

STATE: Pennsylvania	
COUNTY: Philadelphia	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER MAY 5 1972	DATE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**OLD CITY** *Historic District*

AND/OR HISTORIC: **OLD CITY (INCLUDING PARTS OF WASHINGTON SQUARE EAST DEVELOPMENT AREA AND FRANKLIN SQUARE EAST DEVELOPMENT AREA)**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**PHILADELPHIA**

STATE <b>PENNSYLVANIA</b>	CODE <b>42</b>	COUNTY: <b>PHILADELPHIA</b>	CODE <b>101</b>
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
\_\_\_\_\_

STREET AND NUMBER:  
\_\_\_\_\_

CITY OR TOWN:  
\_\_\_\_\_



**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**CITY HALL, DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**BROAD AND MARKET STREETS**

CITY OR TOWN: <b>PHILADELPHIA</b>	STATE: <b>PENNSYLVANIA</b>	CODE: <b>42</b>
--------------------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)**

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
\_\_\_\_\_

STREET AND NUMBER:  
\_\_\_\_\_

CITY OR TOWN: _____	STATE: _____	CODE: _____
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STATE: PENNSYLVANIA	ENTRY NUMBER MAY 5 1972	DATE
COUNTY: PHILADELPHIA	FOR NPS USE ONLY	

12-18-72

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In spite of the diversity of architectural styles in the Old City area most of the buildings are brick, a minority faced with granite, marble, brownstone, stucco, or cast iron. Trim is usually of wood or stone for the earlier buildings and after 1850 often of iron. Buildings of the late 18th and early 19th centuries are residential in character and occasionally in function, two or three-and-a-half stories with gable roofs. Those of the mid-19th century (1830-80), however, are commercial buildings, four or five stories with flat roofs, often with a store front of a material different from the upper stories.

Very few of the buildings, almost exclusively those in Elfreth's Alley, have been restored. The rest of the buildings remain with their exteriors and interiors in various degrees of alteration, but most of them have been altered but slightly over the years.

The commercial character of the Old City area is predominant. The neighborhood is a showcase of 19th century wholesale-retail stores and warehouses. Among the more outstanding examples is the John Singer warehouse at the rear of 319 Market Street, the oldest surviving warehouse in Philadelphia. The three-and-a-half-story brick building was built in 1806 and is similar to the LaTour warehouse on South Water Street that was demolished in 1967. Nearby the architect S. D. Button provided in the five-story Leland Building, 37-39 South Third Street, and early (1855) architectural solution for the tall, narrow commercial building by recessing the spandrels behind continuous granite piers to emphasize verticality. The commercial building at the northwest corner of Front and Arch Streets is a fine example of mid-19th-century cast-iron architecture. Built between 1855 and 1857, it has brick bearing walls and a cast-iron front with an arcade at each of its five stories articulated by engaged columns, originally sanded and painted to simulate marble.

Throughout the area are entire blocks of commercial buildings that are as significant as individual structures. The west side of North Front Street between Market and Arch Streets (2-66 N. Front Street) is a rare surviving block of early-19th-century brick warehouses, characterized by marble piers at most of the round stories. The north side of Chestnut Street between Strawberry and Third Streets (213-43 Chestnut Street) serves as a catalogue of mid-19th-century commercial architecture, displaying brick, brownstone, granite, and cast-iron facades with a variety of esigns ranging from the academic to the utilitarian. The east side of North Third Street between Market and Arch Streets (1-63 N. Third Street) is even more stylistically diverse, ranging from gable-roof brick stores to Italianate and Gothic designs in iron and sandstone.

In spite of its commercial character the area retains some of the nation's most famous residences. Elfreth's Alley, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965, is the oldest unchanged and continually inhabited street in Philadelphia and illustrates the typical side-street dwellings of 18th-century artisans. Twenty-nine contiguous brick houses extend along this six-foot-wide alley between Front and Second Streets above Arch Street. Five similar dwellings

(see Continuation Sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Pennsylvania	
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ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
MAY 5	1972	

(Number all entries)

#2 Location

Area bounded: on the north by the north boundary of buildings and lots fronting on the south side of Wood Street (or legal line of Vine Street Expressway Extension) from the southwest corner of Front and Wood streets to the southeast corner of Fifth and Wood streets;

on the west, beginning at the southeast corner of Fifth and Wood streets, along the west boundary of buildings and lots fronting on the east side of Fifth Street to Benjamin Franklin Bridge Approach, thence eastward to Fourth Street and along the west boundary of buildings and lots fronting on the east side of Fourth Street to the southeast corner of Fourth and Arch streets, thence westward along the south side of Arch Street to Fifth Street, thence southward along the west boundary of buildings and lots fronting on the east side of Fifth Street to the northeast corner of Chestnut and Fifth streets, thence eastward along the north side of Chestnut Street to the northeast corner of Second and Chestnut streets, thence southward along the west boundary of buildings and lots fronting on the east side of Second Street to the northeast corner of Second and Walnut streets;

on the south, beginning at the northeast corner of Second and Walnut streets, eastward along the south boundary of buildings and lots fronting on the north side of Walnut Street to the northwest corner of Front and Walnut streets;

on the east, beginning at the northwest corner of Front and Walnut streets, northward along the east boundary of buildings and lots on the west side of Front Street (or legal line of Delaware Expressway, Interstate Route 95) to the southwest corner of Front and Wood Streets.

