



September 15, 2021

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

ATTN: Philadelphia Historical Commission

Re: 113-29 Berkley Street

Harman Deutsch Ohler Architecture is proposing the new construction of a 6-story Mixed-use structure, containing commercial space(s) at the 1st floor and basement, as well as parking in the rear portion of the first floor and basement, with 143 dwelling units at the 2nd through 6th floors, located at 113-29 Berkley Street. The proposal also includes the incorporation of a 1950 Mountain View diner at the first floor.

Harman Deutsch Ohler Architecture has prepared this application on behalf of Wayne Junction Properties, LLC, the owner of the property.

The developer, Philly Office Retain President Ken Weinstein, concentrated his recent efforts on the preservation and revitalization of the Wayne Junction area, undertaking a series of factory and warehouse adaptive reuse conversions to apartments, restaurants, and offices. One driving concept has been the promotion of uses that appeal to both local community members as well as visitors. He owned and operated Trolley Car Diner on Germantown Avenue in Mt. Airy from 2000-2019 after moving that 1952 Mountain View diner from Wilkes-Barre, PA. The inclusion and preservation of this diner continued his efforts to preserve nostalgia and promote revitalization in once neglected pockets of our city.

Diners trace their lineage back to 1870's Providence, RI., where horse-drawn freight wagons were modified by Walter Scott to serve hot meals; early versions of modern-day food trucks ubiquitous to cities large and small. Building upon this, in Worcester, MA, Samuel Jones manufactured and sold these wagons to other early entrepreneurs. Others followed suit, with wagons evolving into the larger, ornate, pre-manufactured, semi-permanent versions that exist today. Northern New Jersey became the production center of the stainless-steel icons that remain today, which proliferated throughout the Northeast. 6000 were built, 1800 remain, 1200 still proudly serve food, and 200 remain in their original pre-1965 condition.

Our diner is 16' x 60', seats 65, and was manufactured by the Mountain View Diners Company in Singac, NJ in 1950. Prior to its purchase by Wayne Junction Properties LLC in May 2018, it was located and operated in several CT cities over its 70 year history.

- Egan's Diner	Waterbury, CT	
- Windham Diner	Willimantic, CT	
- G. Otto's Hiway Diner	Southington, CT	(1971-86)
- Valley Diner	Waterbury, CT	(1987-1993)
- Mickey's	Willimantic, CT	(2005)
- Jonathan's Café	Willimantic, CT	(2016)

In 2018, our diner completed its 244 miles journey via truck, crossing four state lines, with a police escort from Broad and Cheltenham, to the former site of the Van Straaten and Havey Silk Mill, on Berkley Street in the Germantown section of Philadelphia.

It will borrow its name from the former Wayne Junction Diner, which was located just around the corner from our site on Wayne Avenue. That paramount-style diner was a cherished local eatery for decades, but closed in the early 90s, and sat vacant until its eventual demolition in 2008. Our intention is to restore an amenity to the community that brightens the lives of those that will frequent this stainless steel institution.

We are proposing a 6-story, brick, cast stone and ACP clad structure. The Van Straaten and Havey Silk Mill building, which was demolished by the city in 2012, inspired our proposed aesthetic through the use of prominent brick pilasters, an articulated cornice line, and proportional factory style glazing. The Wayne Junction Diner will take pride of place, nestled inside, and projecting through the 1st floor commercial store front glazing, proudly displaying the stainless steel façade. Visitors will be seated inside and around the diner itself where they can experience the structure from new vantage points.

There are currently more than 20 diners located in Philadelphia, three near-original stainless steel diners (Trolley Car, Silk City, and Bob's Diner), and two that underwent needed renovations, but lost some nostalgic charm (Melrose and Mayfair Diner). We are excited to propose the next iteration of our diner's storied history.

This application is intended for final approval for the proposed new construction as per the enclosed drawings.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding our submission.

Respectfully,

Rustin Ohler
Harman Deutsch Ohler Architecture