is urban, and not natural.

Geography, Urban Planning, and Sociology

Looking at a street as a singular significant element complements but does not completely align with the writings of urban planner Kevin Lynch. In his seminal work, *The Image of the City*, Lynch identifies paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks as interrelated elements of the city's form: "Districts are structured with nodes, defined by edges, penetrated by paths, and sprinkled with landmarks" (**Figure 4**).[32] His writing, however, makes it unclear if these elements are mutually exclusive, especially in differentiating paths and districts from each other – can a path, for instance, also be a district? Features of paths, for example, may include a "concentration of special use or activity" or contain "special façade characteristics." By contrast (or lack thereof), Lynch describes district features as, "thematic continuities which may consist of an endless variety of components: texture, space, form, detail, symbol, building type, use activity, inhabitants, degree of maintenance, topography."[33] However, many of these characteristics can and do fall along paths, and Lynch calls continuity along a path "an obvious functional necessity."

Similar language is found in *Landscape Ecology*, by Richard T. Forman and Michael

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[31] Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 11.

[32] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, Publication of the Joint Center for Urban Studies (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), 48.

[33] Ibid., 67.

Godron. While their terms apply to the context of natural landscapes, "patches," "corridors," and "matrices" could be seen as entities parallel to neighborhoods or districts, streets, and cities. Their argument that "nearly all landscapes are both divided and at the same time tied together by corridors" ties well into the idea that streets themselves, as a type of corridor, are significant and are components of a broader landscape.[34]

In ecology, transects are a linear measuring tool to record the occurrence of different plant and life species across a section of land. Early twentieth century urban planner Patrick Geddes adapted this methodology, termed the "valley section," to describe habitats occupied and changed by people. This methodology has in turn been modified by Andrés Duany, who as part of his New Urbanism model explores the rural-to-urban transect and created the idea of "transect planning." Duany writes that "the transect incorporates the fundamental ecological principle that within a specified area there exists an interrelatedness – a function linkage – between organisms and their physical environment (**Figures 5, 6**). The transect uses a similar principle by stressing the importance of connecting the elements of urbanism – building, lot, street, use – to their physical environment."[35] By dividing land use types into six zones: Rural Preserve (T1), Rural Reserves (T2), Sub-Urban (T3), General Urban (T4), Urban Center (T5), and Urban Core (T6), Duany and his colleagues intend to preserve the integrity of an area's context and, therefore, its land use. [36] Indeed, Duany proposes that

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[34] Richard T. T. Forman and Michel Godron, *Landscape Ecology* (New York: Wiley, 1986), 123.

[35] Andrés Duany and Emily Talen, "Transect Planning.," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 68, no. 3 (2002): 250.

[36] Andres Duany and Emily Talen, "Making the Good Easy: The Smart Code Alternative," *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 29, no. 4 (2001): 1454.

"human habitats are successful when they exhibit a variety of elements that cohere"[37] – an idea not dissimilar to certain commercial or neighborhood historic districts that contain different, yet harmonious, types of architecture within a bounded area. To a certain extent, this type of fluctuation in land use can be seen on Chestnut Street, not just in architectural style among the street's varied rowhouses, but also in various institutional and commercial buildings.

Within writing about historic districts, Hamer also identifies a type of historic district called a fragment: once part of an intact, larger district, urban renewal destroyed the majority of the historic landscape.[38] He explains, "The value that is placed on many historic districts is that they are examples of once-widespread urban phenomena that have almost disappeared."[39] The occurrences of this phenomenon in Philadelphia are too many to count, and the observation of the this discrepancy in cities should be a call to action in evaluating strategies for how to properly recognize and protect these vernacular landscapes.

In her work, Hayden also ties in the concept of landscapes to the human experience, arguing that their physical presence helps form memories and identity – "Urban landscapes are storehouses for these social memories, because natural features such as hills or harbors, as well as streets, buildings, and patterns of settlement, frame the lives of many people and often outlast many lifetimes."[40] Philadelphia, with its plethora of religious buildings, abandoned factories, and low-rise dwellings, remains vulnerable to demolition by developers

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[37] Duany and Talen, "Transect Planning.," 250.

[38] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 16.

[39] Ibid., 17.

[40] Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 9.

interested in pursuing a different use for the site without recognizing its important history as part of the city's social and physical development.

The sociologist Louis Wirth is most notable for his observations of urban daily life, and in particular, the juxtaposition of diverse and homogenous groups in dense urban environments. In his essay "Urbanism as a Way of Life," he observes that

> Diverse population elements inhabiting a compact settlement thus tend to become segregated from one another in the degree in which their requirements and modes of life are incompatible with one another and in the measure in which they are antagonistic to one another. Similarly, persons of homogeneous status and needs unwittingly drift into, consciously select, or are forced by circumstances into, the same area. The different parts of the city thus acquire specialized functions. The city consequently tends to resemble a mosaic of social worlds in which the transition from one to the other is abrupt.[41]

As one of the most important readings in urban sociology, "Urbanism as a Way of Life" provides an explanation for the ways in which older cities developed and housed its citizens. However, Wirth's methodology was only observatory and ethnographic, and he did not conduct any research into broader histories of the neighborhoods. But, does the "mosaic of social worlds" go beyond the people themselves? Could these settlement patterns be attributed to broader issues in urban development and expansion, such as speculation and the choices of urban speculators, the location of the workplace, transportation, or even topography? Ultimately, Wirth's studies show that settlement dynamics transcend the history of urban development; it is the later work of urban historians (whose works I listed earlier) that bring better-founded perspectives as to the reasons that these "mosaics" occur.

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[41] Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (July 1938): 15.

Space and Place in Philadelphia

Similar to the changes in the field of architectural history, there arose a desire among urban historians to research the lives of working-class people. This arose from a larger movement, known as "History from the Bottom Up." One of its proponents, Staughton Lynd, explains that "History from below is not, or should not be, mere description of hitherto invisible poor and oppressed people: it should challenge mainstream versions of the past."[42] The "Bottom Up" idea in part led to Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession*, which examines the origins of objectivity in the history field, and how it has changed over time.[43]

Stuart Blumin includes Philadelphia social history heavily in his 1989 work *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900*. Specific works on Philadelphia's social groups include *The Lower Sort: Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800*, by Billy Smith, and *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family and Group Experience in the Nineteenth Century,* a collection of interdisciplinary essays that culminated a twelve year research project undertaken by the Philadelphia Social History Project. Within this work, there is a particular emphasis on quantitative methodologies and pre-GIS spatial analysis, a growing sub-discipline in history at the time.[44] Other notable survey texts about Philadelphia history include *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of its Growth* by Sam Bass Warner

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[42] Staughton Lynd, *Doing History from the Bottom up: On E. P. Thompson, Howard Zinn, and Rebuilding the Labor Movement from below* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2014).

[43] Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*, Ideas in Context (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[44] For more quantitative historical analyses, see Janet Rothenberg Pack, "Urban Spatial Transformation: Philadelphia, 1850 to 1880, Heterogeneity to Homogeneity?," *Social Science History* 8, no. 4 (Autumn 1984): 425–54.

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968) and *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigly (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982). Again, however, academic studies of early twentieth century urban life is deficient.

Given the literature on streets and corridors as living elements of a cultural landscape, and their potential to influence social dynamics and settlement in the city, there is something to be said about the significance of east-west corridors in Philadelphia, as both a type of "path" or "corridor" in the vocabularies of Lynch and Forman and Godron, respectively, as an element of public and social collective memory as argued by Hayden, or as a component of a Wirthian mosaic of social worlds. Groth adds to this dialogue, explaining

> William Penn's plan for the city of Philadelphia left a physical legacy as the city expanded, both in terms of the streets themselves and the types of building that occurred within each block. The street grid is understood as an integral part of the city's development, whether for better or for worse.[45]

Where buildings were constructed by the mid-nineteenth century (particularly in newly-platted areas) followed a more nuanced pattern than late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century expansion, with dwellings placed on east-west streets, and commercial lining north-south corridors or filling in the emerging business district in the older part of town.[46]

The literature discerns a further segregation between social and economic classes throughout this grid-space (complementing the sociological ideas coined by Wirth), but discusses these trends more concretely in terms of the streets themselves. Stuart Blumin

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[45] See Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 50–53.

[46] There are exceptions to this claim. Spring Garden Street, for example, was a mix of commercial and residential development. Blumin adds that "The wider east-west streets (Mt. Vernon, Green and Spring Garden) were, as might be expected, almost uniformly nonmanual. It is interesting that this was true of Spring Garden Street, which was the busiest (but also the most fashionable) commercial street in this section of the city" (175).

found that "It is on the east-west streets and the alleys that we find evidence of class segregation..." while "true diversity" occurred on north-south corridors. [47] Roger Miller and Joseph Siry supplement this claim in their research in Philadelphia: "A typical building scheme of the 1840s and 50s was the simultaneous construction of a magnificent townhouse on one of the city's primary east-west streets and provision of worker rows in the mews, fronting on alleys cut through the interior of the block."[48] Alan Burstein remarks on city services which followed the patterns of westward residential expansion, "Whatever public transportation existed followed the regular rectangular grid of the city; the early expansion of the affluent population to the west reflected the fact that the best transportation to the emerging central business district was along the east-west axis."[49] Hamer found that "The most famous elite [historic] districts were probably those located along "grand avenues,"" which hopefully gives credence to the claim that streets such as Chestnut Street can and should be considered as a historic district.

David Hamer observes, "Many historic districts are what survives of the historic core, which largely constituted the walking city, whose limits were fixed to a substantial degree by the walking distances between people's homes and the locations of places of

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[47] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 69.

[48] Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900*, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modern History (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 171–73, 177; Miller and Siry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," 143.

[49] Alan N. Burstein, "Immigrants and Residential Mobility: The Irish and Germans in Philadelphia, 1850-1880," in *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the Nineteenth/Century: Essays toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City*, ed. Theodore Hershberg and Philadelphia Social History Project (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 177.

work."[50] However, Chestnut Street in West Philadelphia was the opposite of this phenomenon – by the early twentieth century, people who lived far away from the commercial core either took public transportation or drove to work. Chestnut Street runs one block parallel to the Market-Frankford Line, yet is wide enough to accommodate street parking, and could easily accommodate both these groups.

West Philadelphia's portion of Chestnut Street in represents some of the last building campaigns to be undertaken in West Philadelphia – vacant blocks along Chestnut Street appear on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps as late as 1923. There has yet to be a full analysis of the architectural, socioeconomic, and cultural histories that contributed to this later period of development – from the early twentieth century through World War II. The statement of significance I will produce later on for Chestnut Street will attempt to bridge this gap and will suggest possible avenues for new scholarship.

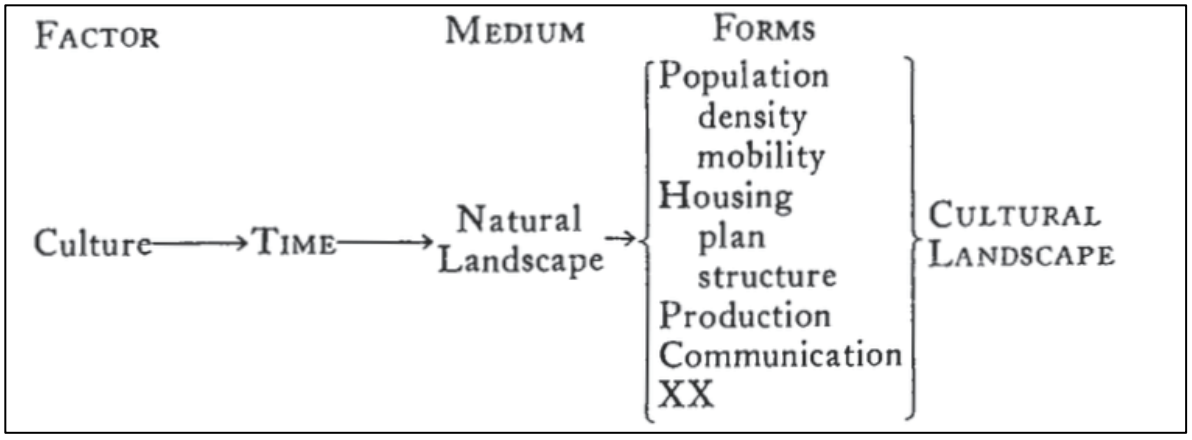

Figure 3. Flow diagram of the cultural landscape Image Source: Carl Sauer, 1925.

[50] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 79.

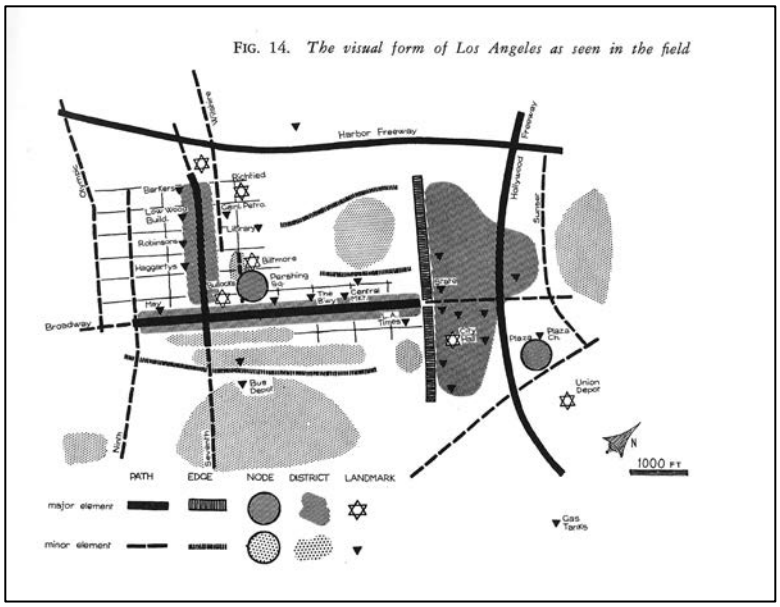

Figure 4. Mental map of Los Angeles with the 5 elements of city form. Image Source: Kevin Lynch, 1960

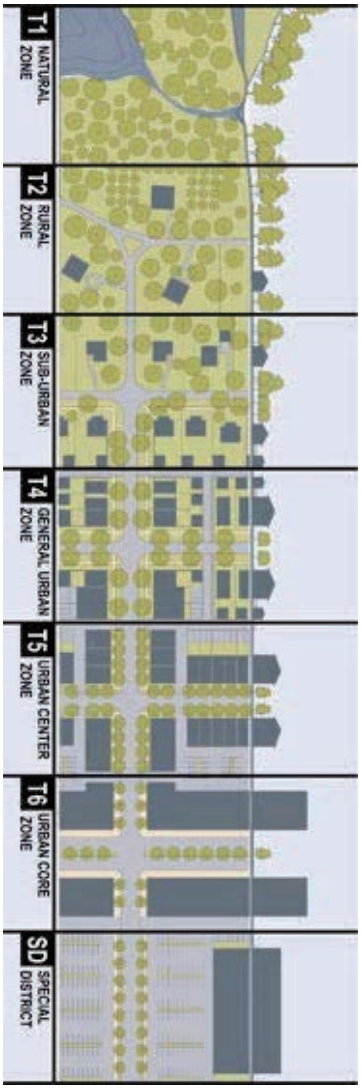

Figure 5 Rural-to-urban transect, sectional view **Figure 6** Rural to urban transect, plan view
Photos Source: "The Urban Transect | DPZ Initiatives,"
http://www.dpz.com/Initiatives/Transect.

DISCREPANCIES IN HISTORIC RESOURCE LANGUAGE AND METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter helped to disambiguate ways that space and landscape categories are understood and defined in the academy. However, a review of the literature also showed that much of this scholarship is disregarded in implementing historic preservation policy and language, as the National Park Service (NPS) has created their own set of classifications and guidelines which do not necessarily apply an existing academic framework. NPS's definitions for five historic categories – buildings, structures, sites, districts, and objects – are clearly defined but leave more wiggle room for interpretation than is to be expected. Their clearness is important, for as the national standard, these definitions are often taken verbatim by local jurisdictions for their own zoning, planning, or preservation codes (including Philadelphia). However, the language presented by NPS deviates from vernacular language and thus requires somewhat of a technical background to understand and apply. In particular, the difference between building(s), districts, and sites, is quite nuanced and requires technical knowledge on the part of the nominator in order to correctly categorize the nominated resource.

Historic designation data in Philadelphia show that the language of local and national historic register definitions, as well as national definitions of cultural landscapes, create opportunities for the miscategorization, or for multiple interpretations, of historic resource categories. In particular, the rowhouse, Philadelphia's most varied vernacular building type, is not interpreted universally on either the national or local level. Secondly, while the National Register provides clear definitions for how to designate resources of various types and scales, Philadelphia does not apply this same criteria at the local level, and if anything, their

language calls for a more nuanced criteria of significance in historic districts. This creates an unclear relationship between National Register designation and local register protection.