Note: the parcel between Nos. 23-41 South Fourth Street, currently proposed for redevelopment, is not included in the District.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Pennsylvania	
COUNTY Philadelphia	
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(Number all entries)

6. Representation in existing surveys

Historic American Buildings Survey 1935, 1941, 1957, 1972 + NHL  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
800 Nineteenth Street, N. W. , Washington, D. C.

and

Library of Congress Annex  
Washington, D.C.

Old Philadelphia Survey (AIA) 1931  
Free Library of Philadelphia  
Logan Circle  
Philadelphia, Penn.

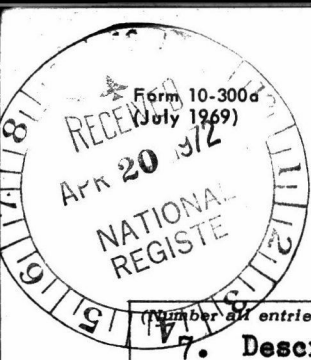
Philadelphia Historical Commission Survey 1957-58  
Philadelphia Historical Commission  
1313 City Hall Annex  
Philadelphia, Penn. 19107

Philadelphia City Planning Commission Survey  
Washington Square Redevelopment Area Plan 1961

and

Old City Historic Area 1971  
Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
13th Floor, City Hall Annex  
Philadelphia, Penn. 19107





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE <b>Pennsylvania</b>	
COUNTY <b>Philadelphia</b>	
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(Number all entries)

7. Description

are at 12-18 and 24 Cuthbert Street (formerly Coombe's Alley), a parallel alley below Arch Street. Unlike their neighbors on Elfreth's Alley, these houses have not been restored or rehabilitated.

Less famous than Elfreth's Alley yet significant, is the German Reformed Church district, an area including 327 Cherry Street (Old German School) on the south, Nos. 129-37, 141-43 North Fourth Street on the west, and the First Reformed Church, 322-30 Race Street, on the north. All of these properties were owned by the German Reformed Church in the early 19th century and played a prominent role in the predominantly German neighborhood. The Reformed Church was founded in Philadelphia in 1727 and erected its first church building on this site in 1747. The present building was its third structure, built in 1837; since 1967 it has been in the process of restoration. Abutting the church's lot to the south is the two-and-a-half-story brick Old German School. Built in 1761, most of its original fabric was destroyed by a fire in 1878; it has recently been renovated into a florist shop. The seven houses on North Fourth Street were built as dwellings during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and are now being renovated into shops and homes, illustrating how old structures can be converted to contemporary use without disrupting or destroying the architectural scale or historic nature of a neighborhood.

The Betsy Ross House, 239 Arch Street, is one of the best known houses in Philadelphia, popularly accepted, even if not historically documented, as the residence of Betsy Ross, the legendary maker of the first flag of the United States. The two-and-a-half-story brick town house is a fine example of 18th-century Philadelphia domestic architecture, but has become a national shrine because of its supposed associations with Betsy Ross. It was built c. 1760, conjecturally restored in the 1930's, and in 1966 a wing for visitors' center was added to the rear.

Some of the oldest and most significant churches in the United States are found within this area. Christ Church, 22-26 North Second Street, an outstanding example of Palladian church architecture in the United States, was built between 1727 and 1744; its steeple was completed in 1754. Many Revolutionary heroes worshipped here, helping it to be named a National Shrine by Act of Congress in 1950. A block to the west, at 330 Arch Street, is the Arch Street Friends Meeting, built in 1804 from the designs of Owen Biddle, author of The Young Carpenter's Assistant (1805), and enlarged in 1811. A center of 19th-century Quaker activity, it remains the site of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and was recently put on the National Register.

A block further north, at 322-30 Race Street, Old First (German) Reformed Church is being restored to its 1837 appearance. Another block to the north, at the southeast and northwest corners of Fourth and New Streets stand St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church and St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church respectively. St. George's Church, also on the National Register, was built in 1769 and remains the world's oldest

(see Continuation Sheet)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Number all entries)

7. Description

Methodist Church in continuous use. St. Augustine's was originally built between 1796 and 1801 but was burned during the "Native American" riots of 1844; the present building dates from 1848.

