

# 40th & Pine: Past, Present, and Future

September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## Aims of the Meeting:

- 1) To examine the historical significance of the John P. Levy mansion (400 S. 40<sup>th</sup> St.) as the basis for more robust and informed public discussion of the future of Pine and 40th Streets.
- 2) To review planning issues surrounding the site.
- 3) To lay the groundwork for a subsequent, preservation-oriented planning workshop.

The mansion is slated for demolition pending approval of permits for an entirely new building. A coalition of near neighbors, supported by preservationists throughout the City, is challenging this. The Board of Review for Licenses and Inspections has approved their standing and, on October 16, will hear their challenge of the Philadelphia Historical Commission's demolition approval.

## Key Dates in the History of 400 S. 40<sup>th</sup> Street

- 1851 New blocks planned West of 40th St. on land acquired from heirs of William Hamilton, botanist and owner of The Woodlands.
- 1852 Merchant-developer Jacob Knorr purchases the block bounded by 40<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, Pine, and Baltimore, from attorney and land speculator Nathaniel B. Browne.
- 1853 Plasterer Thomas Allen erects house on the SW corner of 40th and Pine.
- 1853 Industrialist John P. Levy purchases the property to use as his residence.
- 1890s Later owner and resident, leather manufacturer David Porter Leas, makes Colonial Revival modifications to house, including a new front porch.
- 1942 Property sold to the Thoroughgoods who turn it into a nursing home.
- 1964 Single-story cinderblock wings added to south and east sides of house.
- 1973 House listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.
- 1975 Three-story stair tower added to Pine Street side of house.
- 1978 House listed as contributing to the Hamilton Family Estate Historic District in National Register of Historic Places.
- 1987 Property purchased by the Lavins, who run it as a 'personal care facility'.
- 1998 House listed as contributing to the West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb Historic District in National Register of Historic Places.
- 2003 University of Pennsylvania's subsidiary, OAP Inc., purchases the property.

## Some Websites for Additional Information

Challenge to Demolition: [www.heritech.org/advocacy/40Pine.html](http://www.heritech.org/advocacy/40Pine.html)

West Philadelphia History Center: [www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/wphila/index.html](http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/wphila/index.html)

Philadelphia City Archives On Line: [www.phillyhistory.org](http://www.phillyhistory.org)

Spruce Hill Renewal Plan: [www.sprucehillca.org/plan/III/strategy.html](http://www.sprucehillca.org/plan/III/strategy.html)

Plan for West Philadelphia: [www.philaplanning.org/cpdiv/WPP.html](http://www.philaplanning.org/cpdiv/WPP.html)

Civic Goals and Urban Design Strategies for the 40<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor: [www.40thSt.org](http://www.40thSt.org)