Definitions

In the National Register Bulletin, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, historic districts are defined as possessing "a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development."[51] However, many examples of what are considered "districts" would not be defined as such in everyday vernacular speech. For example, an old factory complex, which many would identify in common speech as "an industrial site," would technically be considered a historic district in the National Register. Meanwhile, a National Register "site" is defined as "the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure."[52] In theory, a former industrial complex could have archaeological value, and a historic farm site is the location of historic occupation and activity. However, the terminology set forth according to the official definition is intended for places like building ruins, archaeological sites, or battlefields. A third discrepancy is that of "building(s)" versus "district": since it is possible to nominate multiple buildings under

[51] Patrick Andrus, "National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" (National Park Service, revised 1991, 1995, 1997; revised for Internet 1995, 2001, 2002 1990), 5, https://www.nps.gov/NR/PUBLICATIONS/bulletins/nrb15/.

[52] Ibid.

the building category in a single National Register application, what would be the difference between this and a historic district? The answer is unclear and will be explored later on in this chapter, as this is the very question that plagues the legitimacy of the 420 Row as a historic district in Philadelphia.

Cultural landscapes are a different kind of historic place whose classification does not fall under the jurisdiction of the National Register of Historic Places. NPS defines cultural landscapes as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values."[53] NPS identifies four types of cultural landscapes: historic sites (battlefields, president's house properties), historic designed landscapes (parks, campuses, estates), historic vernacular landscapes (rural villages, industrial complexes, agricultural landscapes), and ethnographic landscapes (plant communities, animals, subsistence, ceremonial grounds are components).[54] Cities such as Philadelphia inherently relied on natural features and topography in their development; Philadelphia began as a gridded city nestled between two rivers, and areas such as Germantown became desirable for country estates due to their higher ground. The Cultural Landscape Foundation identifies 60 cultural landscapes in the city of Philadelphia, several of which are also historic districts (**Table 5**).

As with many other cities, Philadelphia adapts most of the NPS language into their preservation ordinance. In this ordinance, historic districts are defined as "A geographically

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[53] https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/36-cultural-landscapes.htm

[54] See Charles A. Birnbaum, *Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes* (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1994).

definable area possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of buildings, structures, sites, or objects united by **past events**, plan, or physical development. **A district may comprise an individual site or individual elements separated geographically but linked by association, plan, design, or history**" (in bold are what deviates from NPS definition of a district). Clearly, this definition intends to combine NPS's definitions and guidelines for evaluating historic districts into a single description. The city's definition of "site" is identical to that created by NPS.

Given the discrepancies in how nominators could define historic resources, it is important to take a look at Philadelphia's national and local historic districts to see how well the definitions set forth by NPS and Philadelphia's Historic Preservation Ordinance are applied by the public and/or federal employees. At the national level, the data show that there are indeed inconsistencies, especially in how groups of rowhouses – one of Philadelphia's most common building types – are nominated. While Philadelphia's local ordinance applies much of the same language as NPS, the application of this language is inconsistent with national designation trends.

Historic Resource Data for Philadelphia

The Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia conducted a study on Philadelphia's local and national historic districts in 2008; while thorough and well-researched, it was necessary to update the data for several reasons. First, more historic districts have been designated, both to the local and national registers, since the publishing of the report. Second, the publicly available data on National Register listings is available from two sources – NPS and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC

is the Commonwealth's State Historic Preservation Office), and there are both discrepancies and human error in the inputting of this data. NPS, for example, does not list in their downloadable National Register data whether or not a listing is a historic district, unless the name of the resource explicitly says so. Although the PHMC database of National Register properties, called CRGIS (Cultural Resources Geographic Information System), does note whether or not a resource is a building, district, site, object, or structure, some resources are incorrectly classified as historic districts while other historic districts are incorrectly classified as buildings or sites. (This also led to oversights of older historic districts, and incorrect identifications of historic districts more generally, in the Preservation Alliance's report.) By manually checking the National Register forms against the CRGIS classification, I was able to determine whether or not a particular resource was correctly or incorrectly labeled as a historic district. Ultimately, verifying this data revealed inconsistent patterns in National Register designations of historic streets and historic buildings along streets.

Table 1 is a complete list of National Register Historic Districts in Philadelphia. In addition to listing the number of contributing and non-contributing resources within each district, I created a column titled "district type" which further classifies these districts into categories to provide a more nuanced understanding of what types of resources are within each (going back to the point of vernacular language made earlier). The categories I created are enclave, landscape, neighborhood, street, and site, and take into account the history of the building types and use, setting, and natural features within the district. While most fall into one type, others may be a combination of two; enclave/landscape, for example, indicates a residential development isolated from its surroundings physically, and differs not just in building type and layout but also places an emphasis on the natural features that surround it. Neighborhood/Street are residential designations larger than the single block

level and on average include 3-4 blocks of a neighborhood.

Findings

It appears there is somewhat of a golden number which automatically categorizes a group of buildings as a National Register Historic District. The Philadelphia rowhouse, arguably the city's oldest and most adapted residential type, adds an additional dimension to this ratio. National Register precedent does show that historic districts are a matter of scale: when "unified" or "linked" buildings cover a small portion of a street, a historic district would **not** be the appropriate classification. For Philadelphia, this means that groupings of anywhere from 4-20 rowhouses on a single street are typically designated as buildings under a single National Register nomination, while groupings of rowhouses on multiple streets – in some cases bounded by neighborhood lines – are nominated as a historic district. At the local level, there are no criteria, written or unwritten, for the size and scale of historic districts. Ultimately, designations such as the 420 Row as a local historic district are not done based upon the established methodologies for National Register nominations.

There are 17 designations to the National Register that are nominated as buildings, but should be historic districts based on the NPS definition; these can be found in **Table 2**. Table 2 is comprised of buildings whose settings could very well be deemed a "site" or complex: this list includes Boat House Row; the Naval Asylum; industrial sites such as mills; religious sites; and public housing complexes and garden apartments. Each of these linkage of buildings are "unified by physical development and plan," but for whatever reason were nominated as buildings instead.

Of the National Register Historic District listings in Philadelphia, 18 are along a

single street. Of these, four have fewer than 20 resources while the remaining 14 have more than 20. The two largest street-long historic districts, the Colonial Germantown Historic District (Germantown Avenue) and the Girard Avenue Historic District, have over 500 and 100 resources within them, respectively. **Table 3**, however, is comprised of nine additional National Register listings– comprised of just rowhouses along a single street – that are nominated in the building(s) category, and not as historic districts. These historic building groups include anywhere from 3-26 resources within each nomination.

The nine building(s) nominations in Table 3, and the four small, street-long National Register historic districts in Table 1, are at the essence of the NPS language interpretation issue when it comes to rowhouse designation. A striking example of this discrepancy is between Portico Row and William Strickland Row. Despite being built approximately fifteen years apart, located one block apart from each other, and added to the National Register of Historic Places in the same year, William Strickland Row (**Figure 7**), at 5 buildings large, was nominated as a historic district while T. U. Walter's Portico Row (**Figure 8**) was listed as multiple (16) buildings. Which approach was correct? Bizarrely, it is the historic resource with fewer buildings that was nominated as a building while the one with more was given the building(s) classification. But, to base this decision on numbers is a valid one. Since there are more examples of rowhouse developments along a single street nominated as buildings instead of districts, this seems to be the prudent guideline to follow.

Based on data in **Table 4**, which lists Philadelphia's local historic districts, the largest street-long historic district is Diamond Street, whose inventory form boasts 222 contributing structures.[55] However, the remaining street length local historic districts range in size from 8-

[55] Since portions of the Diamond Street Historic District were demolished under Mayor

86 resources. For comparison's sake, Portico Row and William Strickland Row are protected on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Buildings, but as individual buildings – Portico Row was added in 1958 while William Strickland Row was added in 1961. There has clearly not been a precedent for street-long historic district designations for small groups of rowhouses. This is due to two reasons: the first is that local historic districts were not part of the city's historic preservation infrastructure until 1986, and the second is because in following National Register precedent, small portions of rowhouse development are typically nominated as buildings. This practice is in contrast to recent successful nominations of one block areas such as the 420 Row as districts, and ultimately suggests that the City of Philadelphia is incorrectly applying resource definitions when such small collections of buildings are nominated as districts.

Additional language in Philadelphia's Historic Preservation Ordinance raises questions about the historic district designation process. While the National Register of Historic Places has a binary classification system for historic district resources – either as contributing or noncontributing to the integrity of the district, the City of Philadelphia uses three categories for inventorying resources in a historic district – significant, contributing, and non-contributing. As of the writing of this thesis, only one other city – Santa Fe, New Mexico– uses this same three-tiered inventory classification. This underplays the architectural significance of vernacular resources and overplays significance of high style – an issue that will be explored further in the next chapter.

John Street's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, it is necessary to take an updated inventory of how many structures survive.

Cultural Landscapes

Cultural landscape designation provides an additional layer of ambiguity to protecting historic resources, as their planning tools are different from ones for National Register-listed places: NPS issues their own set of bulletins, websites, and classifications to guide in their professional management. In addition, their stewardship is managed by multiple private and public groups. The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TLCF), a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, maintains a database of all cultural landscapes in the United States. Their database includes information such as landscape type, style, and location. Of their Philadelphia listings (**Table 5**), Germantown Avenue (**Figure 9**) is the only street-long historic district in the database. One other historic district, Society Hill, and one other street, Benjamin Franklin Parkway, are listed in the database. While TCLF classifies Germantown Avenue's cultural landscape as a "Designed Landscape" – there is not a landscape type listed for this resource in the database. broader implications of not knowing what to do By contrast, Society Hill is listed as a "Designed Landscape" – but its significance as a cultural landscape, according to TCLF, rests in its urban renewal redesign in the mid-twentieth century by Modernist architects and forward-thinking city planners. The Benjamin Franklin Parkway, too, was pre-planned before being added to the city's street grid and thus warrants its "Designed Landscape" category and "Parkway" type.

This chapter underscored areas where both National Register practice and Philadelphia historic district policy can be clarified. The takeaways are threefold: first, there is an inconsistency between how historic resources are talked about and how they are officially defined by national and municipal agencies; second, based on existing data on historic district size and resource types, I would recommend that neighborhoods and large expanses of street frontage be designated under the district category, while smaller groups of

rowhouses or contiguous structures be nominated as building(s); and third, that the data bodes well for the potential of this thesis' case study site – Chestnut Street in West Philadelphia – to be listed as a national historic district, but less likely as a local one.

As was suggested in my selection of William Strickland Row and Portico Row as examples, there is an argument, too, to be said about building appearance and architectural style in the decision to designate a related group of historic resources as a historic district versus as a group of buildings. The two sets of building types are nearly identical, and yet they were classified differently - and, based on their size, counterintuitively– as buildings and districts. The next chapter will dive into these visual considerations, and in particular highlight the role that vernacular architecture studies and additional NPS standards play in assessing aesthetic and historic value.

Figure 7 "William Strickland Row," surviving buildings, 221-225 S. 9th Street (215 not pictured). Photo Source: Wikimedia Commons

Figure 8 Portico Row. Photo Source: Jeffrey Cohen, Bryn Mawr College, http://www.brynmawr.edu/cities/courses/06-255/dated/dw6c163.jpg

Figure 9 Photo of Germantown Avenue from TCLF's "Germantown Historic District" database entry page. Photo Source: Barrett Doherty (2015), TCLF, https://tclf.org/sites/default/files/styles/scale_600x600/public/thumbnails/image/GermantownHistoricDistrict_08_BarrettDoherty_2015.jpg?itok=WD7dB-3s

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE IN PHILADELPHIA'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS

As explained in the previous chapter, non-vernacular use of language in local and national preservation regulations creates opportunities for the misinterpretation of resource categories, especially when it comes to the size and scale of what is being nominated. However, the ways this language is applied has broader implications than just that of scale. The distribution and size of historic districts in Philadelphia overwhelmingly represent high style architecture enclaves or areas which were once resided in by the middle to upper class. As historic nominations can be written by Historical Commission staff or a common citizen, this distribution reflects a bias in not just the public eye, but also among urban and architectural historians who do this work professionally. As established in the literature review, architectural history is not just about architectural style. David Hamer notes that "Historic Districts are an embodiment of *perceptions* of significance in buildings and landscapes."[56] Indeed, the problem stems from conflating aesthetic value with historic value – when these are two separate but equal considerations in assessing the significance of a place. This chapter will examine this occurrence specifically in Philadelphia.

Consequences of the Privatization and Politicization of Historic Preservation

Similar to definitions of streets and cultural landscapes in academia, the methodology employed by cultural resource professionals at the municipal, state, and federal levels in designating historic districts and streets is not consistent given the language that NPS provides and the liberty with which states and municipalities are given to apply the NPS

[56] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 87.

criteria. A dichotomy is present between the national standards set forth by NPS – deemed to be universal in their application nationwide – and the privatization of the historic preservation field. Ultimately, the privatization of historic preservation work means that interpretation is a matter of money – if it is financially prudent to argue for a building's national significance so it may be eligible for rehabilitation tax credits, a preservation professional can argue to do so for his or her client; similarly, if it is a disincentive to place a property on the national or local register for financial reasons, a resource may not be nominated even if it does meet criteria for designation. It is important, therefore, to take a full inventory of not just existing national and local historic districts, but also where discrepancies lie in interpreting the criteria.

Since the origins of the historic preservation movement in Philadelphia, an emphasis has been placed on architecture that *seems*, rather than is, actually historical. This was not entirely the intent of a local register; Margaret Tinkcom, the first director of the Historical Commission, understood the importance of protecting the city's vernacular buildings, writing in 1971 that "This difficulty in preservation of lower closed buildings could deprive the city of all evidence of where and how its ordinary men and women lived, leaving us with nothing but a lopsided picture of an upper-class environment." [57] However, to a certain extent this lopsidedness – particularly in terms of the distribution of local historic districts – is exactly what has happened in Philadelphia. This is, on the one hand, a result of misguided judgments of value – specifically, the overemphasis on aesthetic value in determining historic significance – and also due to the politicization of historic districts. Even so, the dwellings which she cited as examples in her article – Cuthbert Street and Woodland Terrace –

[57] Margaret Tinkcom, "The Philadelphia Historical Commission: Organization and Procedures," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 36 (Summer 1971): 390–91.

exemplify broader values of age and taste, respectively. Tinckom too believed that in Philadelphia "…any structure that had survived in an urban area for more than 200 years deserved the Commission's imprimatur,"[58] an idea left unconsidered by many preservation opponents, and most recently demonstrated during the designation proceedings of 81-95 Fairmount Avenue – whose 200th anniversary of construction is approaching.

Architectural Styles within Philadelphia's Local Historic Districts

The academy recognizes the importance of differentiating aesthetic from historic value. Richard Longstreth takes issue with the word style, arguing that "Instead of a complex and nuanced construct developed to analyze meaning in artistic expression, "style" is frequently presented in the preservation arena as a fixed thing, assigned a rigid set of characteristics that are drawn from what turns out to be a very small corpus of examples."[59] Furthermore, he believes that style works against vernacular architecture and certain type of historic districts, as "stylistic properties in many cases are not the most important facets of a building and should not provide the primary basis for interpretation. The style fetish also works against a sound understanding of the salient attributes of districts, farmsteads, and other settings that entail a spectrum of landscape features."[60] Ned Kaufman adds that "we do not believe that architectural and historical values are mutually exclusive or in opposition – though we have found that proponents of both have helped to enforce a misleading

[58] Ibid., 386.

[59] Longstreth, "Architectural History and the Practice of Historic Preservation in the United States," 327.

[60] Ibid., 328.

tension between the two."[61]

David Hamer observes that in historic districts, "The emphasis on homogeneity produces a bias in favor of certain types of district."[62] Indeed, architecturally homogenous districts are the most common historic district type in Philadelphia, although not all are historically authentic. The urban renewal and preservation work in the Society Hill Historic District, for example, is mostly a reimagination of a colonial landscape which never existed. In the 1960s and 1970s, this federally blighted neighborhood's nineteenth century fabric was stripped away to create a faux-colonial suburb in the middle of the historic core. (**Figure 10**). The justification of conflating aesthetic and historic value in places like Society Hill is justified by the following statement by historian Elizabeth Collins Cromley: "Historic Preservation's sense of history is not aimed at telling dynamic stories in which urban life is constructing itself, but instead is aimed at a static Past When Things Were Nicer…To present to us a history of the process of urbanization with all its changes, mistakes, and progress is not preservation's aim."[63] A layered history of development, change over time, and urban renewal in Society Hill is not immediately apparent to tourists, who may believe they are within a truly historic neighborhood simply based on the appearance of the buildings around them. While many may notice the Society Hill Towers as an anomaly in an otherwise human-scale landscape, modern infill rowhomes are less obvious due to their use of historically compatible materials. Meanwhile, the historical interpretation of other

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[61] Ned Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 237.

[62] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 79.

[63] Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "Public History and the Historic Preservation District," in *Past Meets Present: Essays about Historic Interpretation and Public Audiences*, ed. Jo Blatti and New York Council for the Humanities (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 32.

"colonial" tourist attractions in Old City, including Franklin Court, the President's House, and Thomas Jefferson's House, lack authenticity to tourists and historians alike, and are deemed too modern.

