

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCERS use only
received JAN 23 1982
date entered

Directions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Instructions—complete applicable sections

Name

Wesley Building, Board of Home Missions of the United Methodist Church

also known as Robert Morris Hotel

Location

number 1701 - 1709 Arch Street not for publication

Philadelphia vicinity of congressional district 2nd

Pennsylvania code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

Classification

Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Owner of Property

Leard-Greenberg & Co.

number Land Title Building, Broad and Chestnut streets

Philadelphia vicinity of state Pennsylvania

Location of Legal Description

registry of deeds, etc. Philadelphia City Hall

number Broad and Market Streets

Philadelphia, state PA Historic Preservation

Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

1980 federal state county local

survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Harrisburg, state PA

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Methodist Church built the Wesley Building to serve several diverse functions that revolved around Philadelphia as one of the principal American centers of the denomination. This was to be the administrative center of the Home Missions, a location for various Methodist tract societies, and a hotel that would house visiting Methodists as well as the traveling public, presumably free from the evil influences of the city. These uses are apparent in the exterior organization of the building. The first floor is marked by broad basket handle openings, marking the three structural bays of the front and seven bays of the 17th street side. Terra cotta clad octagonal piers with small niches crowned by projecting canopies separate the openings and describe the public function of the first floor spaces. The second story is marked by decorated gothic, pointed arched windows two to the bay that indicates the continuation of larger, public spaces on that level. The next four floors, which completed the original building, are marked by smaller windows, alternately square and gothic pointed in shape, which lighted the smaller bed chambers of the hotel.

At the sixth floor level, a traceried cornice above a fifth floor belt course emphasizes the original top story. In 1921, the original architects returned and added an eight story addition that follows the same gothic theme, using the same materials, the same articulating system, and the same alternating pattern of small windows. At the top, a boldly projecting gothic cornice, with bold pinnacles, breaking through the roof line and enlivening the silhouette provides an effective termination to the most elaborately decorated of Philadelphia's tall buildings. The terra cotta is particularly rich around the major openings, with grape clusters, small busts, and bits of gothic detail adding to the effectiveness of the facade.

The interior is subdivided down the center by corridors from Arch Street and from 17th Street that intersect at the elevators. The 17th Street entrance, which was presumably the primary front, opened under a four part, ribbed groined vault with heavy rib tracery and a handsome plaster boss in the center of the ceiling, from which hangs a large, elaborately formed brass lamp. Richly textured and patterned marble adds to the striking color and decor of the lobby. To the north, the lobby opens through an opening to the marble stair, with elaborately carved and gilded railings that rises to the second floor ball room.

On the south side is the Hotel desk, with offices to the rear. Of particular note are the gothic traceried doors, and a spectacularly rich gothic mail box by the Cutler Mail Chute Co, of Glenview, Illinois.

The second floor elevator lobby is also richly detailed, with a slender grill of gothic tracery over the elevator bank wall. Apparently, it originally opened into a glass surface, making the mechanical apparatus visible in an early twentieth century homage to the machine. Gothic traceried doors and the wildly

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received JAN 26 1982

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

7. Description

1 of 1

patterned doors continue the themes of the first floor.

The last major space of the hotel is also on the second floor, on the north side. It is a wood paneled, gothic detailed ball room with a massive beamed ceiling that represents, in wood, the underlying steel frame. Large plaster brackets with gothic cusped detail completes a handsome room.

P. 105 D. 1

The upper levels are spartan in detail befitting their use as transient hotel rooms. The building is in first class condition; recent washing of the facade and refurbishing of the interior reveals the elegance of this early twentieth century landmark.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1914/ 1921

Builder/Architect Ballinger Co.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Robert Morris Hotel is a brilliant homage to gothic architecture, by one of early 20th century Philadelphia's most innovative firms, the Ballinger Company. For this building, they designed a decorative gothic skin of deeply molded, glazed terra cotta that describes the continuing period attempt to express structure and function. Here, both are fused in the medieval detail that represents both the soaring quality of the tall building and the ecclesiastical client. That client was of further interest; Methodism has been one of the nation's largest denominations, and it has been centered here in Philadelphia, ever since the success of George Whitfield's mid 18th century missions to this city. With the development of the Parkway to the north, it was not surprising that the Methodists would build in its vicinity, and in a style and material appropriate to what was expected to become the most important civic boulevard in the city. That exterior and its richly detailed public rooms survive intact, with few significant changes. The result is an imposing landmark that complements its site and its significant architectural neighbors, the Bell Telephone by John T. Windrim and the INA Office Building by Stewardson and Page.

The building is of further note as one of the principal designs by the Philadelphia architects, Ballinger and Co. That firm began as Geissinger and Hales, designing many of the major industrial buildings of the city. It continues to this day under the same name, having just completed a new building, across Arch Street. In the early twentieth century, that firm became the designers for the Methodist Church in Philadelphia. They designed the gothic Simpson Home, on Belmont Avenue, as a retirement center and also made plans for many of the churches of the denomination. This is their most exciting design.

