

October 15, 2019

Elise Vider, *Chair*

Executive Committee

David Brownlee
George L. Claflen, Jr.
Marsha Moss

The Honorable William K. Greenlee
Chair of the Rules Committee
City Council of Philadelphia
City Hall Room 508
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Steering Committee

Peter Angelides
Julie Donofrio
David W. Feldman
Veronica Ayala Flores
David Gest
Patrick Grossi
Avery Harmon
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Craig Schelter
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Eli Storch
James Templeton
Fon S. Wang
Venise Whitaker

Re: Bills 190611 amending parking standards for historically designated properties, 190612 amending standards for accessory dwelling units, and 190613 amending use standards for historically designated properties

Dear Councilman Greenlee,

I am pleased to transmit herewith our testimony on these bills.

The Design Advocacy Group (DAG) is a public forum and advocate for design quality and equity in the planning, architecture, preservation and physical development of Philadelphia. We are a volunteer organization of more than 1,700 members from a broad spectrum of disciplines who share an interest in promoting excellence in Philadelphia's physical environment.

As an organization, we are excited to see the final recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force evolving into practical policy, which we believe each of these bills to be.

First, and most simply, the introduction of Accessory Dwelling Units into the Philadelphia Code provides a straightforward option for homeowners to balance the costs of maintaining their historic properties.

The Parking Reduction bill represents another meaningful way by which preservation can be incentivized. Not only does this bill encourage the rehabilitation of Philadelphia's historic fabric, it also supports the creation of larger developments, in which the historic component can be a driver of the project, instead of a weighty passenger.

Lastly, in our public comments in reaction to the final draft of the Mayor's Task Force Report, DAG stated that, "we are especially enthusiastic about by-right zoning for special purpose historic buildings." These buildings are often the most difficult to reuse, and this added level of flexibility goes a long way to giving them a fighting chance.

We thank you for addressing the challenge of historic preservation in Philadelphia head on and we hope that you will support all three bills.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Eli Storch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eli Storch, AIA
Design Advocacy Group