As suggested in the Society Hill example, an additional bias in the field until recently was a widespread disdain of Philadelphia's late nineteenth century Victorian architecture. Over the past 60 years, monumental structures such as the Jayne Building gave way to Independence Mall, the Mercantile Library to a parking garage, and Frank Furness' portfolio of over 600 buildings in the city of Philadelphia whittled to less than twenty. However, many of Philadelphia's local historic districts comprise of nineteenth century fabric: Spring Garden, Rittenhouse-Fitler, Diamond Street, Park Avenue, and Parkside are examples of speculative neighborhoods from the mid-to-late 1800s.

The above neighborhoods were built as the residences of the wealthy and elite, and, as Cromley observes, "When the district is constituted in landmark law, it is certified as a historically atmosphere space where genteel values are promoted through tasteful architecture."[64] On the other hand, the local register is lacking in historic districts that represent the life of the lower-to-middle classes – likely due to these structures having less historic integrity, and less "style," than their larger counterparts. In fact, the majority, if not all, of Philadelphia's local historic districts meet the criteria for designation under aesthetic considerations. While aesthetic values are historic, they are separate from historic value. Longstreth adds that "Often, physical characteristics – be they of a building, structure, or landscape – cannot be fully understood without careful examination of related economic, political, social, or technical factors. Likewise, the physical world adds a significant

[64] Ibid., 34.

perspective to the understanding of people, events, and the historical patterns of which they are a part."[65] Ned Kaufman suggests a methodology for this type of approach:

> Whereas a typical preservation survey might start by identifying a particular building type or architectural style, then cataloguing and comparing existing examples, a historical site survey typically starts with an understanding of how the community functioned – where people lived and worked, how they interacted socially, educated their children, worshipped, and entertained themselves – and then moves on to a listing of the buildings or places important in the life of the community, and finally to a survey of surviving examples.[66]

Philadelphia ought to consider historic districts that could qualify for protection under criteria for significance that are not based on "architectural style." In cities such as Philadelphia where any historic district designation is an obstacle, potential historic districts with a "lack of style" have even higher hurdles to cross and would raise a number of questions – how would a property owner, for instance, maintain his "historic" property when the building fabric itself is not the essence of, or not significant to, its value?

It is also worth mentioning that the "Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual," published by the city in 2008, provides an overview of different rowhouse types in the city, but the classifications are by no means comprehensive. In addition, the guidebook is more for maintenance than it is for history. In fact, the three types that the publication identifies as "20th Century Rowhouses" do not list any to have been constructed in West Philadelphia (**Figure 11**).[67] For Chestnut Street, its two-story workingman's homes would, to many architectural historians, not qualify as historic not just because they simply don't *look* historic,

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[65] Longstreth, "Architectural History and the Practice of Historic Preservation in the United States," 329.

[66] Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story*, 240.

[67] I consider Eastwick to be in Southwest Philadelphia, not West Philadelphia. Rachel Simmons Schade et al., "Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual" (The City of Philadelphia, 2008), 8.

but because their maintenance over time has stripped or covered much of the building's historic materials (**Figure 12**). This approach, however, ignores the social history of the area, which is quite layered and worthy of academic exploration.

Street Historic Districts

Streets embody both transience and permanence; as corridors of movement, vehicles and people can quickly pass through, but along streets are dwellings, office buildings, stores, churches, and schools that would only disappear if demolished. Contrary to the early north-south expansion of Philadelphia along the Delaware River, the east-west streets ultimately became the primary arteries of movement. Since they are not bound by neighborhood patterns of architectural style, they represent a broader range of architectural history that often correlates with the development of the city and in itself serves as a timeline. Streets therefore make a logical location for a historic district: Hamer alludes to this with his use of the word continuum in discussing urban historic districts: "Within a total city context historic districts can preserve a sense of the architectural and historical continuum of the life of that city, even if one district viewed in isolation may appear to be confined artificially to just one era."[68] Street historic districts inherently have more diverse architecture as these corridors are more vulnerable to change over time as the needs of the corridor change – due to advances in transportation, citywide development, changes in industry, etc. Sam Bass Warner observed, "aside from class segregation there was nothing in the process of late nineteenth century suburban construction that built communities or neighborhoods: it built

[68] Ibid., 26.

streets."[69] Streets symbolize more than just architectural style – their form, and the buildings along it, comprise a total landscape. Cromley adds, "The preservation of buildings and of streetscapes is not a purely architectural issue because visitors will take from those streetscapes impressions about historic life patterns."[70]

The types of streets-long historic districts in Philadelphia can be divided into three types. The first type, a "Main Street," is similar to a Main Street that would be found in a historic commercial downtown: a mix of commercial and residential buildings, with the occasional monumental structure and public park. Main Street Manayunk (local/national), E. Logan Street (local/national) and Germantown Avenue (national) are excellent examples of street-long historic districts. A "speculative street," such as the Diamond Street or Park Avenue local historic districts, displays architecture along a street from one particular building campaign or architect. Finally, an "enclave," such as Greenbelt Knoll, used the street to augment the setting of the district's architecture: in this case, a cul-de-sac creates privacy and exclusivity.

Historic Districts and Integrity

David Hamer defines historic district integrity as having "a high degree of harmony and consistency among the component elements of a district."[71] There are a number of issues that arise in examining not just the integrity of individual properties within a historic district, but also the integrity of the historic district itself. The first, and arguably most

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[69] Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston ; 1870 - 1900*, 2. ed, Harvard Paperbacks 133 (Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), 158.

[70] Cromley, "Public History and the Historic Preservation District," 32.

[71] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 35.

important of these issues, is that the politicization of historic district boundaries can, intentionally or unintentionally, exclude equally significant historic fabric. Jonathan Farnham, the current Executive Director of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, stated in 2010 that "Spruce Hill, as it is imagined, is very large, and not homogenous, not cohesive. So I think one of the proposals we might have for the commission is that the district be broken down into a series of smaller districts that would have tighter, more justifiable boundaries and would encapsulate shorter spans of history."[72] Indeed, this is the exact methodology that was behind the recent designation of the 420 Row, a district which would have otherwise been part of the Spruce Hill nomination.

However, historic district boundaries themselves can lack integrity if they're drawn with political motives in mind – but this is inherently unacademic. Peirce Lewis observed that "[Cultural geographers] reject the idea that certain things and certain areas are somehow more historic than other things or places. They are skeptical of putting boundaries around certain areas and calling them "historic districts" – as if there were somehow a greater quantity of history inside the district than outside it."[73] Due to varying political reasons, the often jagged boundaries of historic districts can intentionally omit surrounding buildings which meet the same criteria for designation, but are excluded. Yet this suggests that the professional exercise of nominating a historic district is not approached with the same academic rigor as geographers and historians might hope it would.

Take the Spring Garden historic district. For both the local and national

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[72] Alan Jaffe, "The Slow Climb to Historic District Status," *PlanPhilly*, accessed May 8, 2017, http://planphilly.com/articles/2010/01/06/slow-climb-historic-district-status.

[73] Lewis, "Taking Down the Velvet Rope: Cultural Geography and the Human Landscape," 24.

nominations, the northern boundary is roughly at the southern edge of Fairmount Avenue, between 15th and 21st Streets. Yet, this boundary omits historic resources that would not only meet the same criteria as those within the historic district, but look identical, too. As seen in **Figures 13 and 14**, rows of three story Italianate homes comprise the 1800 block of Fairmount Avenue, but only those on the south side are protected on either historic register. Perhaps recognizing that there was more historic fabric related to the 1983 Spring Garden Historic District, a successful expansion to the original National Register boundaries was completed in August 2001. However, this continued the exclusion of historic properties north of Fairmount Avenue and primarily focused on the area bounded by the south side of Fairmount Avenue, 15th Street, Mount Vernon Street, and 19th Street. Six months later, the, Fairmount Avenue Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The boundaries of this district lie flush with the Spring Garden Historic District expansion (**Figure 15**). While the National Register may have excluded these properties due to owner opposition, there is no reason why historic properties on the north side of Fairmount Avenue were not included in the initial nomination, or added at a later point.

A second question that arises is, what is the level of integrity of an intact block of homes with many alterations and interventions? Chestnut Street, for instance, contains heavily modified historic fabric. As can be seen in in the survey inventory of Chestnut Street located in Appendix B, many porches that were once open have been enclosed, wooden bay windows have been covered with vinyl, and finials have been removed. Closer to 40th Street, many twins and townhouses have been adapted to accommodate commercial use on the ground floor. More drastic examples include block-long apartment complexes: on the 4500 block, all but one of the four story identical apartment houses has been demolished (**Figure 33**). A third unexplored issue, then, is that of demolished buildings and vacant lots, and how

to interpret those surviving buildings. Opponents of historic designation have argued before that the removal of a building's surrounding context diminishes it significance. Melinda Milligan has argued that

> The utility of the historic fabric argument is widespread for preservation professionals in that it can be invoked when arguing that an area or building should be preserved because it is an "intact" portion of the fabric or because it is a "remnant" of the no longer intact fabric. Additionally, it can be used when referring to large areas such as districts or streetscapes as "swatches" of such fabric or to small areas and individual building as "important features" in the urban fabric.[74]

A catch-22 is present here, especially in speculative historic districts – the more that is demolished, the less integrity the remaining properties have. The less integrity the properties have, the less likely the remaining historic fabric will be protected. The city-conducted demolitions in Strawberry Mansion, and more, recently, Philadelphia Housing Authority demolitions Sharswood, have essentially destroyed any possibility of these neighborhoods being listed on the local register of historic places, despite once being excellent examples of nineteenth century speculative neighborhoods – and in the case of Strawberry Mansion, possessing distinctive rowhouse designs. Future preservation planning must account for neighborhoods like these, and other, intact areas of the city where integrity of materials or setting are diminished, to account for quote-unquote "insensitive" alterations or interventions. Milligan believes that "Historic districts are representative of features of urban development that have allowed for, or have protected, survival and continuity. As the great majority of districts in American towns and cities testify, those features are not at all characteristic of the overall process of urban development."[75] Mostly done in the name of

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[74] Melinda Milligan, "Buildings as History: The Place of Collective Memory in the Study of Historic Preservation," *Symbolic Interaction* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 114.

[75] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 28.

maintenance, the alterations to these dwellings include vinyl siding and enclosed porches. Peirce Lewis recognizes that all components of a landscape – no matter how visually pleasing – are essential to understanding and analyzing it, explaining, "But to interpret cultural landscape, one cannot ignore the parts of it that offend one's aesthetic or moral sensibilities."[76] If we are to rid ourselves of a strictly aesthetic approach in analyzing these rowhouses, it would be possible to argue that these changes add layers to the significance of these homes for working class Philadelphians – and ought to remain.

[76] Lewis, "Taking Down the Velvet Rope: Cultural Geography and the Human Landscape," 24.

Figure 10 352 S. 4th Street (second from left), in Society Hill. The top photo, taken in 1957, shows the condition of the property before urban renewal; the bottom image, from 1962, shows the results of an extensive historic rehabilitation. Annotation added by author. Photos Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission.

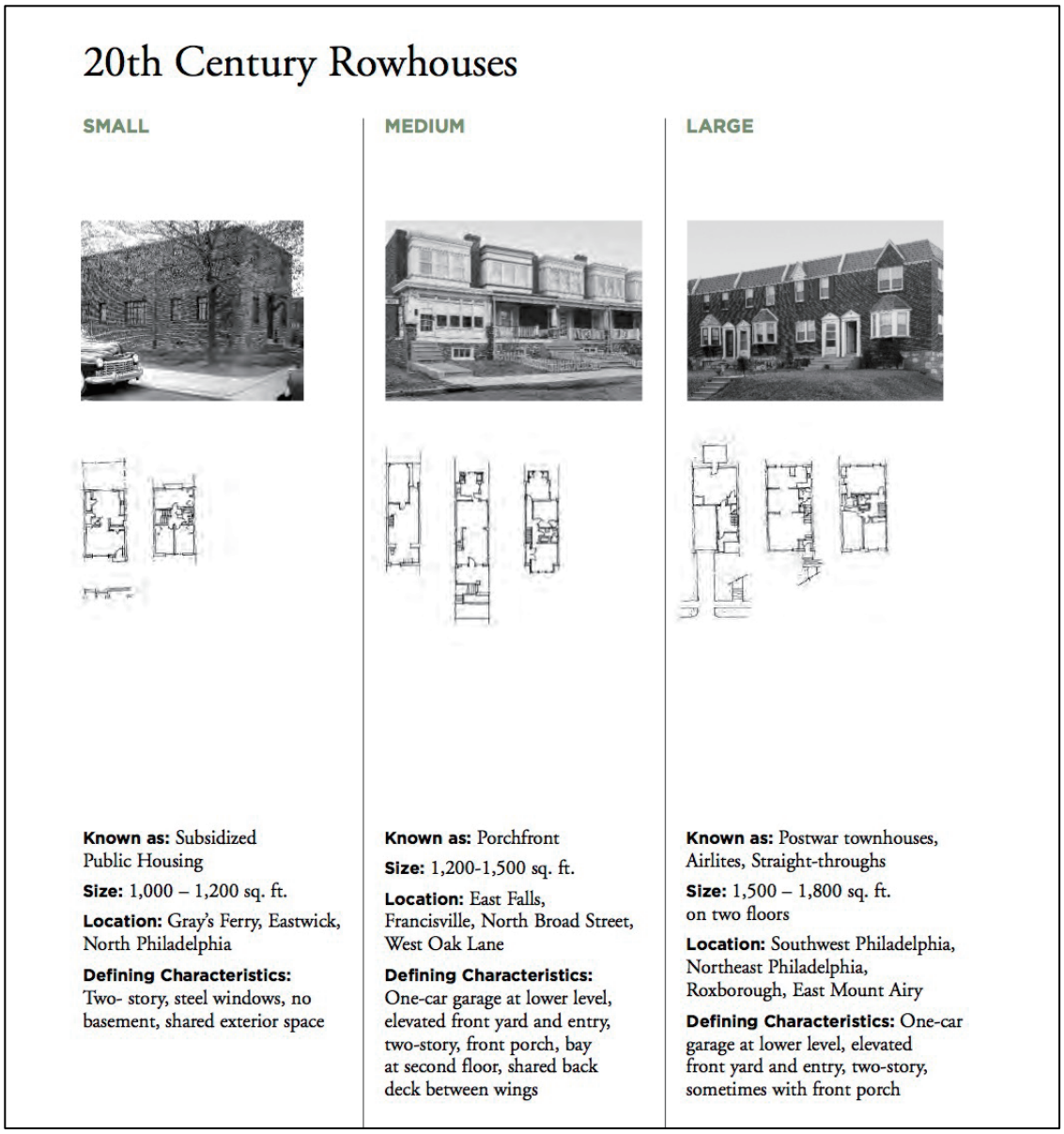

Figure 11 Illustration of typical 20th century rowhouses Source: Rachel Simmons Schade et al., "Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual" (The City of Philadelphia, 2008).

Figure 12 6000 block of Chestnut Street, looking southwest. Photo Source: Author.

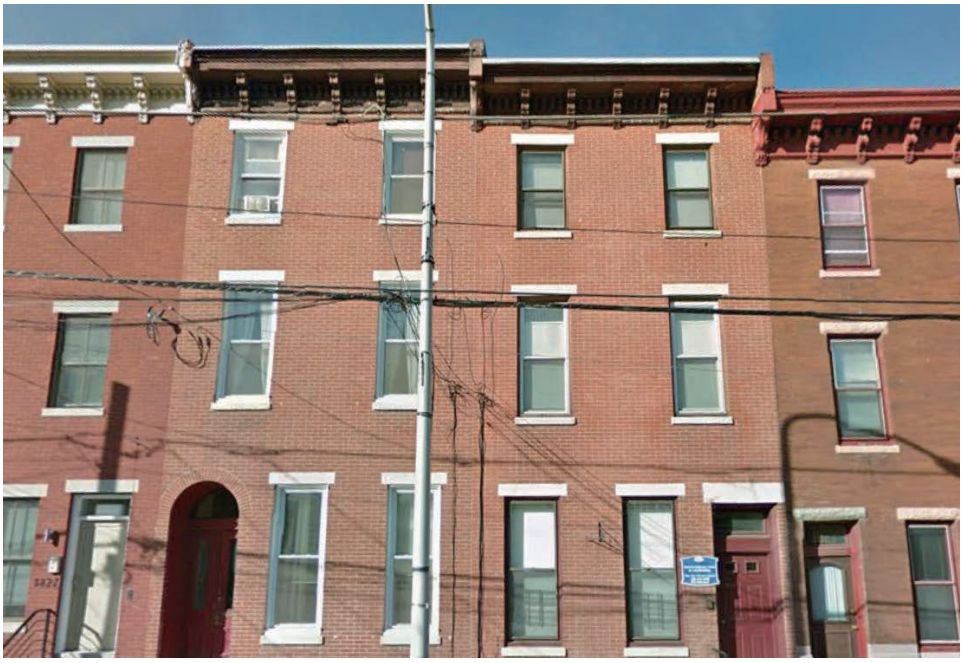

Figure 13 1800 block of Fairmount Avenue, north side. Photo Source: Google Street View.

Figure 14 1800 block of Fairmount Avenue, south side. Photo Source: Google Street View.

