

THE
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P.O. BOX 31927, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19104

WEB SITE <http://uchs.net>

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University City Historical Society Proposes Chester-Regent Historic District

The University City Historical Society has nominated a group of 41 homes in the Clark Park area of West Philadelphia for listing on Philadelphia's Register of Historic Places. The nomination, named the Chester-Regent Historic District, will be considered at two public meetings of the Philadelphia Historical Commission in April and May.

The 41 homes of the Chester-Regent Historic District were all designed by the well-known nineteenth-century architect Willis G. Hale for a small development on the south side of Chester Avenue and both sides of Regent Street between 45th and 46th Streets. The properties that comprise the district present a typical urban hierarchy, with a single-family mansion known as "The Gables" and large twins on Chester Avenue, to smaller south-facing twins on Regent, and a north-facing set of rowhouses on Regent. All 41 houses share common building materials and distinguishing characteristics of the Queen Anne style.

Willis G. Hale is best known as the architect of the Divine Lorraine Hotel located at North Broad and Fairmount Streets, also on the historic register. Hale, often paired with the architect Frank Furness, epitomized the late nineteenth-century love of eclectic Queen Anne style.

The Historical Commission will first review the nomination at their Committee for Historic Designation meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 17, 2019 in Room 18-029 on the 18th floor of the municipal office building at 1515 Arch Street. The second review will occur with the full Commission, at 9 a.m. on Friday, May 10, 2019, in the same location. Both meetings are open to the public and will provide both the owners of the houses and the public to participate in the Commission's discussions about the merits of the listing on the local register. A copy of the nomination is available on the Historic Commission's website, www.phila.gov/historical.

In nominating the Chester-Regent Historic District, the University City Historical Society (UCHS) has sought the feedback and support of all property owners within the proposed district. Multiple meetings hosted by UCHS were convened to provide owners the opportunity to understand the impact of historic designation and to ask questions of the staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission. The nomination has been submitted with the majority of property owners in support of the nomination.

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The University City Historical Society has nominated these properties recognizing their architectural significance and role in the development of Philadelphia's largest streetcar suburb. West Philadelphia contains one of the largest collections of intact Victorian residential architecture in the United States, and yet the vast majority of these structures remain unprotected. New development in West Philadelphia has dramatically accelerated in recent years, often resulting in the demolition of historic neighborhood assets to make way for larger and less architecturally interesting structures. The nomination of the Chester-Regent Historic District will preserve one of West Philadelphia's most treasured blocks for generations to come.

About the University City Historical Society

Founded in 1967, The University City Historical Society is a volunteer community organization that promotes awareness of the history and architectural character of University City. More information can be found at www.uchs.net

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