

POLICY ADDRESSING HISTORIC LAND MARKING

The nonconsensual designation of churches and other religious property as land mark or historic property, or as part of a historic district, is a serious problem for many religions. Without the consent of the religious community involved, these designations are an undue intrusion of Government into religious organizations, represent a threat to religious freedom and where historical designation does exist can result in a significant financial burden for the property owner. Many denominations, including the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, desire exemption from these nonconsensual designations through legislative action or, if necessary, litigation in the courts.

In order to avoid any problems or misunderstandings in the pursuit of such remedies through the legislature or the courts, all Pastors, Directors and Administrators are requested not to become involved with or participate in the historic land marking of any buildings of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and its parishes, either individually or as part of a district or accept offers of technical assistance and/or funding for such purpose, however, well-intentioned by offerees. Moreover, reports should promptly be made in writing to the Office of the Vicar for Administration whenever any attempted or proposed historic land marking and/or offer of technical help or funding become known.