Although famous Bank Row, Chestnut Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets, lies just outside the officially designated Old City area, three important bank buildings remain within the area. Bank of North America, 307 Chestnut Street, was the first commercial bank in the United States, chartered by the Continental Congress in 1781. In 1929 it merged with the First Pennsylvania Banking and Trust Company and continued to occupy the present, original site until 1967. The present Late Victorian Roman Revival building was built in 1895 from the designs of James H. Windrim.

Adjacent to the Bank of North America, at 315 Chestnut Street, is the First National Bank, the first national bank chartered in the United States. John McArthur, Jr. designed the chaste Italianate building, which was erected between 1865 and 1867 and is now a branch bank of the First Pennsylvania Banking and Trust Company. Nearby is the Mechanics Bank, 22 South Third Street. Built in 1837 it remains one of the last local Greek Revival designs of the noted architect-engineer William Strickland. It has been used as the Norwegian Seamen's Church since 1930. Other bank buildings of less importance are also in the area, including the Manufacturers National Bank, 29 North Third Street, and one at 18 South Third Street with notable Egyptian-Revival Doors.



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old City area is part of the original 1682 plan of the city of Philadelphia as laid out by Thomas Holme, surveyor for the province's proprietor, William Penn. In terms of architectural style and historic significance it remains one of the most important parts of the city. It includes some of the city's famous residences, historic churches, important financial institutions, and perhaps most importantly rare surviving 19th-century commercial districts, probably without equal in the United States for their extent and diversity.

Although the area possesses some significant buildings, some of which have been restored, equally as important is the promise of the area for future renovations into a residential-commercial neighborhood. It is relatively isolated from the bustle of the large retail and office buildings of the city center. Superhighways border the area to the north and east. Society Hill, a successfully restored and preserved historic residential district, borders it to the south, and the Independence National Historic Park, encompassing some of the most historically significant buildings in the nation, borders much of the area to the west. Preservation and development of the Old City area would create a large, contiguous district of historic buildings renovated for contemporary use.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS





NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

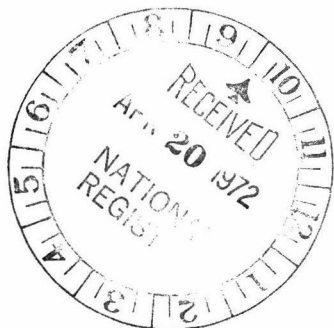
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE <b>Pennsylvania</b>	
COUNTY <b>Philadelphia</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <b>MAY 5</b>	DATE <b>1972</b>

(Number all entries)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Philadelphia Historical Commission files which include photographs, insurance surveys of the Philadelphia Contributionship and Mutual Assurance Company, etc.



Philadelphia

PROPERTY

Old city

STATE

Pa.

DATE OF RECEIPT

4/20/72

YES

NO

NUMBER

REGISTER



DATA PAGE

PHOTO (S)

PHOTO DESCRIPTION (S)

MAP (S)

MAP DESCRIPTION (S)

LOGGED

ACKNOWLEDGE

4/20/72

RESUBMIT

Teck ok 4/24/72/djt

REVIEW

OK means 4/20

HISTORIAN

Chay 4/20/72

ARCHEOLOGIST

ARCHITECT

OK Chambers 4-19-72

ASST. KEEPER

OK Miller 4/25/72

KEEPER

WRITER/EDITOR

Needs date stamp.

OK

otherwise, ok

Maurice 4/21/72

DIRECTOR, OAHP

EDITORIAL PROCESSING, EDITOR

Federal Registry Entry 6-6-72

Annual Edition Entry

Logged

MAY 5 1972

Card

MAY 5 1972

COMMENTS:

WORKING NUMBER 4,20,72,562

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:



101, 103-05 Arch

9.3.71 h

NPS Number 5.5.72

Title: Old City  
Phila, Pa

Loc. front + east facade

(1)

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

59 N. 33rd



SLATE

PHOTOGRAPH

E. side 3a

Arch to market

4. 7. 70 ly

NPS Number 5.5-72

Title: Old City

Loc. East side 3lt.

South fr. Arch to  
market

(2)

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



129 No 4<sup>th</sup> St

10.6.71 ~~de~~

NPS Number 5.5.72

Title: Old City

Phila, Pa

Loc. View of North

(3)

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



PA FRONTIS

10-105

NPS Number 5.5.72

Title: Old City H. Dist.

Phila Pa.