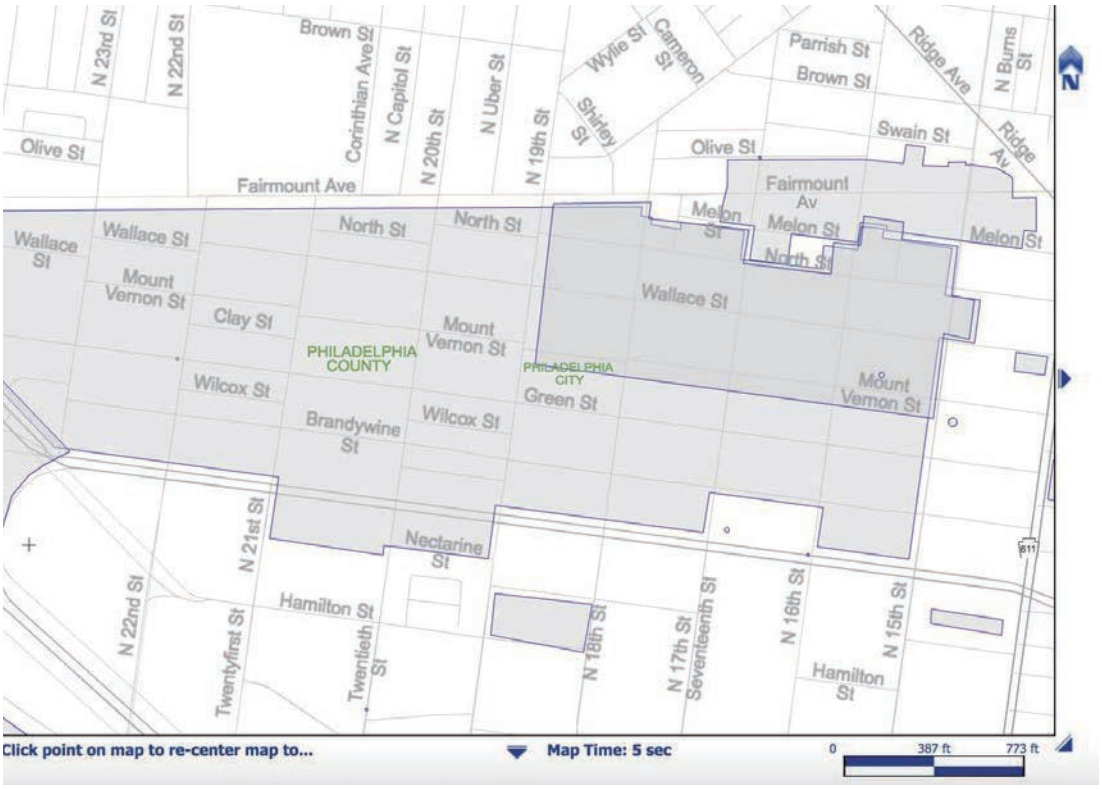

Figure 15 CRGIS map showing juxtaposition of Spring Garden and Fairmount National Register Historic Districts. Image Source: CRGIS, Author.

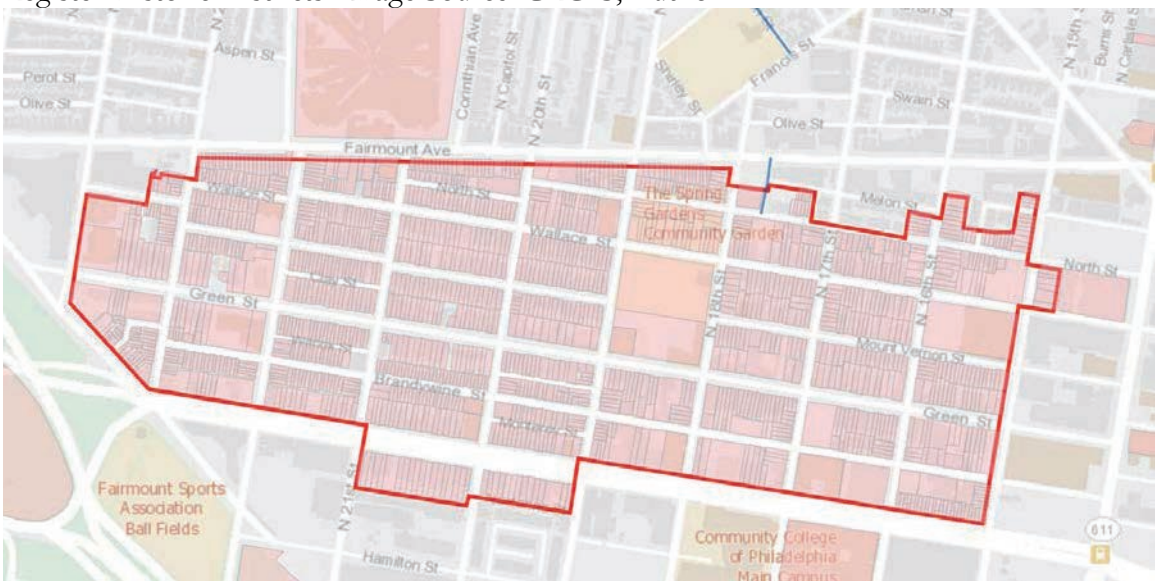

Figure 16 Spring Garden Historic District Map, Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Image Source: City of Philadelphia, PHL Maps, ArcGIS Online.

CASE STUDY: CHESTNUT STREET

Chestnut Street between 40th and 63rd Streets is an ideal location to test historic district and cultural landscape methodologies. Most buildings along Chestnut between 40th Street and 63rd Street are more than 50 years old – in fact, many are nearing or are over 100 years old. Despite this historic fabric eligible for designation and protection, Chestnut Street's listing on local and national historic registers is paltry. Chestnut Street (in West Philadelphia) is only designated in part on the National Register; there are two individual National Register designations on the 5400 Block, but they comprise the same property (Oliver Wendell Holmes School), and the West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb Historic District only covers the area along Chestnut Street between 40th Street and 45th Street. On the local historic register, there are no individual or district designations on Chestnut Street west of 41st Street. Given the rate at which universities like Penn and Drexel are expanding, there is an urgent need for an architectural survey and evaluation of significance of these unprotected properties. National Register designations could curtail demolition and encourage the rehabilitation of these historic structures using federal tax incentives and the 10-year property tax abatement.

The results of a survey and architectural inventory of historic properties conducted on 26 February 2017 can be found in Appendix B. As shown a map created by the author in Appendix C, the survey revealed that every block on Chestnut Street between 40th Street and 63rd Street contains historically significant architectural fabric. Given that historic districts are defined as an area "possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of buildings…united by…physical development," this area of Chestnut Street is clearly worthy

of district designation. Chestnut Street is significant as a transect of West Philadelphia's urban cultural landscape. In particular, this transect includes a variety of commercial architecture, working-class housing, middle-class speculative townhouses, schools, utilities and churches. Socially, the district was home to a number of socioeconomic groups who came to settle in West Philadelphia in the early twentieth century.

In this chapter, I will outline the historical and architectural significance of this corridor, placing an emphasis on its residential architecture and transit-oriented businesses. I will then evaluate Chestnut Street's integrity through the seven aspects recognized by NPS: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In particular, the qualities of integrity that best apply to assessing the current conditions of Chestnut Street are design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Finally, I will examine how using lenses of cultural landscape and architectural history theory can help or hinder the argument for this street-long district's significance. Ultimately, this process reveals that a cultural landscape approach is more inclusive of historic properties, as a purely architectural-based methodology may gloss over vernacular building types that do not fall under high-style categories but reflect broader themes in everyday working-class architecture.

Statement of Significance

Chestnut Street between 40th Street and 63rd Street contains distinctive concentrations of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings from West Philadelphia's final period of development. While by 1895 there was little to no settlement along Chestnut Street west of 45th Street, the corridor exploded with construction through the 1920s and 1930s, which was when the last undeveloped parcels of land were built upon.

While rowhouses and apartment buildings were the principal building types to appear along Chestnut Street during this time, schools, religious buildings, factories, and commercial facilities – especially those related to the automobile industry – also contributed to this period of growth. Though Chestnut Street can be parceled into different neighborhoods within West Philadelphia (Spruce Hill, Walnut Hill, Cobbs Creek), the corridor was once – and to some extent still is – an urban cultural landscape and thriving ecosystem of homes, businesses, and institutions. As a transect of West Philadelphia's urban landscape, Chestnut Street was and is a illustration of the symbiosis of the types of buildings that make up a typical bounded neighborhood.

From two-story workingman's homes, to middle-class emulations of three story townhouses, to block-long apartment buildings, the vernacular residential fabric along Chestnut Street catered to different socioeconomic groups who sought refuge in West Philadelphia's established suburban environment. Miller and Siry observe that "During the early suburban development of West Philadelphia, land division, mortgaging, and building practices assured a remarkable degree of small-scale architectural and social homogeneity which in part replicated that of the old city." [77] While Chestnut Street, as an isolated thoroughfare, feels more urban than the more traditional streetcar suburb neighborhoods of West Philadelphia due to its proximity to the Market-Frankford Line and use as an automobile-heavy corridor, it provided a chance for working and middle class families in need of these amenities to enjoy similar housing types as the middle and upper class. Just as in neighborhoods that contain both grand houses and working-class mews, differences in income, race, and class are visually evident through vernacular speculative residential

[77] Miller and Siry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," 102.

architecture along Chestnut Street alone.

The variation in form and style among Chestnut Street's two-story dwellings is particularly unique. The two-story rowhouse provided working-class Philadelphians with the means to own a home on a modest income in one of the city's "suburbs." As an architectural type, their construction in West Philadelphia gave way to speculative experimentations in rowhouse form and urban vernacular expression for a twentieth century working-class population. Despite their small footprint, these dwellings still contained features common for the majority of rowhouses in West Philadelphia, including a substantial setback from the street or sidewalk, with stair access to an elevated front porch, and a modest lawn or driveway to provide green space (**Figures 17, 18, 22**).

Variations in the two-story rowhouse along Chestnut Street include bay-front rowhouses, which provided extra room and light on the second floor (**Figure 19**), and double-height porches (**Figures 19, 20**), which allowed for extra room on the second to enjoy the outdoors and, as a housing type more common in cities like Charlotte, North Carolina, the opportunity to reside in a unique housing type for the area given the modest square footage. Working-class families were able to enjoy some semblance of distinctness while participating in the speculative housing market often characterized, and criticized, for their mass-production of architectural forms and subsequent lack of identity.

Housing options for the middle class along Chestnut Street were not missing, either. A familiar type – the tried and true townhouse – mimicked the grand Queen Anne homes found in Spruce Hill, Cedar Park, and Squirrel Hill, but on a smaller scale. While not as physically tall and large as those around Baltimore Avenue, the middle-class townhouses on Chestnut Street were three stories tall, set back from the street, unique in color palette and materials, embellished with architectural detail, and featured spacious front porches (**Figures**

21, 22). Furthermore, the size and craftsmanship of these homes stand out from the two-story working class dwellings that in some cases surround them.

The middle-class also experimented with living in group dwellings, as Chestnut Street became home to a number of 4 to 5 story apartment buildings. With ostentatious name such as "The Netherlands," "Greystone," "Fulton," "Satterlee," and "Edinborough," these Classical Revival apartment houses emulated those popping up at the same time in downtown Philadelphia (**Figures 23, 24**). However, these apartments different from their Center City counterparts in terms of scale. Often occupying an entire city block, these buildings indicate not just the demand for the middle class to live in classically styled apartment buildings, but also the sheer availability of land on which to build such structures –and were ultimately on a scale that apartment buildings in downtown Philadelphia could not achieve.[78]

The influence of the automobile on Chestnut Street's appearance and vitality is not to be understated; it can be seen in what currently is and is not present. In fact, I would argue part of Chestnut Street's vitality west of 40th Street was dependent on the automobile. Chestnut Street, at its peak, had numerous garage and automobile facilities, and many not only still survive, but are still used in their historic capacity (**Figure 25**). Others have been adapted to other uses (**Figure 24, 26**). Where run-of the mill gas stations are today are the same sites gas stations were 100 years ago (**Figure 28**). Other utilities along the corridor include the Philadelphia Gas Works building, still in use at 5230 Chestnut, and the Bell

[78] And, it is possible that this was a scale that builders did not necessarily want to achieve – Although the turnover rates of apartment units in these buildings warrants further exploration, there may have been a catch-22 in that the increased availability of these numerous apartment units may have made them undesirable in the long run.

Telephone Building (now Verizon) at 5650 Chestnut (**Figures 29, 30**). These two utilities distinguish themselves from other buildings along the street in their scale (in the case of Bell Telephone) and a vernacular classicism characterized by Flemish bond brick, limestone trim, and textbook proportion and ornament. Surrounded by vacant and parking lots, the Bell Telephone building's scale is particularly apparent.

Chestnut Street also witnessed the establishment of businesses and institutions that catered to the influx of households-- in particular, religious buildings, schools, and commercial buildings. Near the 5200 block, a small commercial enclave developed around what was historically a bustling commercial corridor along 52nd Street; many remnants of this survive today (**Figure 31**). The scale and architectural caliber of these buildings create landmarks along the corridor, and indicate the degree to which West Philadelphia's population continued to grow through the first three decades of the twentieth century, thus necessitating institutional expansion of schools and religious organizations.

Evaluation of Integrity

Just as significance varies along Chestnut Street, integrity does as well – and it varies among all aspects set forth by NPS. Between 40th and 45th Street, integrity is much more variable and dependent on the side of the block. Between 40th and 45rd Street, for example, Chestnut Street contains a mix of well- and poorly-maintained historic structures, insensitively-designed modern infill, parking lots, and vacant lots. Along the 4400 block, single-family rowhouses have been converted to multiple units and ground floor conversions

(**Figure 32**). The mixed integrity east of 45th Street is partially due to this area's proximity to institutions such as Drexel University and the University of Pennsylvania, whose sphere of influence is creeping westward (**Figure 33**). Due to a transient student population, and the institutions who cater to them, historic buildings have been poorly maintained or demolished, and vacant lots have filled in for housing, grocery stores, and parking.

West of 45th Street, on the other hand, one finds relatively intact speculative housing blocks – so integrity of setting and feeling are high – but integrity of materials and workmanship varies from block to block. While some blocks have minimal changes to historic fabric – enclosed porches and replaced windows – others have more historically insensitive maintenance (vinyl sheathing, formstone, paved front lawns) or are altogether in a deteriorated condition. Furthermore, commercial buildings along Chestnut Street have been treated much less sensitively than their residential counterparts; insensitive additions and conversions back and forth from residential to commercial use have rendered many facades a shell of their former selves. In addition, many modern storefronts, including pull-down security gates, awnings, detract from many of the special characteristics of low density, early 20th century commercial architecture near 52nd Street as well as residential conversions.

One of the areas along Chestnut Street which appears to have the lowest integrity is the north side of the 5600 block. Currently occupied by a Fresh Grocer and Rite Aid pharmacy, one would assume based on the surrounding streetscapes that the shopping center replaced a block of rowhouses. However, historic maps and aerial imagery reveal that industrial space once occupied this side of the block. When the Chilton Company printing factory headquarters was demolished in the late 1990s, the complex had barely reached 50 years old – the minimum age to be considered historically significant by the National Register (**Figure 34**).

Given that Chestnut Street is historically significant, but integrity varies throughout, the question arises of what would be considered historically significant in an inventory of the street. In evaluating the significance of the street, a holistic cultural landscape approach or a strictly architectural history approach can be taken. Both are valid methodologies, but the former applies more of a comprehensive history while the latter is based upon strictly aesthetic principles. Furthermore, it is important to note that the significance of Chestnut Street is not based on the assumption the street was the only place people who lived there spent all their time and did all their things. However, the variety of architecture and building use along the street suggests a transect approach that could reveal many types of significance along the street.

Approach 1: Cultural landscape approach to interpreting Chestnut Street

The designation of this portion of Chestnut Street as a historic district utilizes the form of a street as an alternative method to understand a cultural landscape. While streets are designated on the local and national registers in Philadelphia, this could be a chance to bring together many different periods of significance and development that are all tied to a single corridor. As David Hamer observes, "This fits in with the growing tendency to plan a structure of historic districts for a city so as to ensure that each major phase in its history receives a clear representation in at least one of them."[79] In the case of Chestnut Street, the potential historic district would contain nearly all aspects of its days as a residential street,

[79] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 27.

and automobile-influenced settlement.

The influence of the automobile on Chestnut Street's development could be one way of analyzing the street as a cultural landscape. The housing types, street size, and other buildings along the street, in many ways, are representative of the ways that Americans changed their living patterns to accommodate the car. For instance, the proliferation of two story dwellings in Philadelphia implies a decline in property values as the area developed. Chestnut Street did not develop linearly – rather, building occurred simultaneously westward from the Schuylkill River and eastward from Cobbs Creek. Simple concepts of urban real estate economics reveal that there is a price premium for which individuals are willing to pay to be close to or far from their workplace, and to own more or less land, or some combination of the two. This is apparently especially in the 4900-5000 blocks, where two story rowhouses begin to permeate the landscape, but are still organized as twins separated by alleys rather than as contiguous rowhouses (**Figures 17, 19**). This setting seeks to distinguish properties from the typical attached rowhouse block by giving these property owners more space – literally and figuratively – from their neighbors.