One final note is the architectural terra cotta which was produced in Philadelphia, by the Conkling Armstrong Co. of Nicetown. Its use here pointed towards the extraordinary possibilities of inexpensive yet convincing ornament that was largely ended by the change of architectural theory at the end of the 1920s. This building remains a testament to the popular response to architecturally rich designs.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide 36: 35 31 August 1921;
 29: 11 (18 March 1914)
 Architectural Annual of the T Square Club, 1915 p. 171

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/4 acre
 Quadrangle name Philadelphia, Pa.-N.J.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	4	8	5	5	8	5	4	4	2	2	5	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the north west corner of 17th and Arch Streets, the property extends west 80 feet then north 117' to a 2' 10 1/2" alley, then east to 17th Street, then south to the point of origin, with

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	Pennsylvania	code	county	Philadelphia	code
state		code	county		code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas, Ph.D.
 organization Clio Group, Inc. date 26 August 1981
 street & number 3961 Baltimore Avenue telephone 215-386-6276
 city or town Philadelphia state PA

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Larry E. Tise
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date 1/17/82

For HCERS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 date
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: date
 Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Name of Property Wesley Building Board of Home Missions of the United Methodist Church
State, County PA Philadelphia County
Federal Agency _____

The above nomination is being returned to you because of problems in the areas checked below and/or on the back of this form. Please return this form when the nomination is resubmitted.

Technical Review

- Name
- Location
- Classification
 - Category
 - Ownership
 - Status
 - Present Use
- Owner of Property
- Location of Legal Description
- Representation in Existing Surveys
- Description
 - Condition
 - Original Site/Moved (w/date)
- Significance
 - Period
 - Areas of Significance
 - Specific Dates
- Major Bibliographical References
- Geographical Data
 - Acreage
 - Quad Name
 - Quad Scale
 - UTM
 - Verbal Boundary Description and/or Site Plan or Tax Map
- Form Prepared By
- Certification
 - Level of Significance
 - SHPO Signature
 - Federal Signature
- Photographs
 - Missing
 - Not Adequate in Quality
- Maps
 - USGS Map
 - Site Plan/Sketch Map
 - Historic District Map
- Comments: Verbal boundary description incomplete

Public Acquisition

Substantive Review Problems (see reverse)

Julius Byer
Signed

Substantive Review

dnr-lb

Description

 Incomplete/Inaccurate: _____

 Alterations: _____

 Dates: _____

 Boundary Selection/Justification: _____

 Other: _____

- Is the adjacent building (to the left) included? P.S. - pls provide additional information.

Significance

 Too Weak or General: _____

 Poorly Related to Resource: _____

 Confusing/Incomplete: _____

 Context: _____

 Integrity: _____

Please discuss this building in relation to other work of the firm -

 Period of Significance Unclear: _____

 Exception(s) to Criteria not Justified: _____

 Other: _____

Bibliography: _____

Geographical Data

 Acreage: _____

 VBD: _____

- VBD seems to be incomplete -

Certification: _____

Photographs:

 Inadequate Coverage: _____

 Poorly Labeled/Not Keyed to Map

 Other: _____

Maps

 USGS

 Sketch

- Missing
- Location of Resource(s)
- Boundary Lines
- Discrepancies
- Other

Comments

Wesley Building, Board of Home Missions of the United

Name Methodist Church
 State, County PA Philadelphia Fed Nom or Request-Agency _____
 Working Number 1-26-82-258 Federal Register Date _____

- Nomination
- Determination of Eligibility
- On Nomination Form
- Bldg(s)
- Site
- Object
- Structure
- District
- Within:
 - Multiple Resource Area
 - Thematic Group

Maps 1
 Photos 7

Nomination prepared by: Action: Check if Appropriate:

State Staff ACCEPT State Request for Review

Local RETURN 3/2/82 Keeper's Decision to Review

Other REJECT 2nd Return

I. Evaluation of Resource (cont. on back if necessary)

II. Evaluation of Nomination

	Good			Comments
	Adequate	Poor		
1. Descriptive Statement Short Format <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			- Is the adjacent building also included?
2. Significance Statement Short Format <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			poor organization - although architectural significance + associations with Methodist church are increased.
3. Concepts/Integrity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
4. Concepts/Criteria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			border a more than
5. Concepts/Boundaries				incomplete UBD
6. Contextual Evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			- This is most "exciting" yet little context provided -

General Comments (cont. on back if necessary):