Loc. View of Elfreth's Alley (4)

West to Second Street

P.C. A. STROBL

CITY PLANNING

COMMISSION

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

533-183

Jacket \_\_\_\_\_ Illus No. A236

Width 20 Depth 23 Focus 50 %

Sq. Ht.  Line  Comb.  Sil'te  Broad

Strobl



319 1/2 Market St

9.2.70 h

NPS Number 5.5.72

Title: Old City

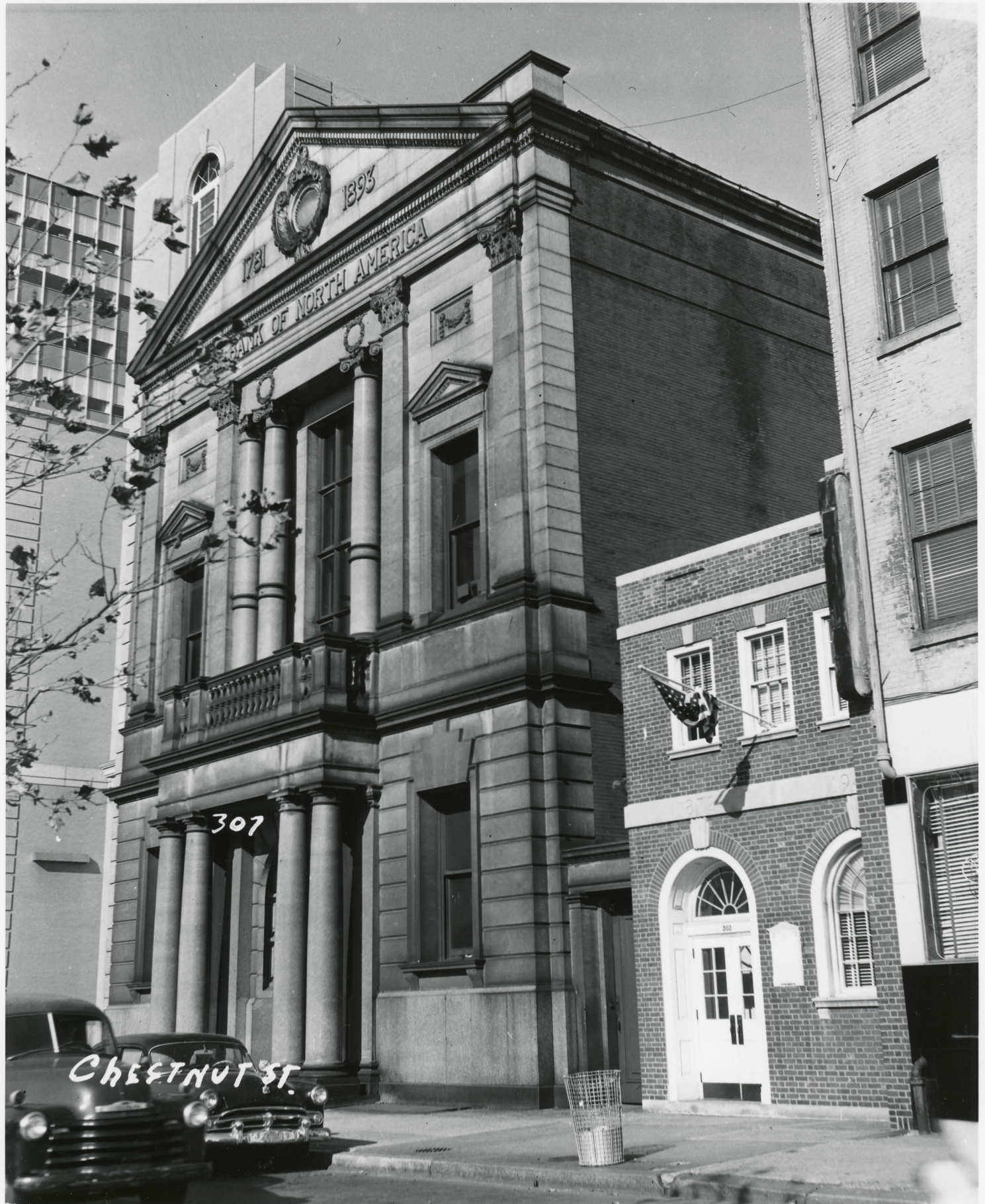
Phila, Pa

Loc. Photo of 319 1/2

Market Street

(5)

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



1781 BANK OF NORTH AMERICA 1893

ESTABLISHED 1781

307

303

CHESTNUT ST.

NPS Number 5.5.72

Title: Old City

Phila, Pa

Loc. Photo 307 Chestnut St

Bank of North American

Bldg

(6)

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

39804

PUBLIC PROPERTY

Architecture & Engineering Division

PHOTOGRAPHIC UNIT

ROOM 738 CITY HALL

NOV 18 1959



LITTERING  
SUBJECT  
- TO -  
\$50.00  
FINE

FLOORS  
RENT  
NO. 1461

S BUSLIK  
45  
GENERAL  
MERCHAND

Leland Bldg

37-39 So 3rd St

2T 1963-903

NPS Number 5.5.72

Title: Old City

Phila Pa.

Loc. View of Leland Bldg.

37, 39 South 3rd St.