The linearity of Chestnut Street serves as a landscape, and can be understood using a number of related cultural landscape theories introduced in the literature review. Chestnut Street can be categorized into a mental map à la Kevin Lynch, with landmarks, districts, nodes, and corridors. While the entire street itself serves both as a district and corridor, smaller districts exist where architectural homogeneity is present – which allows for aesthetic considerations to be part of this model. Outlier buildings from the overwhelming residential landscape, churches and schools, serve as landmarks. Nodes occur at 40th Street – the beginning of the district, 52nd Street – a commercial corridor, and 63rd Street – the end of the district. With this model, nearly every block has a feature besides the street district running

through it – whether it be an individual landmark, or a row of homogenous attached residences.

Similarly, Andres Duany considers that transect planning "applies a range of human habitats composed of varying degrees of human intensity."[80] The built density of Chestnut Street has always ebbed and flowed: remnants of rolling country suburbs survive near 40th Street, while dense apartment buildings are found closer to public transit, and small-scale, two story rowhomes near the Cobbs Creek Parkway were intended for the commuting driver. Chestnut Street's built environment can be similarly categorized into historic zones depending on land use and building type.

David Hamer rightly observes that "Because of the emphasis on homogeneity and consistency as desired characteristics, what historic districts represent less well is the history of interactions among classes and, indeed, also among diverse ethnic groups."[81] Chestnut Street provides a "why not both" solution to this issue: almost every block has homogeneity and consistency due to the historically speculative nature of Philadelphia's housing market, and yet as one travels westward on Chestnut Street, rowhouses of all scales and types can be found. Hamer adds that

> Historic districts are representative, or have been chosen because they have been deemed to be representative, not just of architectural styles or district forms but also, to an extent that is seldom fully acknowledged, of America's major symbolic landscapes, which appear to invoke and embody in a particular coherent and powerful way distinctive and admired American values.[82]

The street as a symbolic landscape has been an underutilized preservation strategy in cities,

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[80] Duany and Talen, "Transect Planning.," 250.

[81] Hamer, *History in Urban Places*, 79.

[82] Ibid., 87.

and places such as Philadelphia – the "city of firsts" – may reveal more history than meets the eye in this regard.

Approach 2: Architectural history approach to interpreting Chestnut Street

The second approach in assessing the historic significance of a corridor such as Chestnut Street is through a strictly high-style approach. In looking at building size, material, type, and architect, those structures worthy of can be picked out along the corridor. Furthermore, the City of Philadelphia's three-tiered system of historic district status – significant, contributing, and non-contributing – may make for additional degrees of historic significance.

There are enough architectural styles present among the residential parts to categorize into types along the street, similar to what would occur in a neighborhood like Spruce Hill, where building campaigns by different land speculators resulted in different, yet similar, houses in the neighborhood. What this ultimately creates is a discontinuous collection of buildings and structures which are not well-suited as a district, since the distance between them renders them unrelated. This could create, however, the opportunity for a more traditional cultural landscape inventory that may be spread out over a larger physical area.

In addition, certain building types would not be considered significant or contributing to the district based on existing aesthetic standards. Two-story, bay front rowhouses, as well as double-height rowhouses, would fall under this category. In addition, their low integrity of materials would detract from their significance. Schools and churches would be considered architecturally significant, and so would the two utilities – Bell

Telephone and Philadelphia Gas Works. However, the interesting rows of commercial structures would likely not fall under this category, as they have been substantially altered over time.

In the case of Chestnut Street, its "ordinary" buildings are more revealing of the area's history at a micro level, but also considering its place in Philadelphia's broader history, represent changes in the city at large. Individual buildings are not necessarily trying to be representative of an entire history – and to some extent cannot represent an area's entire history – but their interpretation as a cultural landscape should be taken seriously as a historic resource. As established in the literature and by example, using a strictly aesthetic approach in arguing for a place's significance omits important historical information and disregards more recent periods of significance. Questions of integrity will only remain if aesthetic principles are not expanded to include "less sensitive" alterations, which have been part of the street's landscape for decades.

Figure 17 6200 block of Chestnut Street, looking northwest. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 18 5000 block of Chestnut Street, looking southeast. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 19 4800 block of Chestnut Street, north side. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 20. 4900 block of Chestnut Street, looking southeast. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 21 South side of 4400 block of Chestnut Street, looking southwest. These were built ca. 1875. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 22 North side of the 4900 block of Chestnut Street. These were built some time between 1910 and 1923. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 23 4700 block of Chestnut Street, looking southwest. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 24 "The Netherlands," 4300 block of Chestnut Street, looking southwest. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 25 Penn Automobile Company, 4212-18 Chestnut Street. A demolition permit has been issued for this structure. Source: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, PhillyHistory.org.

Figure 26 4800 block of Chestnut Street, south side. Historic Studebaker automobile showroom (at center) being reused by Scion car dealership. Photo Source: Author

Figure 27 4700 block of Chestnut Street, south side. Salmon-colored building at left, currently a church, was once an automobile showroom. The showroom windows have been filled in with glass brick. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 28 4600 block of Chestnut Street, looking west. Photo Source: Author

Figure 29 Bell Telephone Building (now Verizon), 5650 Chestnut Street. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 30 Philadelphia Gas Works building, 5230 Chestnut Street. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 31 5200 block of Chestnut Street, south side looking east. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 32 4400 Block of Chestnut Street, looking northwest. Photo Source: Author.

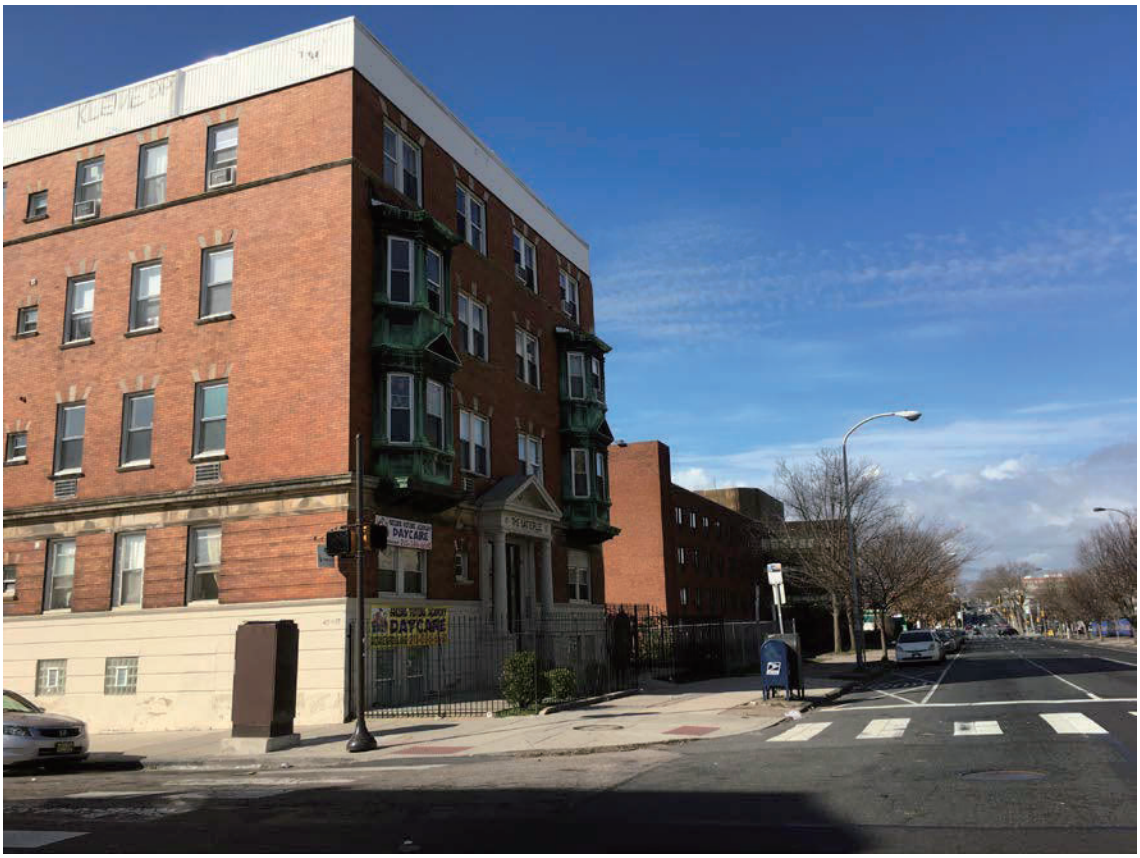

Figure 33 South side of 4500 block of Chestnut Street, looking west. This side of the block used to be completely occupied with apartment houses like the one in the foreground. Photo Source: Author.

Figure 34 Chilton Company Building, 5601 Chestnut Street (built 1922, demolished ca. 1999). Photo Source: Ballinger Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

CONCLUSION

"South Philadelphia, a large area of middle-aged rowhouses, mainly inhabited by blue-collar blacks and third-generation Italians…is not on any [historical] tours, and it is not likely to be. Most people I know on the Historical and Museum Commission in Harrisburg would think you were crazy if you suggested such a thing. Yet the fact is that South Philly is a more truthful historical museum than Betsy Ross's house will ever be."

Peirce Lewis, "Taking Down the Velvet Rope: Cultural Geography and the Human Landscape"

The above quote, written 30 years ago, still describes the state of preservation in Philadelphia: despite designations as a World Heritage City and a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the city is unable to facilitate new development in such a way that utilizes or protects historic resources. Instead, ideas of what seems, rather than what is, historical permeate decisions about what buildings or neighborhoods are worth preserving. In the case of Philadelphia, tourists walking around Society Hill may not realize that many of the charming façades in this "historic" neighborhood were artificially placed on nineteenth century buildings, since these buildings are touted (and protected on the local register) as examples of colonial-era architecture. As they walk toward Jeweler's Row, their Benjamin Franklin-lookalike tour guide may not share the news that a 29-story tower that is slated to replace five buildings along the oldest diamond district in the country, and that the city's Historical Commission has tabled nominations for their designation.

This bias is not just within Philadelphia's tourism infrastructure: scholars of its architectural and urban history continue to tell the stories of wealthy individuals or families, architect-designed buildings, and grand public sites rather than expanding to include ordinary people or everyday places. This bias in turn influences the public understanding of historic preservation's role in Philadelphia – one that is often believed to be burdensome, stifling, or unprogressive. Philadelphia's historic districts fall into this historiographical pattern, as they, for the most part, are illustrative of a cohesive type of residential development for a middle

to upper-class clientele. Yet, even the representation of this district type on the local register is not comprehensive, and is arguably deficient: Spring Garden, for instance, is protected for its history as an intact, late nineteenth century speculative neighborhood, while Spruce Hill and Strawberry Mansion – neighborhoods equally high in style and authentic in setting – are not. With only 2% of the city's total building stock listed in the local register, and more recently, the Historical Commission following an unspoken rule not to designate historic districts that comprise more than 25 buildings, a new solution needs to be generated that adequately protects the city's most vulnerable historic places and at the same time allows for a manageable inventory of resources to enter the Historical Commission's jurisdiction with each new submission.

This thesis has argued for the potential of entire streets to be designated as historic districts. In order to do so successfully, historic preservation professionals and practitioners must depart the "style fetish" approach that values historic districts primarily on their aesthetic value, and instead utilize an existing historic framework – that of cultural landscapes – to holistically identify and categorize resources along a street. Ultimately, this street-long model is inclusive of varied architectural styles and building uses, and places the everyday significant buildings on par with the extraordinary.

Recommendations

If this methodology is to be used in the future, a number of other streets besides Chestnut Street are prime for evaluation. Many of the city's commercial corridors, for instance, are eligible to be local historic districts based on their mix of building types and social history as thoroughfares. Some of the more intact examples include Germantown Avenue, East Passyunk Avenue, Lancaster Avenue, and Baltimore Avenue, as well as niche

maker's spaces such as Jeweler's Row and Fabric Row. The former group comprises of streets that deviate from Philadelphia's street grid; future history or architecture scholarship could examine the role that these non-conforming streets once played and still play in city life. Another group that I call "second-tier streets" have more variable integrity and fabric loss akin to Chestnut Street in West Philadelphia, and are also worth exploring as historic districts using a cultural landscape methodology: these include Fairmount Avenue, Spring Garden Street, and Girard Avenue. These were once intact vernacular streetscapes around which corridors of commerce and residence developed, and in the past 50-60 years have become substantially altered due to housing development projects and urban renewal efforts.

In some cities, National Register listed places and districts are automatically protected on local registers. In Philadelphia this is not the case, although the Philadelphia Historical Commission is often asked to comment on National Register listings in the city. Another way to approach this issue, then, would be to assess all existing National Register listings for historic streets.

The process of researching and writing this work has additionally unveiled a number of issues that local, state, and national preservation agencies should resolve not just to aid projects such as this thesis, but also to facilitate future planning and development for historic places. First, NPS should make careful consideration of understand that cultural landscapes do not fall under their current categories and types. In particular, urban cultural landscapes – which straddle the line between designed and vernacular landscapes –. Inversely, city agencies should look to cultural landscape preservation planning for additional tools on how to protect historic resources, especially when it comes to assessing buildings with little surviving historic fabric. If an aesthetic approach must be continued, the city needs to develop financial incentives that will encourage homeowners to restore their properties to

their appearance at their time of construction. Using historic materials and craftsman experienced in historic restoration can be extremely costly, especially for residents of lower-income areas where disposable income will not necessarily be used for building maintenance and preservation.

Third, both Pennsylvania's CRGIS and National Park Service data need to be vetted for human errors from its initial entry. In particular, NPS should include more metadata in their downloadable data: currently, it only contains the identification number, name, location, and date of designation of the resource. By including categories such as "resource type" and, in the case of districts, the number of contributing and non-contributing resources, NPS would provide a great service to local governments and . In the case of Pennsylvania, CRGIS simply has incorrect or incomplete data for these variables, and PHMC staff should review them to ensure database accuracy moving forward.

Margaret Tinkcom, the first Director of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, concluded in a 1971 legal brief that "The story of historical preservation in Philadelphia can best be described as a tale with an old fashioned moral: what one person or one agency cannot do alone, a united effort can bring to a successful conclusion."[83] The takeaway from this thesis should be one of inclusivity rather than exclusivity; Philadelphia's ordinary building types, in many ways, are more revealing of the city's history than any exceptional one, and should be treated as such. With proper interpretation and dissemination of the city's history, a change in public perception of everyday building types may very well happen. Ultimately, collaboration between the Historical Commission, other city agencies, neighborhood organizations, history advocates, and the general public will be necessary to

[83] Tinkcom, "The Philadelphia Historical Commission: Organization and Procedures," 395.

achieve this goal. While it should not be expected that future historic districts have the unanimous support of their property owners as was the case with the 420 Row,

I close with a quote from Philadelphia architect John Irwin Bright, who wrote in 1931 that "It may well be that critics yet unborn will rate the Philadelphia row house above the skyscraper as a sounder contribution to the architectural record of American life."[84] To some extent, this has happened – but only for rowhouse types distinct in their materials who tell the story of wealthy Philadelphians. I hope that this thesis at least begins a dialogue to close the gap between the two-story rowhouse and the skyscraper – and recognize the significance and value of all buildings types in between.

[84] John Irwin Bright, "Architectural Styles," *The American Magazine of Art* 23, no. 1 (1931): 54.

