 May 16, 2015

Dear Historic Street Resident:

The Philadelphia Society of Small Streets (PSSS) believes that your street deserves restoration as soon as possible. However, it will take some effort on your part to make that happen.

PSSS is dedicated to the preservation, repair, and restoration of Philadelphia's historic small streets. We put priority on historic streets that are lined with historic homes, particularly those streets located in historic districts, as well as in potential tourist areas.

This year The Streets Department published a survey and report, “The Historic Streets Assessment Report”, to catalogue and prioritize for restoration all of Philadelphia’s 551 historic blocks. The recommendations of that report and the contractor’s reliance on a computer program to determine the prioritization of historic streets to be repaired, seems to have not worked as hoped.

**The Street Department’s Top Ten list:**  The final Top Ten list presented by the Streets Department appears to be primarily back alleys and side streets of businesses, apartment buildings, and new development.  Only one street, the 300 block of American Street, fits the PSSS profile, in that it is lined with historic houses and desperately needs restoration.  In addition, many of the streets selected are far from the historic district.  The Number 1 street on the Top Ten list is a back street in Manayunk, consisting primarily of backyards and garages, and situated over 7 miles from City Hall.  Also on the list are 3 streets in Northern Liberties that are in the midst of a new development that is currently being constructed, and 1 street that appears to be an intersection up in Mt. Airy.

**As a result of the serious weaknesses in the Report, PSSS has stepped forward to make our own recommendations. Your street is on our list (see other side).**

If you want to influence the decision-making process, now is the time to act. Please go to [www.SmallStreetsPhilly.org](http://www.SmallStreetsPhilly.org) for important information and links, including “The Historic Streets Assessment Report” and our response, which includes The PSSS Suggested Restoration Priority List (linked to Google Street Views).

Persistence matters. We formed PSSS in 2011 in order to help in the restoration of Philadelphia’s charming and historic streets. In 2012, we got our own street, the 200 block of S. Jessup Street, plus 3 neighboring historic streets, restored. However, our success came only after several years of lobbying city officials and letters from residents. We based our case on safety, history, tourism, and the arts (lots of artists, photographers, and film crews come into our neighborhood).

So, if you want your street restored, you need to do your part – organize your neighbors and keep at it until you get what you and your historic street deserves – repair and restoration.

Contact:

* Mark.Squilla@phila.gov  (Chair of Streets Committee on City Council)
* David.Perri@phila.gov  (Streets Commissioner, Streets Department
* Jon.Farnham@phila.gov  (Executive Director of Philadelphia Historical Commission)

It would also help if you joined our (free) meetup group so that we can keep you informed of the latest developments, and you can do the same for us. There is strength in numbers.

Lynn and Cliff Landes, founders

The Philadelphia Society of Small Streets

<http://www.SmallStreetsPhilly.org> (important information & links)

<http://www.meetup.com/The-Philadelphia-Society-of-Small-Streets-PSSS/> (free meetup group)

215-629-3553

**PSSS Suggested Restoration Priority List:**

First – Society Hill: (These two streets are next to each other in Philadelphia’s premier historic district)

        S. American Street, 300 block – In a historic/tourist district, lined by historic houses, looks like it needs a total reset.

* S. Philip Street, 300 block – In a historic/tourist district, lined by historic houses, may also need a total reset due to sidewalk that is well above street level and collapsing

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Second – Wash West:  (These three streets intersect one another in Wash West, another historic district next to Society Hill, and are in the very active community (Jefferson Hospital) at 10th and Spruce, which features lots of cafes, restaurants, businesses, and the historic Bonaparte House - <http://www.ushistory.org/districts/washingtonsquare/bonap.htm>

        Hutchinson Street – 200 block, lined with many historic houses and some new construction, needs a total reset

* Bonaparte Court – adjacent to Bonaparte House, lined with some newer townhouses and garages
* Manning Street – 900 block, lined with a few historic houses, plus garages, and businesses, empties onto lively 10th Street business and café district.

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Third – South Philly:

* Alter Street – off Front Street, special “blue” street, across from the Rizzo Ice Rink and next to Mummers Museum, needs total reset
* (2 streets) Oriana and Kater Streets, off of South Street – 300 block, behind TLA theatre, some houses and businesses, outside eating area, interesting situation

* American Street – off Carpenter Street, special “yellow” street, very charming dead end, lined with historic houses, needs to be reset
* Bodine Street – off of Christian Street. This is a clear safety issue, but only in one small spot at entrance of street. Work should be done as soon as possible by a Streets Department crew. Otherwise the street is lined with historic houses and is in good shape.

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Not prioritized, but should also be done as soon as possible:

        Panama Street (Schuylkill River/Locust Point neighborhood) – 2400 block, charming street, lined with historic houses, but in bad shape, needs to be completely reset.