(7)

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

903

Form 10-301  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

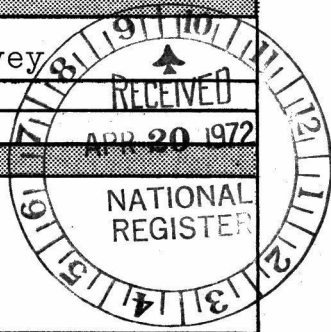
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Pennsylvania	
COUNTY Philadelphia	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER MAY 5 1972	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: Old City			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: (see continuation sheet for boundaries)			
CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia			
STATE: Pennsylvania	CODE 42	COUNTY: Philadelphia	CODE 101
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE: U.S. Dept. of Commerce Coast and Geodetic Survey			
SCALE: 1:24,000			
DATE: 1967			
<b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

PH0072265





ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE PENNSYLVANIA

Date Entered MAY 5 1972

Name

Location

✓ **Bethlehem Historic District I**

**Bethlehem  
Northampton County**

✓ **Old City Historic District**

**Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County**

Also Notified

**Hon. Hugh Scott**

**Hon. Richard S. Schweiker**

**Hon. Fred B. Rooney**

**Hon. William J. Green**

**Director, Northeast Region**

HR NRowland:mmn 5/5/72

**State Liaison Officer**

**Mr. William J. Wewer**

**Deputy Executive Director**

**Pennsylvania Historical & Museum  
Commission**

**William Penn Memorial Museum & Archives  
Building**

**Box 1026**

**Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108**

August 7, 1973

*PHH  
ARM  
cc  
PHR - Rogers*

Mr. Robert D. Quinn  
Deputy Director, Facilities Engineering and  
Construction Agency  
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare  
North Building Room 3025  
Washington, D.C. 20201

*Phila Co.*

Dear Mr. Quinn:

The Advisory Council has been informed by Mr. Norman Fovikes of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), Real Property Division, of an undertaking by your agency which may have an effect on the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Old City Historic District, a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is the proposal to transfer 225 Chestnut Street, which lies within the historic district, to the General Services Administration (GSA) as surplus property.

Because the Philadelphia Old City Historic District is listed on the National Register, 225 Chestnut Street is entitled to the protection afforded by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (80 Stat. 915). Therefore, the Council requests that you investigate this matter with respect to the applicability of Section 106 and provide us with a report on your Department's compliance with the Act.

For your convenience, enclosed is a copy of the compliance procedures issued by the Council and published in the Federal Register, November 14, 1972.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

*[Signature]*

Ken Tapanan  
Compliance Officer

Enclosure

cc:  
S. K. Stevens  
HPO-Pa  
DD-Dackenson  
PH-Utley

DDG-PA:NR-Phila Old Town HD (225 Chestnut St) (Sec 106/transfer to GSA)  
DDG-Holz/cis 7/8/73

April 8, 1975

H. Russell Bintzer  
Vice President of University Relations  
Drexel University  
32nd and Chestnut Streets  
Philadelphia, Pa., 19104

Dear Mr. Bintzer:

When A. J. Drexel gave the money to set up Drexel Institute I'm sure he hoped to be pleasantly remembered. He certainly deserves to be. But anyone who considers the present plight of the old building down on Third Street might wonder.

Built in 1854, the old Drexel Building has a fine marble facade, the lower part of which has been covered over by the cheap signs of the last tenant. It is now vacant.

The building backs right up to the historic court where Benjamin Franklin lived and on which the Federal Government is now spending more than four million dollars for restorations and tourist development (that doesn't include the cost of buying the land).

The Drexel Building individually has been certified by the Philadelphia Historical Commission as an historic landmark and it is located in a Federally Registered Historic District. It stands only a couple of hundred feet from the new Visitor Center of the Independence National Historical Park which is now being completed.

The present owners seem to have bought the property without knowing its historic significance. Last September they sent a demolition contractor to get a permit for its removal and they were resisted by the Historical Commission. The latter, however, has only the power to delay action for a few months and the time is fast running out. In fact, if there isn't a really audible public protest towards changing the owners' minds (the Keystone Shipping Company, A. B. Kurz, President) the building will probably be pulled down in about four weeks.

As an architect specializing over many years in the care and restoration of old buildings, I have inspected the Drexel structure. Except for a skylight leak which can be easily fixed the whole is in good basic condition. For its continued use new mechanical work would have to be installed. If only one floor were to be used that would cost very little. Somebody could make a lot of money in it during the Bicentennial years. The big thing is not to let it get pulled down this spring.

Enclosed are some sheets of solid historical fact and a copy of an Inquirer article by the well-known financial writer Joseph Livingston.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. A. J. Drexel Paul to whom I have spoken personally.