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APPENDIX A: TABLES

Table 1. National Register of Historic Places, Historic Districts in Philadelphia

District Name	Year nominated	Contributing Resources	Non-Contributing Resources	District Type	Notes
Awbury Historic District	2001	34	3	Enclave/Landscape	
Brewerytown Historic District	1991	381	11	Neighborhood	
Broad Street Historic District	1984	72	0	Street	
Callowhill Industrial Historic District	2010	33	29	Neighborhood	
Center City West Commercial Historic District	1988, expanded 2009	251	41	Neighborhood	
Chestnut Hill Historic District	1985	2284	581	Neighborhood	
Clinton Street Historic District	1972	71	--	Street	
Cobbs Creek Automobile Suburb Historic District	1998	1051	34	Neighborhood	
Colonial Germantown Historic District	1966, expanded 1987	514	65	Street	NHL
Compton & Bloomfield (Morris Arboretum)	1978	--	--	Site/Landscape	

Dobson Mills	1988	23	1	Site	
Drexel Development Historic District	1982	65	1	Neighborhood	
Dropsie University Complex	1975	3	0	Site	
Druim Moir Historic District	1979	7	8	Site	
East Center City Historic District	1984	289	103	Neighborhood	
Elfreth's Alley Historic District	1975	32	--	Street	NHL
Fairmount Avenue Historic District	2002	75	5	Street	
Fairmount Park	1972	--	--	Site/Landscape	
Fisher's Lane	1980	13	4	Street	
Fort Mifflin	1970	4	--	Site	NHL; nomination and inventory not listed in CRGIS
Friends Housing Cooperative	2013	17	--	Site	
Garden Court Historic District	1984, expanded 1986	321	0	Site	
Girard Avenue Historic District	1985	137	4	Street	
Girard Avenue West Historic District	2011	85	--	Street	No inventory list on CRGIS

Girard College	1969	5		Site	NHL
Greenbelt Knoll Historic District	2010	2	3	Enclave/Landscape	
Haddington Historic District	1988	82	3	Neighborhood/Street	
Head House Square	1972	22	--	Site	
Hamilton Family Estate	1979	12	--	Neighborhood/Street	
Independence National Historical Park	1966	45	--	Site/Landscape	
Lower North Philadelphia Speculative Housing Historic District	1999	855	87	Neighborhood	
Manayunk Main Street Historic District	1983	86	25	Street	
North Broad Street Mansion District	1985	76	15	Neighborhood	
Northern Liberties Historic District	1985	140	19	Neighborhood	
Old City Historic District	1972	409	236	Neighborhood	
Old Germantown Academy & Headmaster's Houses	1972	4	--	Site	
Overbrook Farms	1985	377	36	Neighborhood	
Parkside Historic District	1983	1513	28	Neighborhood	

Charles Willson Peale House (Belfield)	1966	5	--	Site	
Pennsylvania Institute for the Deaf & Dumb	1985	10	--	Site	
Philadelphia Naval Shipyard Historic District	1999	262	57	Site	Many contributing resources have been demolished
Powelton Village Historic District	1985	856	37	Neighborhood	
Ramcat Historic District	1986	617	89	Neighborhood	
Rittenhouse Historic District	1983, expanded 2010	1799	264	Neighborhood	
RittenhouseTown Historic District	1992	8	1	Neighborhood	NHL
Society Hill Historic District	1971	575 (approx.)	--	Neighborhood	No complete inventory on CRGIS
South Front Street Historic District	1972	7	--	Neighborhood	
Southwark Historic District	1972	600 (approx.)	--	Neighborhood	No inventory list on CRGIS
Spring Garden Historic District	1978, expanded 1983	1319	123	Neighborhood	

Stanley (Fox Chase Farm)	2005	15	1	Site	Partially in Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties
William Strickland Row	1977	7	--	Street	
Tulpehocken Station Historic District	1985	155	13	Neighborhood	
University of Pennsylvania Campus Historic District	1978	28	--	Site	
Upper Roxborough Historic District	2001, expanded 2004	127	68	Neighborhood	
Walnut-Chancellor Historic District	1980	51	--	Neighborhood	
Washington Avenue Historic District	1984	8	--	Street	No inventory list on CRGIS
Washington Square West Historic District	1984	300 (approx.)	--	Neighborhood	No inventory list on CRGIS
Wayne Junction Historic District	2012	17	2	Neighborhood	
West Diamond Street Townhouse Historic District	1991	78	1	Street	

West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb Historic District	1998	3386	118	Neighborhood	
Woodland Terrace	1972	20	0	Street	
The Woodlands	1967, form updated 2004	10	4	Site/Landscape	NHL
Yorktown Historic District	2012	620	5	Neighborhood	

Table 2. Resources which were not nominated as Historic Districts, but could be categorized as such based on the NPS Criteria.

Name of Resource	Year nominated	Contributing Resources	National Register Category	Notes
Boat House Row	1987	15	Building(s)	
Frederick A. Poth Houses	1979	7	Building(s)	
U.S. Naval Asylum	1972	4	Building(s)	NHL
Carl Mackley Houses	1998	5	Building(s)	
Alden Park Manor	1980	6	Building(s)	
John Bartram House and Gardens	1966	4	Building(s)	NHL
Most Precious Blood Roman Catholic Church, Rectory and Parochial School	1992	3	Building(s)	
Brownhill and Kramer Hoisery Mill	2014	5	Building(s)	Partially demolished in 2014-2015.
Fairmount Water Works	1976	8	Site, Building(s)	NHL, Listed as district in CRGIS database

Table 3. National Register listings of multiple buildings along a single street.

Name of Resource	Year nominated	Contributing Resources	National Register Category	Notes
Houses at 1907-1951 N. 32nd Street / Mansion Court	1994	12	Building(s)	
Houses at 2000-2018 Delancey Street	1982	10	Building(s)	
John Shedwick Development Houses	1982	4	Building(s)	
Poth & Schmidt Development Houses	1983	6	Building(s)	
Hockley Row	1983	3	Building(s)	
Portico Row	1977	16	Building(s)	
Ringgold Place	1978	26	Building(s)	
Regent-Rennoc Court	1985	9	Building(s)	
John Stewart Houses	1979	5	Building(s)	

Table 4. Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, local Historic Districts

District Name	Year Nominated	Significant Resources	Contributing Resources	Non-Contributing Resources	District Type	Notes
420 Row	2017	8	0	0	Street	
Aubury	2010	26	2	6	Enclave	
Diamond Street	1986		222	13 vacant lots	Street	Partial demolition as part of "Neighborhood Transformation Initiative"
E. Logan Street	2010	6	19	4	Street	
Girard Estate	1999	0	450	6	Neighborhood	
Greenbelt Knoll	2006	3	15	1	Enclave	Along private cul-de-sac
Main Street Manayunk	1984	--	86	25	Street	Same as NR nomination
Old City	2003	208	513	242	Neighborhood	
Overbrook Farms	Under consideration	13	434	50	Neighborhood	
Park Avenue	1990	4	27	0	Street	Partially demolished for Temple's Liacouras Walk.
Parkside	2009	37	52	21	Neighborhood	Significantly fewer resources than NR district.
Rittenhouse-Fitler	1995	126	772	88	Neighborhood	
Society Hill	1999	324	559	44	Neighborhood	
Spring Garden	2001	82	1175	96	Neighborhood	
Tudor-East Falls	2009	0	210	0	Neighborhood	

Table 5. TCLF Database Listings of Cultural Landscapes in Philadelphia

Name of Resource	Category	Type

Abbottsford Homes	Designed Landscape	Suburb, FHA-Approved Neighborhood
Awbury Arboretum	Designed Landscape	Arboretum, Garden and Estate, Picturesque Garden
Awbury Recreation Center	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Neighborhood Park
Azalea Garden	Designed Landscape	Public Park
Bartram's Garden	Designed Landscape	Botanical Garden, Garden and Estate, Colonial Garden
Benjamin Franklin Parkway	Designed Landscape	Parkway
Benjamin Rush Medicinal Plant Garden of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia	Designed Landscape	Botanical Garden, Courtyard, Institutional Grounds, Cultural Institution
Carroll Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares
Cecil B. Moore Station Plaza	Designed Landscape	Plaza
Cherokee Apartments	Designed Landscape	Suburb, Garden City/Garden Suburb
Christ Church Burial Ground	Designed Landscape	Cemetery
Cliveden	Designed Landscape	Garden and Estate, Colonial Garden
Delancey Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Neighborhood Park
Dickinson Square Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Neighborhood Park
Fairmount Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Large Municipal Park
Fairmount Water Works	Designed Landscape	Institutional Grounds, Governmental Institution or Facility, Public Park
FDR Golf Course	Designed Landscape	Golf Course
FDR Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Neighborhood Park

Fitler Square	Designed Landscape	N/A
Fort Mifflin	Designed Landscape	Institutional Grounds, Military Institution
Founders Garden - Temple University	Designed Landscape	Commemoriative Landscape
Franklin Court	Designed Landscape	Courtyard
Franklin Square	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares
Germantown Historic District	Designed Landscape	N/A
Germantown White House	Designed Landscape, Historic Site	Garden and Estate, Public Park, National Park
Glen Foerd on the Delaware	Designed Landscape	Garden and Estate, Country Place Era Garden
Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church National Historic Site	Designed Landscape, Historic Site	Cemetery, Institutional Grounds, Religious Institution
Independence Mall	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares, National Park
Independence National Historical Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares, National Park
Independence Square	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares, National Park
John F. Collins Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Vest Pocket Park
John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Scenic Reservation
Laurel Hill Cemetery	Designed Landscape	Cemetery, Rural Cemetery
Logan Square	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares
Magnolia Garden	Designed Landscape	Public Park, National Park

Matthias Baldwin Park	Designed Landscape	N/A
Mikveh Israel Cemetery	Designed Landscape	Cemetery
Morris Arboretum	Designed Landscape	Arboretum, Garden and Estate, Picturesque Garden
Mount Vernon Cemetery	Designed Landscape	Cemetery, Rural Cemetery
Norris Square Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares
Old Pine Street Churchyard	Designed Landscape	Cemetery
Pastorius Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Neighborhood Park
Philadelphia Museum of Art	Designed Landscape	Institutional Grounds, Cultural Institution
Physick House and Garden	Designed Landscape	Garden and Estate, Picturesque Garden
Rittenhouse Square	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares
Rodin Museum	Designed Landscape	Institutional Grounds, Cultural Institution
Rose Garden	Designed Landscape	Public Park, National Park
Shofuso Japanese House and Garden	Designed Landscape	Public Park
Society Hill	Designed Landscape	N/A
St. Peter's Church and Burial Ground	Designed Landscape	Cemetery, Institutional Grounds ,Religious Institution
Temple University - Main Campus	Designed Landscape	Campus, Multiversity Campus
The Woodlands	Designed Landscape	Cemetery, Rural Cemetery, Garden and Estate, Colonial Garden
University of Pennsylvania	Designed Landscape	Campus, Quadrangle Plan

Vernon Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Neighborhood Park
Washington Square	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares
Welcome Park	Designed Landscape	Commemorative Landscape, Plaza
William Penn's Philadelphia Plan	Designed Landscape	Boulevard, Public Park, Greens / Commons / Squares
Wissahickon Valley Park	Designed Landscape	Public Park, Scenic Reservation
Wissahickon Valley Park Trail	Designed Landscape	Public Park
Wyck House	Designed Landscape, Historic Site	Garden and Estate, Colonial Garden

APPENDIX B: INVENTORY OF CHESTNUT STREET

4000 BLOCK

- **North side:** two story, three bay commercial building built up to lot line; one three story Italianate stone clad rowhouse (formerly a twin); three story brick twin with altered first floor; two, three story stone twins with stone façade, enclosed porch, and gable dormer; Christ Community Church (Gothic Revival style); American Law Institute (modern infill); Branden Apartments (6 story, 5 bay buff brick and terra cotta apartment building with Art Deco elements); Chestnut Arms apartments (4 story + basement, 7 bay, buff brick, tudor oriels at west elevation and parapet roof at south elevation)
- **South side:** 1.5 late nineteenth century Italianate twins. One has been built out to add a double height porch; two, one story restaurants within historic footprint; parking lots; police station; 3 pairs of 3.5 story Italianate brick twins, vacant lot where an identical twin once stood; modular new construction that will soon occupy vacant lot.

4100 BLOCK

- **North side:** brick twin, brick church (formerly a social club); parking lot (formerly a grave yard – probably has archaeological significance); two and a half Italianate twins
- **South side:** block-long old car garage and repair shop; historically was larger but has been partially demolished; replaced Philadelphia Rapid Transit Co. Depot which is the reason why the southern protion of the block is shorter.

4200 BLOCK

- **North side:** late nineteenth century three story commercial building with insensitive buildout at ground level, some sort of institutional building in a subdued classical revival style (library? Bank?), church (Christ the King Prayer Chapel, formerly Reform Episcopal Chrsit Memorial Church)
- **South side:** Rowhouses of varying style, integrity, and infill. Penn Auto Company

building, more late 19th century rowhouses, vacant lot used for parking, parking lot, three story brick twin setback from the street, vacant lot

4300 BLOCK

- **North side:** liquor store strip mall
- **South side:** 4 story apartment building ("The Netherlands")

4400 BLOCK

- **North side:** corner store commercial building, rowhouses ranging in style from Italianate to Dutch/German style, some historic commercial buildings
- **South side:** very intact block of brick rowhouses (High Victorian/Queen Anne?)

4500 BLOCK

- **North side:** West Philadelphia Catholic high school, two former garages/warehouses, parking lot
- **South side:** smaller scale apt building (Satterlee apartments – used to be an 8 building complex that took up almost the whole block), vacant lot, senior housing (Mercy Life West Philadelphia)

4600-FARRAGUT BLOCK

- **North side:** car wash
- **South side:** gas station

FARRAGUT-4700 BLOCK

- **North side:** Rite Aid and parking lot
- **South Side:** Small commercial strip mall, gas station

4700 BLOCK

- **North side**: 6 and two ½, four story + basement, 3 bay wide apartments, garage (now a church), 4, two story rowhouses set back deeply from the sidewalk with a set

of stairs and a deep front porch. Oriel windows on second floor all covered with unoriginal vinyl. One has original pediment.

- **South side:** parking lot, church, Community College of Philadelphia building, all 1.5 stories; car inspection station

4800 BLOCK

- **North side:** 4, two story brick homes with two tiered, full façade porch, parking lot, Totoya support building, Uhaul rental facility.
- **South side:** Scion dealership that uses part of old Studebaker showroom

4900 BLOCK

- **North side:** West Philadelphia High School (replacement of historic building); 5 pairs of two story twins with double height porch
- **South side:** three story, bay front rowhouses. The eastern 8 are entirely made of brick open space brick kneewall, segmented parapet, next four are stone with tudor lancet parapet, next four are brick again, with rounded parapet and bow oriel on second floor, next six are 2.5 story brick bay front, with bow oriel on second floor, bay dormer on roof, final six are three story, 3 bay brick and are built half a story higher than the rest of the houses on the block. All have modest front yards.

5000 BLOCK

- **North side:** brick (Flemish bond with glazed headers), two story bay front twins with oriel on second floor. Some have the original broken scroll parapet above cornice. Modest front yards bound by stone wall. Stone pedestals support columns on front porch. Many porches are closed in and oriels covered with vinyl siding.
- **South side:** Same as north side

5100 BLOCK

- **North side:** same twins from 5000 block, some built out over lawn to have commercial storefronts and be closer to sidewalk; three story brick commercial

building – same footprint as a rowhouse - with parapet; stripmall-type single story commercial storefronts; former garage converted to store

- **South side:** vacant lot, one half of a three story twin with full height portico porch; the Y (brick building with no windows); McDonalds

5200 BLOCK

- **North side:** commercial storefronts ca. 1900-1930, 1-3 stories in height.
- **South side:** two story commercial storefronts, all take up the footprint of a rowhouse; Philadelphia Gas Works Beaux-Arts building; White Rock Baptist Church (formerly St. Matthews Methodist Episcopal Church)

5300 BLOCK

- **North side:** two story, bay front brick rowhouses, open porch, wooden bay window, and interesting broken cornice shape, modest front yards. Some yards have been paved, porches enclosed and bay windows and cornices covered with vinyl siding.
- **South side:** same as north side, but with canted cornice. Some first floor spaces converted to commercial use, especially by intersections and not mid-block. More intact front yards on south side.

5400-RUBY BLOCK

- **North side:** two story, bay front brick rowhouses, open porch, wooden bay window, and canted cornice, modest front yards. Again, porches are continuously connected but some have been closed in.
- **South side:** same as north side

RUBY-5500 BLOCK

- **North side:** two story brick rowhouses with double-height porch and portico; three outlier brick bay front rowhouses, two and three stories tall; parking; Oliver Wendell Holmes school (now housing)
- **South side:** setback Laundromat with parking, two story stone rowhouses with double-height porch and portico; two story flat front brick rowhouses that are set

back from the street – once likely had front yards but have been converted to carpads.

5500 BLOCK

- **North side:** low density; low rise non historic buildings; four unattached two story flat front brick rowhouses with corbilled cornice. Vacant lots in between.
- **South side:** one historic parapeted brick garage on this side of the block; commercial, religious, all built within the past 30 years;

5600 BLOCK

- **North side:** Large open shopping center: Fresh Grocer, Rite Aid.
- **South side:** parking lot, former automobile showroom, Bell Telephone building

5700 BLOCK

- **North side:** Two story, bay-front rowhouses with stone steps, curved bannister wall. Small front yard, some have been paved over. Second floor oriel is capped with a bracketed cornice underneath the roofline's broken bracketed cornice. Various degrees of alteration.
- **South side:** two story, bay front brick rowhouses. Curved stone bannister and water table lead up to recessed front porch. Varying degrees of alteration and integrity. first and last two buildings on the block are 3 stories tall.

5800 BLOCK

- **North side:** Two story, bay-front brick rowhouses with oriel window on second floor. Set back from the sidewalk. Original features include small front lawn, stairs leading to front porch, porch wall with parapet, stepped stone bannister.
- **South side:** Vacant car lot, One story, gabled old gas station building. Two story, bay-front brick rowhouses grouped in 7, 10, and 10. Nearly all bays have been covered with vinyl siding, all porches enclosed, and front lawns paved over, although some still have grass. Stone is used to clad basement level and stairs.

5900-Redfield BLOCK

- **North side:** three clusters of 10 two-story plain brick rowhouses with small setback. Originally all would have had open porch. Nearly all are enclosed and now have vinyl siding on first floor and second floor (wood) oriel. Some are stuccoed. Four story, two bay apartment building with Spanish revival and Italianate elements (now a church building, mothballed)
- **South side:** same rowhouses as on north side.

Redfield-Salford BLOCK

- **North side:** same brick rowhouses as 5900-Redfield block with same extent of alterations.
- **South side:** same brick rowhouses as 5900 block, with same extent of alterations. Two are extremely altered with oriel window filled in on second floor – one as a church and the other as a residence. Church may have been a commercial storefront.

