

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Rockwell buys 17 Bringhurst homes

For more than 130 years, the Bringhurst Trust provided affordable housing to needy families in 16 brick half-double homes built on Laurel Street in 1877 with funds left in the will of Wright Bringhurst, a wealthy resident of Trappe who died in 1876.

Bringhurst's will created a trust with three Pottstown residents as trustees to build the houses and manage the properties, overseen by Pottstown Council.

In recent years, however, the Trust has been unable to continue its operations. The Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas appointed three attorneys knowledgeable in real estate to dissolve the Trust and dispose of its real estate. (Other branches of the Trust own properties in Norristown and Upper Providence.)

Recently, the Pottstown properties were sold to Rockwell Development Group, the developer of the nearby

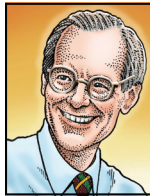
Hanover Square Townhouses and the restored Hanover Square Warehouse (Meyerhoff shirt factory).

Tom Burleigh, project manager, said the 16 homes will be renovated and leased at market rates. (Because all the homes are on one lot, it would be cumbersome to try to subdivide 16 different lots.) Given the homes' age and unusual history, Rockwell hopes to do the renovations as a federal historic tax credit project.

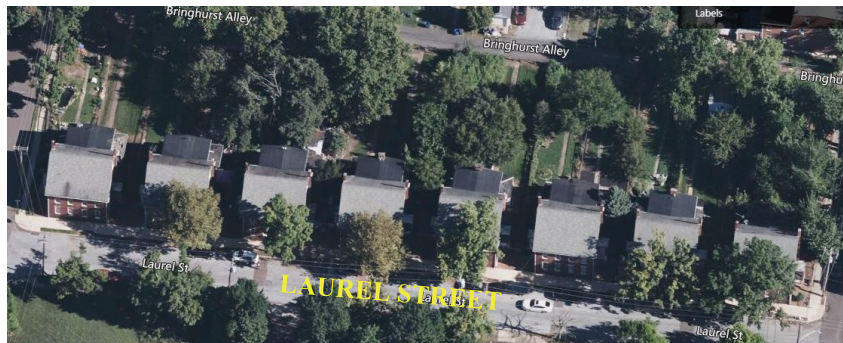
Rockwell also purchased a home at 316 N. Charlotte Street, a stand-alone house owned by the Bringhurst Trust.

Both Burleigh and Mark Himsworth, a court-appointed attorney for the Bringhurst Trust, declined to disclose the sale price.

Given Rockwell's historic restoration of the shirt factory, it's likely the Bringhurst homes will be a gem.



Commentary by  
Thomas Hylton



**SIXTEEN BRICK HOMES** comprising the north side of the 300 block of Laurel Street, shown above and below, were constructed as affordable housing by the Bringhurst Trust in 1877. The Trust was set up by the will of Wright Bringhurst, a county philanthropist, and operated successfully for more than 130 years before falling apart in recent times. The Trust was taken over by the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas and its homes were recently sold to the developer of the Hanover Square townhouses, Rockwell Development Group, for an undisclosed sum.