Sincerely yours,



# 'They Bring in a Lot of Money'

## Protestors Don't Want Building to Fall

By MARIO A. MILLETTI  
Of The Bulletin Staff

It doesn't look like much any more, the dirty gray building at Philadelphia's 34 S. Third st., with the eye-sore-making sign stretched across it.

But the five nuns, museum curator, and several others who showed up in old town Philadelphia yesterday don't want the four-story, Victorian-styled Drexel & Co. building turned into a parking lot.

That would be a shame, they feel, because the city would lose another bit of its history.

"If a city hasn't got any past, then it hasn't got any future either," said Charles E. Peterson, an architectural historian.

Besides, he said, "historical buildings are the capital assets of this city." Through tourism, "they bring in a lot of money."

The group went to look around the building's now-deserted insides and to stir up some publicity. Demolition, delayed once already, is set for May 7.

The preservationists believe the building is historically important because Francis Martin Drexel set up shop on Third st. in 1837 — the building at number 34 was built in 1837 to deal in currencies.

(That's U.S. currency, by the way, not foreign. In those early days, U.S. banks printed their own paper money and the dollar that came off one bank's printing press might have been worth the same as the dollar from another bank's.)

Drexel's private bank fi-

nanced the Mexican War and earned an international reputation. Over the years, it's been merged and merged again until what's left is known as Drexel Burnham & Co., headquartered today in New York.

### 'At a Dead-End'

The people meeting yesterday didn't know it, but at the same time a letter arrived on the desk of John Whitehead, a supporter who wasn't there.

The letter made the preservationists' thread of hope all the more thin. A second organization had turned down the idea of saving the building by buying it for historical purposes, said Whitehead. An associate partner with the consulting firm of Day & Zimmerman, Whitehead has been trying to find a savior.

"My avenues are at a dead-end," Whitehead said. He approached both a "financial and a religious-oriented" organization where preserving the site was "related to their own background."

The nuns were at the Third st. building yesterday because Francis Martin Drexel's granddaughter, Katherine Drexel, founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to minister to the needs of Indians and blacks.

The museum curator, Geraldine Staub, was there because Francis Martin's son, Anthony Joseph Drexel, founded what's now Drexel University. Because she's in charge of the university's Museum Collection, she brought along two portraits done by Francis Martin.

The elder Drexel was a portrait painter before becoming a financier. His days at the easel included nine years in South America paint-

ing important people, including Simon Bolivar.

The building was bought by Charles Kurz & Co. in 1972. The firm, a holding company for Keystone Shipping Co., planned to tear the building down to expand two of its parking lots.

But in 1973, the entire block was certified as worth preserving by the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts," said an architectural observer in noting that the entire row is an example of Philadelphia's early commercial architecture.

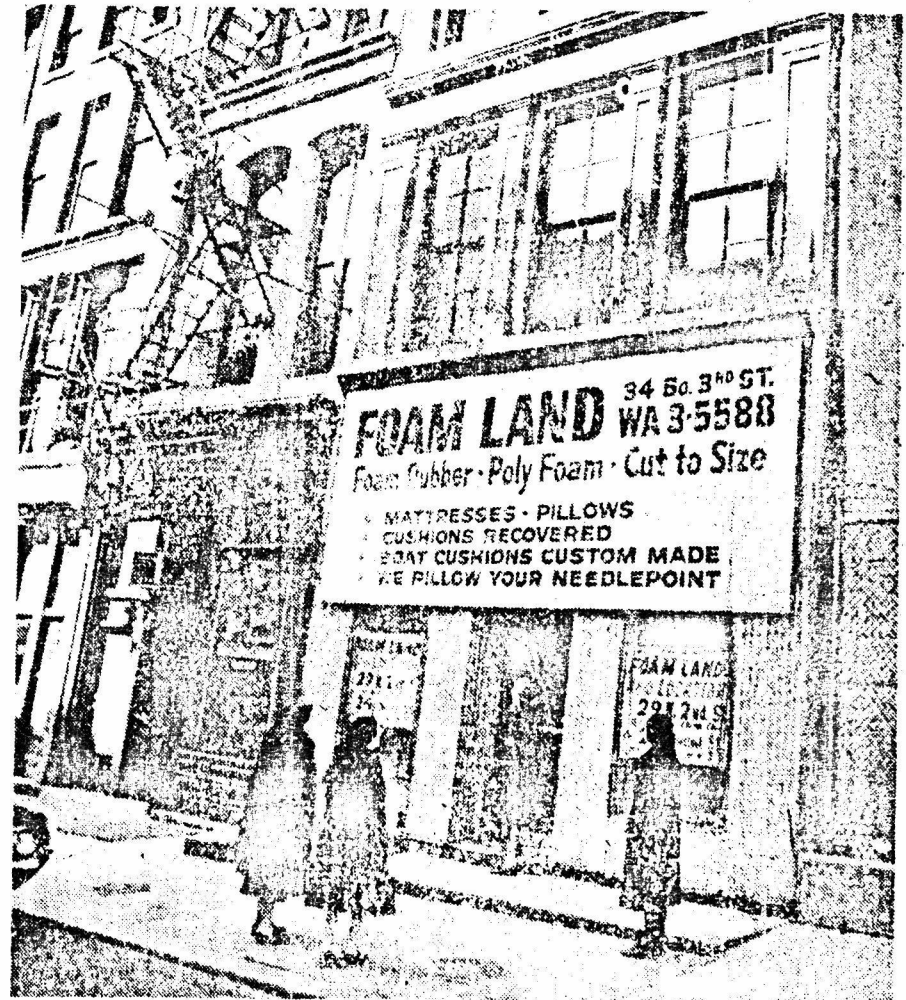
Another observer said that tearing down just one building on that block would be like having a mouthful of good teeth with an ugly gap here and there.