SALFORD-6000 BLOCK

- **North side:** five two story rowhouses/commercial buildings. Some were residential to commercial conversion while others are now the reverse. Two have original second floor four light wooden rectangular oriel.
- **South side:** two and three story brick homes, now with commercial on the ground floor. Spanish tile shed roof supported by brackets. Second floor brick oriel with limestone lintel and sill "The Swank" bar

6000 BLOCK

- **North side:** two story brick rowhouses with basement. Original features include broken scroll/swan's neck pediment with finial rising from center, modest front lawn surrounded by stone wall; open first floor porch supported by ionic columns, second floor oriel window with wooden mullion pilasters. Ca. 1917 Synagogue (now a church). 4.5 three story brick twins, semi-circular opening, oriel at 2nd floor, originally had open porch

- **South side**: same brick rowhouses as north side extend the full length of the block

6100 BLOCK

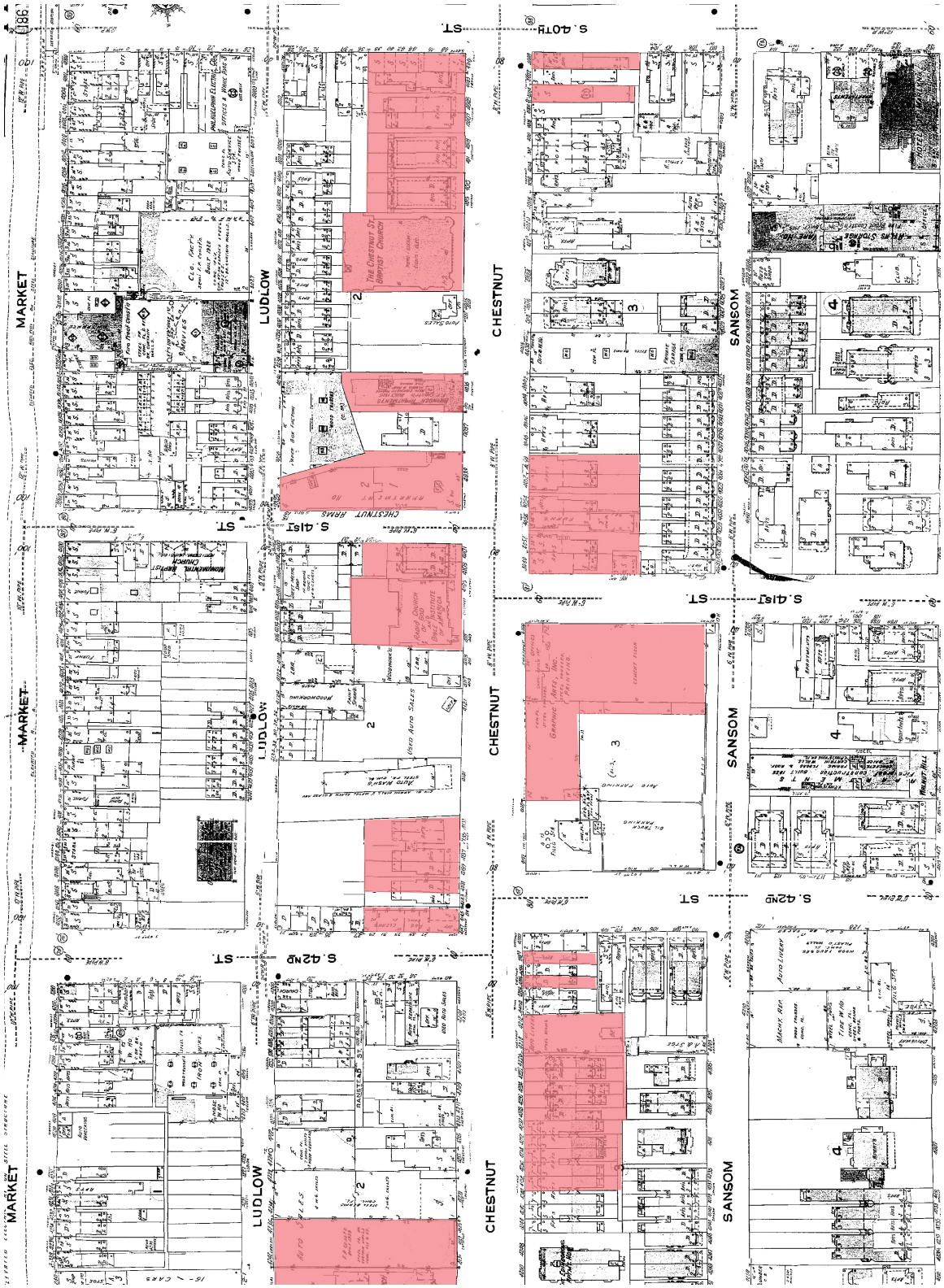
- **North and south side:** two story brick rowhouses with stone basement extend the full length of this block. Homes are set back from the street and are accessed by two flights of concrete stairs separated by a deep landing. All have modest front lawns. Second floors have 3 light oriel window and wooden cornice flanked by bracketed finial. Various levels of alteration in the homes – many have enclosed first floor porch, replacement window in rounded basement opening, vinyl coverings on cornice and oriel, window shades, and nearly all have replaced windows.

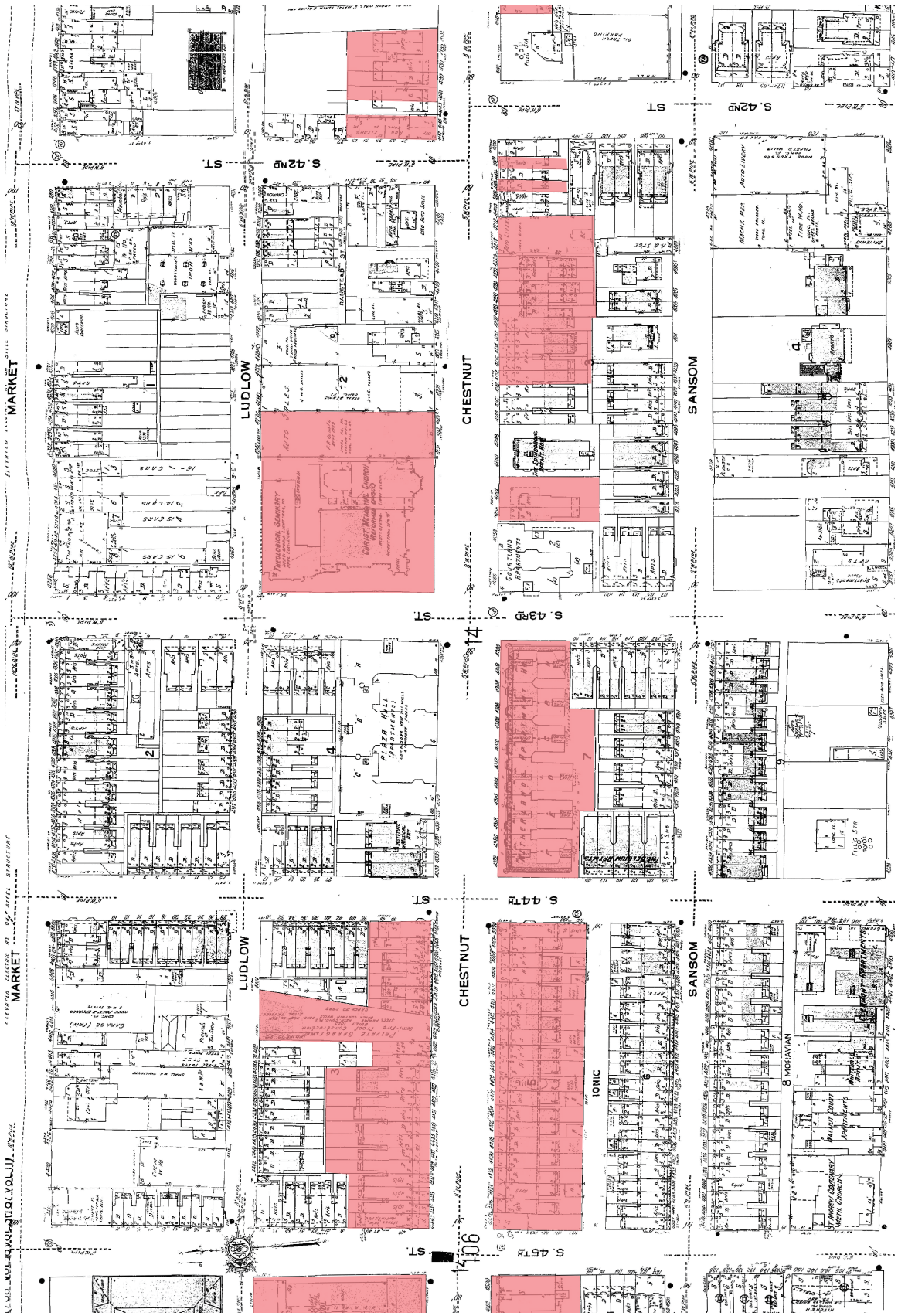
6200 BLOCK

- **North side:** 15 three story Dutch Colonial Revival rowhouses. Cobbs Creek Court, a 4 story E-Shaped apartment building. Gas station.
- **South side:** Chestnut Park Apartments, 4 story + basement U-shaped apartment building. A continuous row of 10 brick rowhouses, with double-stacked porches supported by fluted Corinthian columns. Entryways are delineated at roof level with five pediments. Second floor porch has rounded bow porch.

APPENDIX C: MAP OF CHESTNUT STREET

Parcels shaded in pink show extant buildings.

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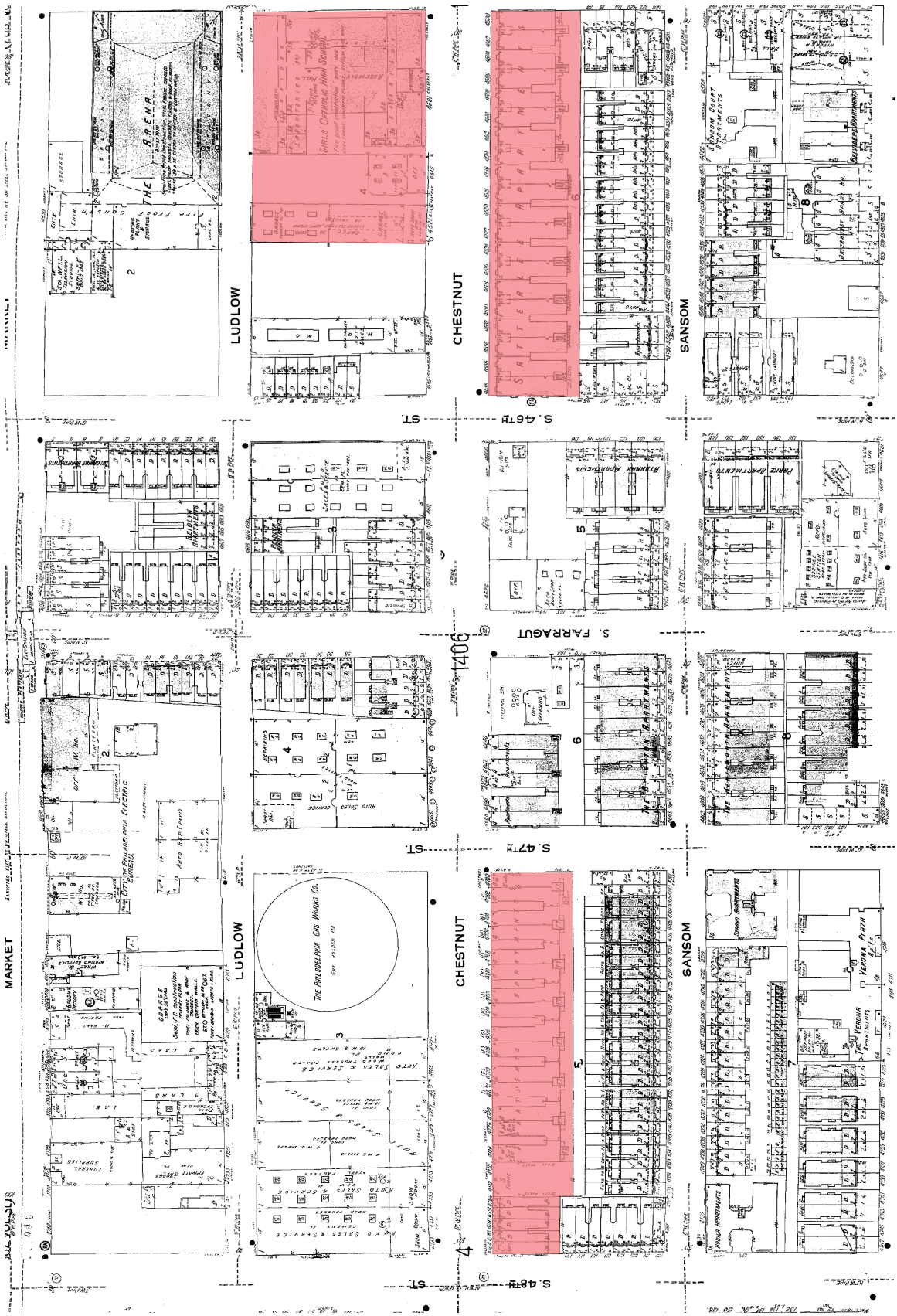
MOHAVIAN
PLAZA HALL (APARTMENTS)
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CHRIST MEMORIAL CHURCH (REFORMED EPISCOPAL)
AUTO LIVERY
GOURTLAND APARTMENTS
PRIVATE GARAGE
GARAGE (PRIV)
ST. ANDREW CONTENARY METH. CHURCH
WALNUT COURT APARTMENTS
COLEMAN APARTMENTS
FIELD STR
14
14
06


