



RENEW > Historic Preservation

Cultural and Historical Resources



*Philadelphia2035
Citywide Vision*

Goal 6.1.1 Preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures and districts.

Several major events have shaped development within Lower North: the introduction of the railroads and growth of textile factories in the 1800s, the subsequent population boom, the creation of East Fairmount Park in the late 1800s, the introduction of the Market-Frankford Line and Broad Street Line in the early 1900s, and the Second Great Migration of African Americans following World War II. Each of these events has contributed to a rich history within the district. This legacy has left many physical artifacts that have been preserved and some that still could be.

Lower North has 10 National Register Historic Districts and two Philadelphia Register Historic Districts. In addition there are dozens of National Register and Philadelphia Register Historic Sites, seven National Historic Landmarks, one National Historic Landmark District, and three Philadelphia Register Historic Streets. In the last 10 years, developers have invested over \$116 million in or adjacent to these historic districts, including at least 850 units of new housing.



Strawberry Mansion Bridge
Photo: Nathan Holth and Rick McOmber



Plaza Apartments
Photo: Domus Inc.



Dox Thrash House
Photo: Preservation Alliance



National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects deemed worthy of preservation. Owners of income-producing properties listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places or of properties that are contributing resources within a National Register Historic District may be eligible for tax credits for the rehabilitation of the historic structure.

National Historic Landmarks and Landmark Districts

National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic sites, buildings, structures, or objects designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. National Historic Landmark Districts are historic districts that have received the same designation.

National Designation



Local Designation



Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

The Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) is responsible for ensuring the preservation of historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, interiors, and districts in the city. The commission identifies and designates historic resources, listing them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It regulates preservation through the City's building and other permitting processes.



Registered Cultural and Historic Resources

- National Register Site
- ▭ National Register District (ND)
- National Historic Landmark
- Girard College National Historic Landmark District
- Philadelphia Register Site
- ▭ Philadelphia Register District (LD)
- ... Philadelphia Register Street Paving District



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Recommendations

27. Direct housing subsidies and commercial assistance into areas within or adjacent to the Diamond Street Local Historic District and West Diamond Street National Historic District.
 - > Implementing Agencies: OHCD, Commerce | CW Objective: 8.1.3
28. Pursue nomination of the following sites to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places:
 - The Pyramid Club (1517 W. Girard Avenue)
 - Legendary Blue Horizon (1314 N. Broad Street)
 - Church of the Gesu (1734–54 W. Thompson Street)
 - Berean Presbyterian Church (2101 N. Broad Street)
 - Teatro Puerto Rico/Diamond Theatre (2119 Germantown Avenue)
 - The townhomes at 1416–32 W. Girard Avenue
 - F.A. Poth Brewery (31st and Jefferson Streets)
 - > Implementing Agencies: Nonprofits, PHC | CW Objective: 8.1.1
29. Pursue nomination of the Strawberry Mansion Southwest District to the National Register of Historic Places:
 - > Implementing Agencies: Nonprofits, PHC | CW Objective: 8.1.1
30. Facilitate partnerships to utilize underused religious buildings:
 - Partner arts organizations and congregations with large facilities; and
 - Provide flexibility in the building code to accommodate uses other than religious services in existing buildings.
 - > Implementing Agencies: MOACCE, L&I, Non-profits | CW Objectives: 8.1.5



Late 19th century townhomes anchor the 1400 block of W. Girard Avenue. Inappropriate commercial signage and building reuse, like the building pictured at left, threaten to diminish the integrity of this block. The block should be locally designated.

CASE STUDY

Church of the Advocate

Located at 18th and Diamond Streets, this Gothic Revival North Philadelphia church was completed in 1897. Between 1973 and 1976, fourteen large-scale murals were installed that depict the black experience in the United States. Along with its small congregation, a soup kitchen, and summer camp, the church now shares space with *Art Sanctuary*, an organization dedicated to bringing citizens together through the community-building power of black art. The Church of the Advocate provides an impressive example of how congregations can develop partnerships to enable the utilization and preservation of their large facilities.



Historic Resources Addressed in the Recommendations