Kurz & Co. was ready to start tearing it down last fall, but preservationists were able to delay the demolition at least six months by using the city's historic preservation law. They can't stop the company that way again.

Kurz's agent, Edwin D. Greenbaum, of the Albert M. Greenfield & Co. real estate concern, said Kurz was willing to sell the building to "any legitimate preservation group that would want it." He ruled out possibilities like a restaurant or souvenir shop.

Kurz doesn't want to make a profit, Greenbaum said. But he does want to recoup the \$55,000 purchase price and costs, like taxes, incurred in carrying the property.

If the building is torn down, he said, the nuns could have the facade.



Bulletin Staff Photo by Charles T. Higgins

Nuns from the order, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, protest the planned razing of the old Drexel Building, 34 S. 3d st., Philadelphia.

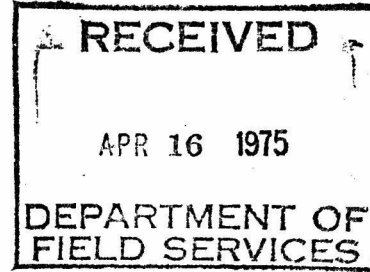
But the real estate man said he can't tell whether the original lettering on the building's marble face is still there. A former owner covered part of the front with corrugated metal, he said.

And, of course, the immediate past owner has that huge sign proclaiming "FOAM LAND . . . Foam Rubber . . . Poly Foam . . . Cut to Size . . ."

CHARLES E. PETERSON, F.A.I.A. *Architectural Historian, Restorationist and Planner*

April 11, 1975

Russell V. Keune AIA  
Director, Department of Field Services  
The National Trust for Historic Preservation  
746 Jackson Place, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006



Dear Russ:

I have known the Drexel Building for 25 years but didn't hear about the threat until about Christmas time. Then I started some research and got out (personally) three fact sheets, copies enclosed. The Drexel is the key to saving Third Street and that's the key to the whole "Old City Registered Landmark" area.

The new regime at the Philadelphia Historical Commission stuck its neck out for the first time (that I know of) on this one and what I am doing is trying to back them up. The local AIA Preservation Committee is behind it, too (in a mild way) and its chairman -- Al Holm -- is away on vacation.

The nuns made the first arrangements for the recent picture story but they didn't really know how. But enclosed two newspaper clips and a letter to Mr. Bintzer. They tell the story, I hope.

Any publicity will help -- there doesn't seem to be any leadership here any more. I haven't been able to get the Park Service interested.

Time-wise I'm in desperate shape myself and am losing out on my IRS deadline.

I'm sending a complete set of this to Terry. Why did we have to hit a weekend and a deadline at the same moment?

Regards,

Charles E. Peterson

Encls.  
CEP:hg  
cc: Mrs. Morton (w/encls.)

P.S.: I think that the ACE development is a real step forward. That's why I agreed to come up. I can give them to publish a substantial, well-documented essay on hydraulic cement on The Middlesex Canal -- first USE in the US as far as I know now.

Subject: Drexel Building (1854), NR  
Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

enc ~~P~~  
~~PP~~  
PH  
MAY 2 RECD  
PR

April 24, 1975

Mr. Adolph B. Kurz, President  
Keystone Shipping Company  
313 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Dear Mr. Kurz:

It has come to the attention of the National Trust for Historic Preservation that the future of the Drexel Building, built in 1854, located at 34 South Third Street in Philadelphia, is currently being decided. Both on its own merits and as an important part of the Old City Historic District, the Drexel Building is designated in the National Register of Historic Places; as such it represents a vital element of the city's architectural and historical heritage. Its close proximity to the ongoing restoration of sites within the Independence National Historical Park gives it added significance. As the owner of this historic building, the Keystone Shipping Company is in a unique position to take the lead in an effort to preserve it, if only by allowing preservationists a reasonable time to marshal their resources to purchase the building for restoration. We hope that you will use your influence on behalf of this important Philadelphia landmark during the celebration of our nation's Bicentennial.