MARKET
LUDLOW
CHESTNUT
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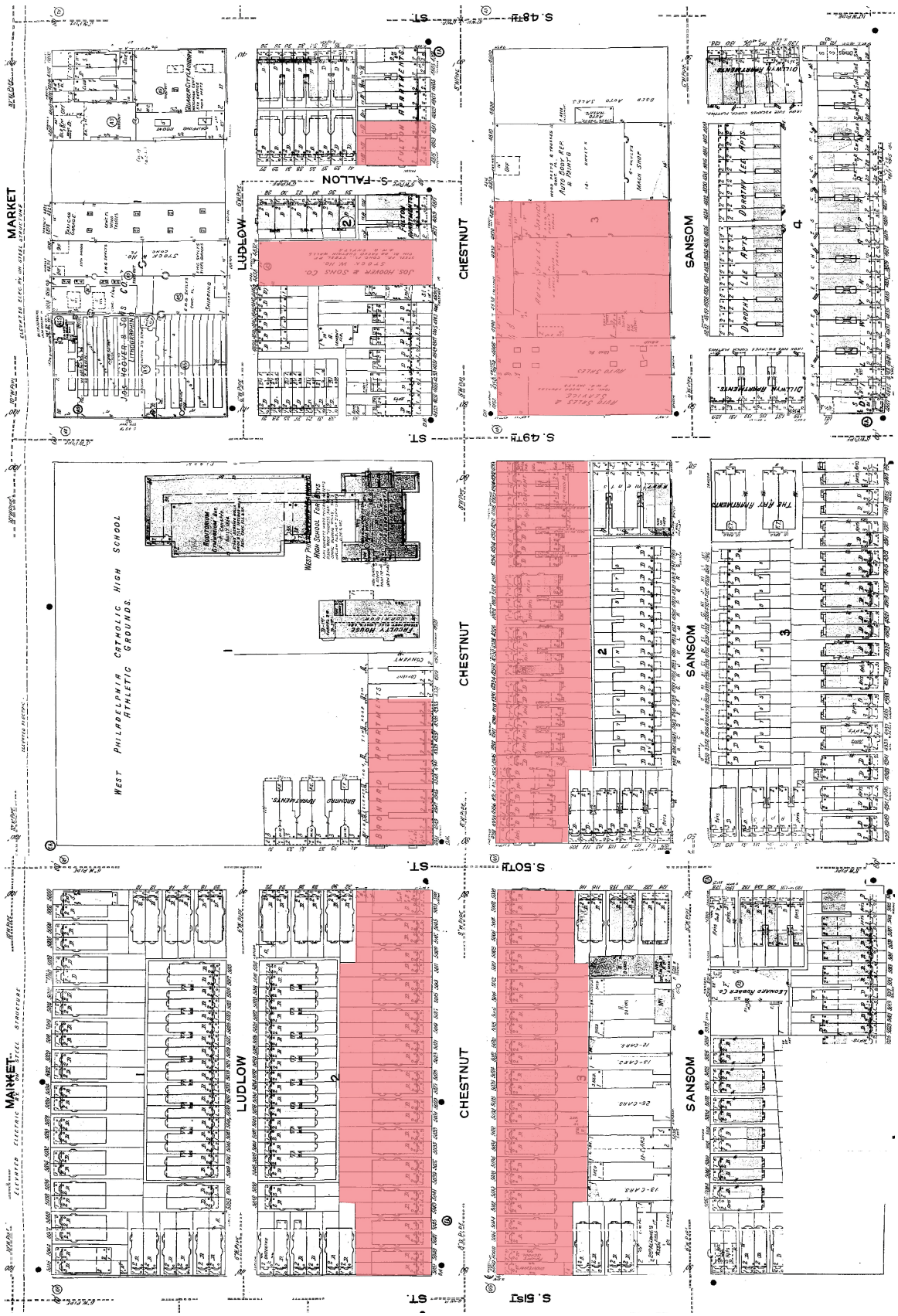
S. 46TH ST.
S. FARRAGUT
S. 47TH ST.
S. 48TH ST.
THE ARENA
GIRLS' CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
THE PHILADELPHIA GAS WORKS CO.
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA ELECTRIC BUREAU
AUTO SALES & SERVICE
ATANNAR APARTMENTS
PARKE APARTMENTS
VERONA PLAZA
THE VERONA APARTMENTS
ROULA APARTMENTS
1406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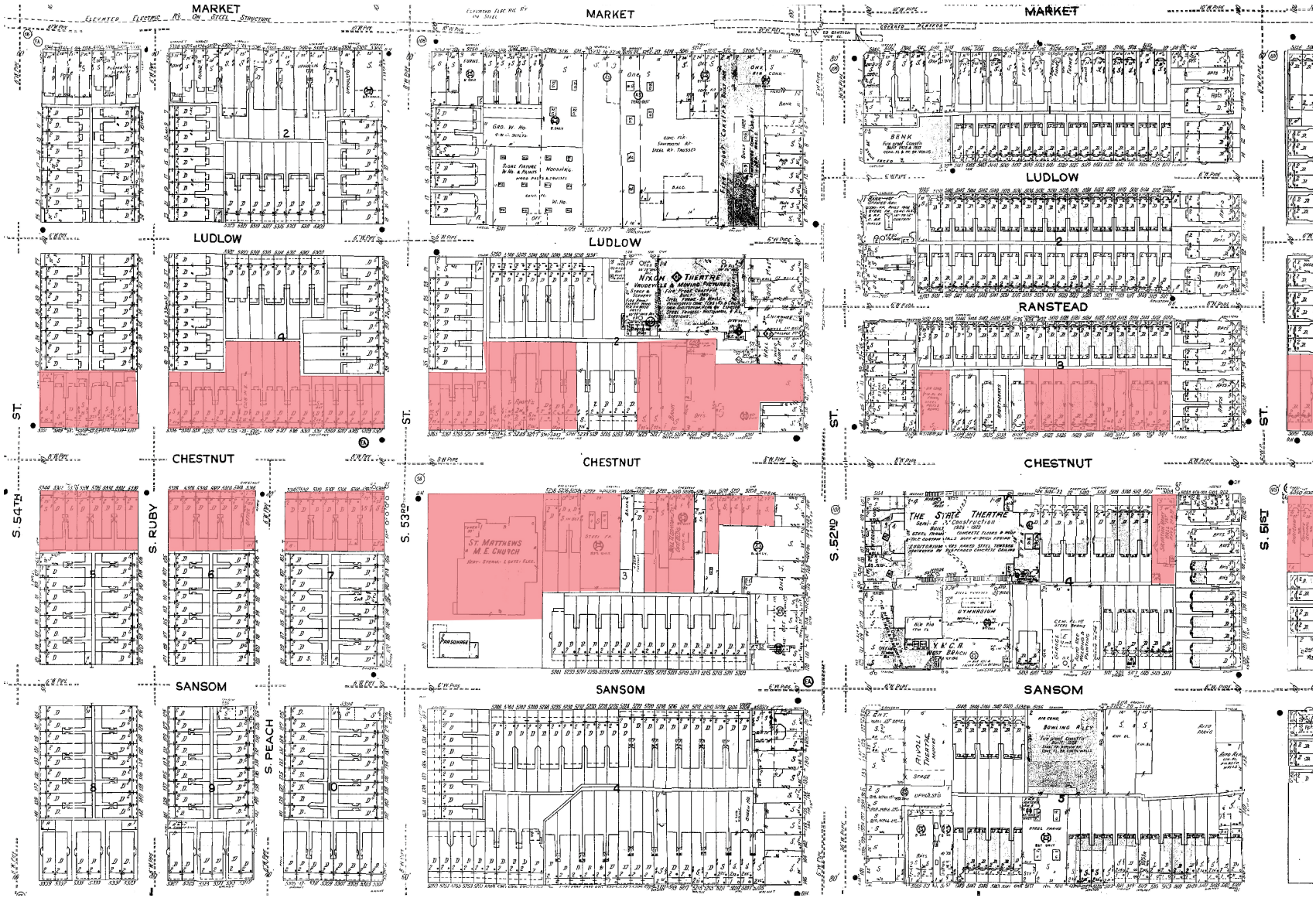
ATHLETIC GROUNDS.
FACULTY HOUSE
BRONARD APARTMENTS
DILLWYN APARTMENTS
DOROTHY LEE APTS.
THE ART APARTMENTS
JOS HOOVER & SONS CO.
FULTON APARTMENTS
AUTO SALES
AUTO BODY REP.
MACH SHOP
LEONARD RUBBER CO.
ELEVATED ELECTRIC RAILWAY STEEL STRUCTURE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S. 54TH ST.
S. RUBY
S. PEACH
S. 53RD ST.
S. 52ND ST.
S. 51ST ST.
NIXON THEATRE
ST. MATTHEWS M.E. CHURCH
THE STATE THEATRE
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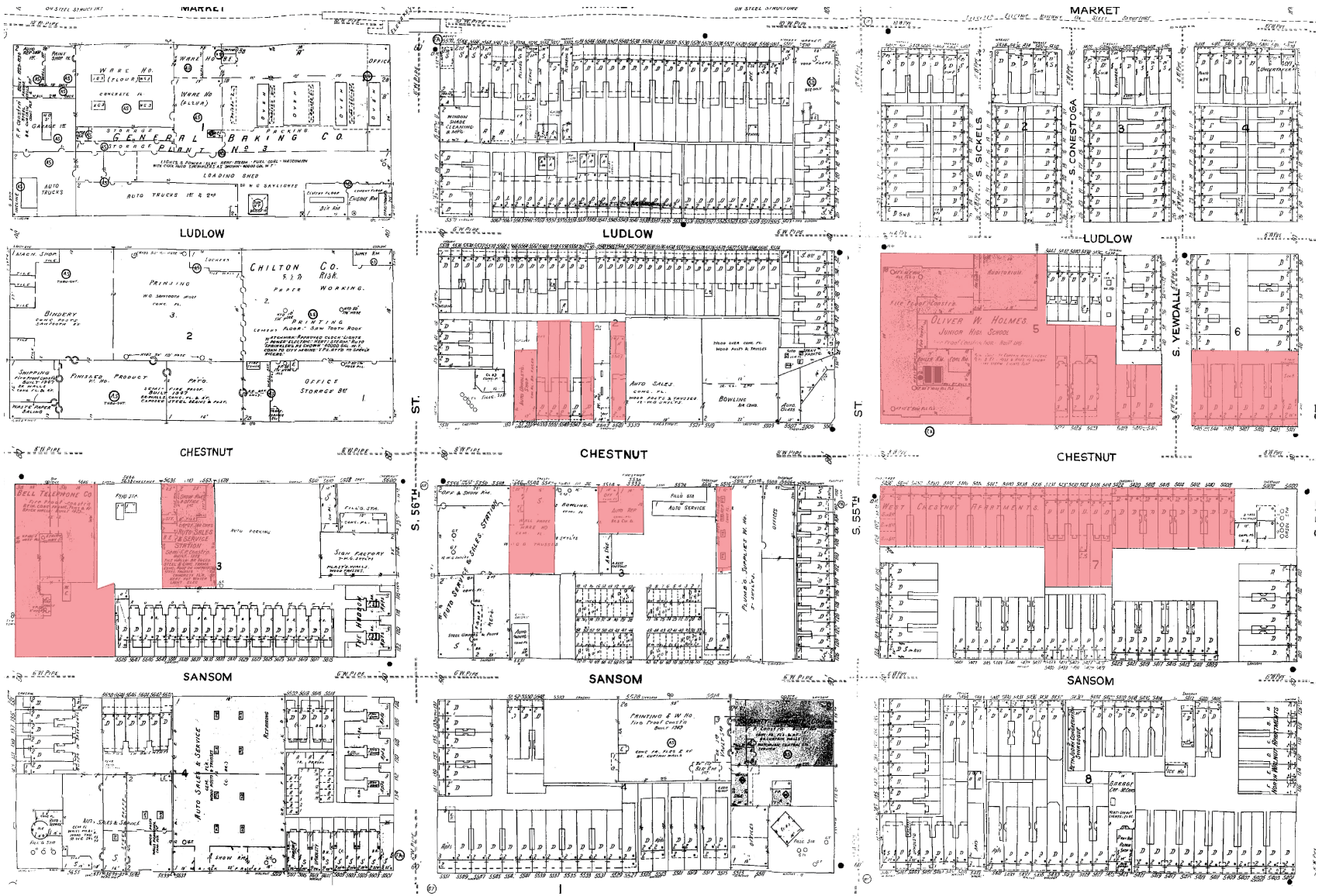
GYMNASIUM
BOWLING ALLEY
STAGE
BANK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AUTO TRUCKS
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PRINTING
BINDERY
FINISHED PRODUCT
OFFICE STORAGE BE
CHESTNUT
CHESTNUT
CHESTNUT
S. CONESTOGA
S. SICKELS
S. YEWDALL
OLIVER W. HOLMES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
AUTO SALES
BOWLING
AUTO SERVICE & SALES STATION
WEST CHESTNUT APARTMENTS
S. 56TH ST.
S. 55TH ST.
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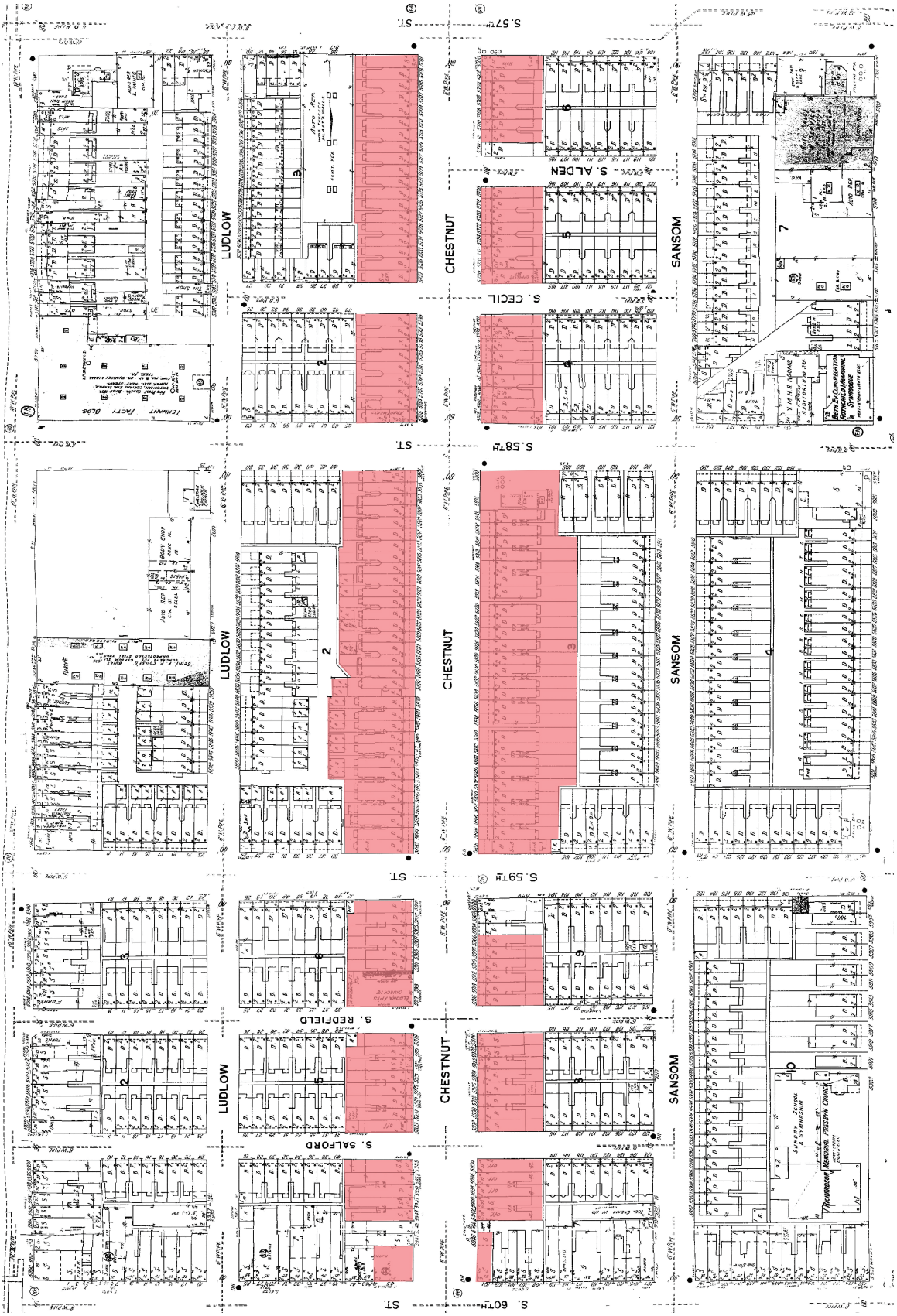
SIGN FACTORY
SANSOM
SANSOM
SANSOM
PRINTING & W. HO.
GARAGE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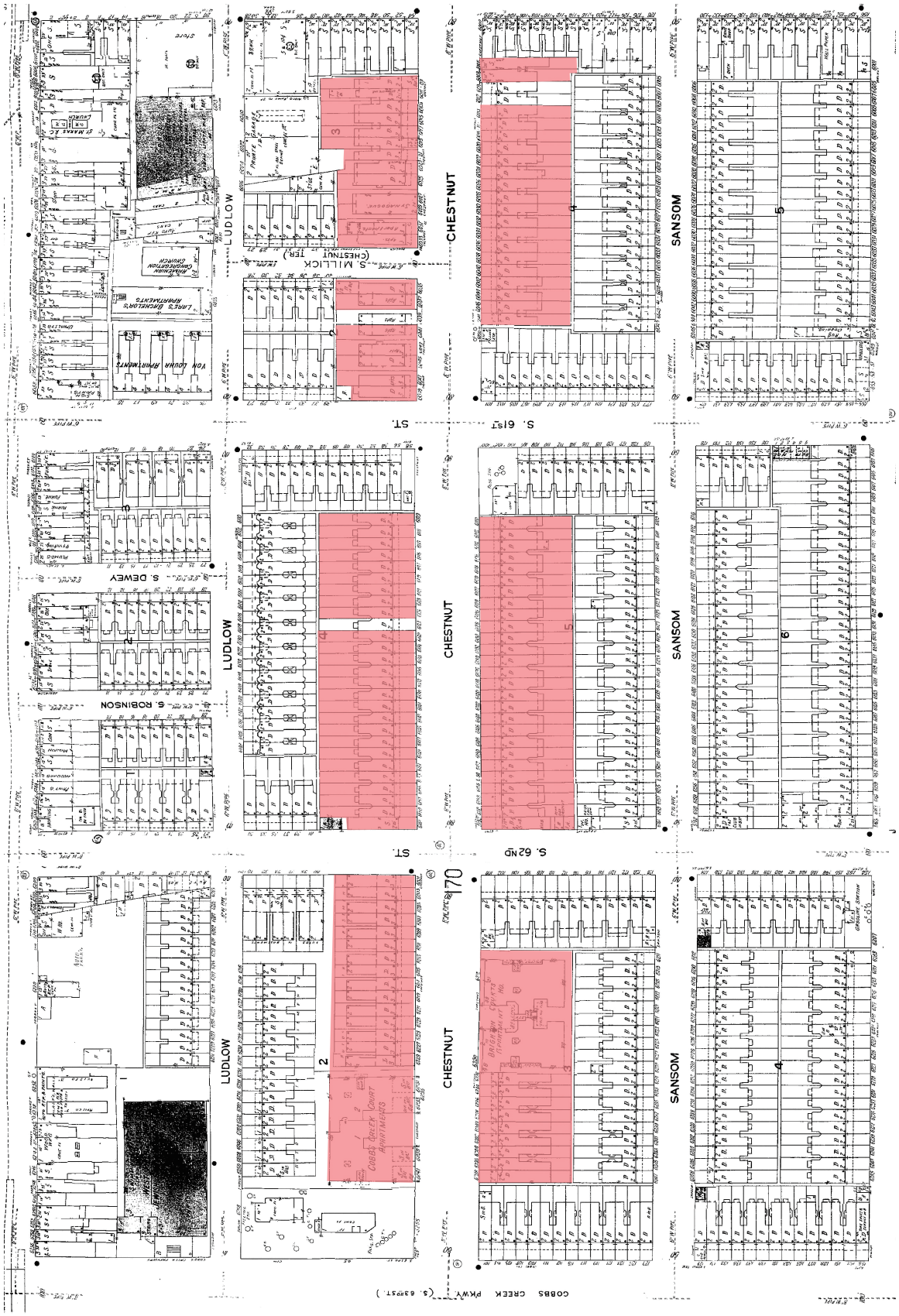
SANSOM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SANSOM
S. 61ST
S. 62ND
S. DEWEY
S. ROBINSON
S. MILLICK (CHESTNUT TER.)
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