We are taking the liberty of enclosing literature on the National Trust for Historic Preservation. You may find the special supplement on adapting buildings in our most recent issue of Preservation News to be of special interest.

Sincerely,

Lawson B. Knott, Jr.  
Executive Vice President

Enclosures

bcc: Anthony N.B. Garvan, NT Adv., w/c incoming  
James B. Stevenson, NT Adv., "  
William J. Wewer, SHPO, "  
John Dickey, AIA-SPC, "  
Charles E. Peterson, "  
Philadelphia Historical Commission, "  
Independence Nat'l. Historical Park, NPS, "  
✓ Ernest A. Connally, "

DR/RVK/bp

Philadelphia Co.  
P.A.

Advisory Council on  
Historic Preservation  
1522 K Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

JUL 26 1978

Mr. Peter Benjamin, Director, Office of Program Analysis  
Urban Mass Transportation Administration  
U. S. Department of Transportation  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Benjamin:

By letter of June 3, 1975, the Council requested that U.S. Department of Transportation investigate the applicability of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f, as amended, 90 Stat. 1320) to the construction of a Metropolitan Subway System, an undertaking assisted by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration that may have an effect upon the Old City Historic District, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a property included in the National Register of Historic Places. A copy of that letter is enclosed.

We have not yet received a reply. We would appreciate it if you would look into this matter and let us have a reply as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please call Ms. Amy Schlagel at 202-254-3967.

Sincerely,

Myra F. Harrison  
Assistant Director  
Office of Review  
and Compliance

Enclosure

USE original RESIDENTIAL intermediate \_\_\_\_\_ new COMMERCIAL/RES.

ESTIMATED COST 90,000.00 FINAL COST \_\_\_\_\_

HOUSING UNITS before N/A after N/A FEDERAL FUNDS (no ( ) yes \_\_\_\_\_

NHL ( ) NHL District ( ) NR ( ) NR District  State/local District ( ) Proposed ( )

Name of district OLD CITY H.D. Date listed/certified 5/5/72

NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNER F.H. STAELING  
1808 TWO GIRARD PLAZA, BROAD & SO. PENN. SQ.  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19102

SIGNIFICANCE

PRELIMINARY

Date received \_\_\_\_\_

Date info requested \_\_\_\_\_

Date info received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

- ( ) contributing
- ( ) non-contributing
- ( ) conditional

FINAL

Date received 6/10/80

Date info requested \_\_\_\_\_

Date info received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

- ( ) contributing
- ( ) non-contributing

REHABILITATION

PROPOSED WORK

Date received 3/5/80

Date info requested \_\_\_\_\_

Date info received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

- ( ) approved ( ) approved/conditions
- ( ) withheld ( ) denied

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) plans

COMPLETED WORK

Date received \_\_\_\_\_

Date info requested \_\_\_\_\_

Date info received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

- ( ) approved ( ) denied

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

APPEAL

Date received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

- ( ) sustained ( ) overturned

APPEAL

Date received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

- ( ) sustained ( ) overturned

046-80-PA-80-0096

31 CHERRY STREET

PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA CO.

2.

USE original Commercial intermediate \_\_\_\_\_ new Residential/Commercial

ESTIMATED COST 100,000.00 FINAL COST \_\_\_\_\_

HOUSING UNITS before 1 after 4 FEDERAL FUNDS ( ) no ( ) yes \_\_\_\_\_

NHL ( ) NHL District ( ) NR (\*) NR District ( ) State/local District ( ) Proposed ( )

Name of district Old City Date listed/certified 5/5/72

NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNER Martin A. Fischer  
408 Vine Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

SIGNIFICANCE

PRELIMINARY

Date received \_\_\_\_\_

Date info requested \_\_\_\_\_

Date info received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

( ) contributing

( ) non-contributing

( ) conditional

FINAL

Date received 9/18/80

Date info requested \_\_\_\_\_

Date info received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

( ) contributing

( ) non-contributing

REHABILITATION

PROPOSED WORK

Date received 9/22/80

Date info requested \_\_\_\_\_

Date info received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

( ) approved ( ) approved/

( ) withheld ( ) denied

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) plans

COMPLETED WORK

Date received \_\_\_\_\_

Date info requested \_\_\_\_\_

Date info received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

( ) approved ( ) denied

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

APPEAL

Date received \_\_\_\_\_ Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

( ) sustained ( ) overturned

APPEAL

Date received \_\_\_\_\_ Date of action \_\_\_\_\_

( ) sustained ( ) overturned

0167-80-PA-80-01C3

408 Vine Street (Peter Tomson Building)

-Philadelphia/Co.



320, 322, 324 No. 3<sup>rd</sup> St: Are these  
inside or outside of the Old Town  
H.D., Philadelphia?

Ellen Ramsey