Reviewer/Date Brauham 3.2.82

See Attached _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received APR 10 1984
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wesley Building, Board of Home Missions Of The United Methodist Church

and/or common Robert Morris Hotel

2. Location

street & number 1701-1709 Arch Street N/A not for publication

city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied (partially)	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name The Soundview Group, Ltd., a New York Corporation

street & number c/o Laurence Berk, Esquire, Two Penn Center Plaza, Suite 920

city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania 19102

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds, County of Philadelphia

street & number Philadelphia City Hall, Broad & Market Streets, Room 153

city, town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania 19107

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title PA. State Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August, 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wesley Building/Robert Morris Hotel and Philadelphia Tract Society Buildings, located at 1701-09 Arch Streets represents two magnificently executed examples of Gothic style architecture, undertaken by the architectural firms of Ballinger and Perrot/the Ballinger Company and Horace Castor, respectively. Philadelphia has long served as one of the major centers of the evangelical efforts of the Methodist Church in America; and in 1914 they first commissioned Ballinger & Perrot to design a six story office building to house their various publishing, home mission and administrative activities. The use and owner of the building is cleverly indicated by its ecclesiastical design. Moreover, the employment of a terra cotta skin, produced by the Conkling-Armstrong Terra Cotta Company, enabled the subtlest nuances of the Gothic style to be clearly delineated.

As originally constructed, the building's entrance was oriented to the Seventeenth Street elevation with a compound arched door surround. The Seventeenth Street elevation had three single light commercial windows, each with four light transoms set into a molded opening. Decorative piers with small niche capped with ornate canopies define the openings. The right and left bays had street entrances, which remain intact. A cornice band of terra cotta enhanced with quatrafoil panels completed the ground floor. Above, rises a richly detailed building three bays in width along the Arch Street elevation and seven bays along Seventeenth Street. Decorative buttresses, extending the height of the building, delineate each bay. With the exception of the second floor fenestration, the Arch Street elevation mimics the Seventeenth Street elevation, creating a fluid transition between the two. Paired Gothic arched windows with terra cotta mullions and cusp tracery panels indicate a larger public space within. The Seventeenth Street elevation also utilized the Gothic arched opening, interpreting it in smaller, tripartite sash. Above the second floor, the fenestration forms a regular pattern of four square head windows capped by Gothic decorative detailing. Above the sixth floor windows, marking the conclusion of the original Wesley Building, is an intense, repetitive pattern of Gothic detailing, below is a projecting tracery cornice which forms a rich canopy. Pinnacles with crockets, pierce the sky bringing the building to a studied conclusion.

The Ballinger Company's 1921 addition was designed and executed with such precision that the rich cornice detail at the sixth floor, provides the only moment of doubt this building was not constructed as a four story tower. However, the eye moves quickly up to the fenestration and detail, exactly replicated on these floors, and all doubt appears to vanish. Rather than destroying the elegant complexity of their original design, Ballinger meticulously matched the form and detail for the hotel addition. The Gothic cornice motif is also repeated, and the pinnacles, removed from the sixth floor, were replaced at the buildings roofline. In effect, Ballinger produced the perfect architectural compliment to the integrity and beauty of their original Gothic wonder.

The only major change to the building occurred on the Arch Street elevation, with the introduction of a new building entrance in the middle bay. In keeping with the prescribed order of business, this second access faithfully replicates the original Seventeenth Street entrance.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Philadelphia County

Continuation sheet

Wesley Building,

Item number 7

Page 2

The interior is subdivided down the center by corridors from Arch Street and from 17th Street that intersect at the elevators. The 17th Street entrance, opened under a four part, ribbed groined vault with heavy rib tracery and a handsome plaster boss in the center of the ceiling, from which hangs a large, elaborately formed brass lamp. Richly textured and patterned marble adds to the striking color and decor of the lobby. To the north, the lobby opens through an opening to the marble stair, with elaborately carved and gilded railings that rises to the second floor ballroom. On the south side is the Hotel desk, with offices to the rear. Of particular note are the gothic traceried doors, and a spectacularly rich gothic mail box.

The second floor elevator lobby is also richly detailed, with a slender grill of gothic tracery over the elevator bank wall. Apparently, it originally opened into a glass surface, making the mechanical apparatus visible in an early twentieth century homage to the machine. Gothic traceried doors and the wildly patterned doors continue the themes of the first floor.

The last major space of the hotel is also on the second floor, on the north side. It is a wood paneled, gothic detailed ballroom with a massive beamed ceiling that represents, in wood, the underlying steel frame. Large plaster brackets with gothic cusped detail completes a handsome room.

The upper levels are spartan in detail befitting their use as transient hotel rooms.

Time has not compromised the architectural integrity of this building. It remains today, one of the city's most important examples of Gothic style architecture interpreted in the modern genre of high rise construction.

Horace Castor's 1922, four story addition for the Philadelphia Society lacks the finesse of the Ballinger structure, yet it shows great sensitivity to its monumental neighbor. A brick, hollow tile and terra cotta structure, Castor extrapolated the best features of the Wesley Building's design most notably the arch, tracery and niche motifs. The building is dominated by a large arched opening, at the first floor, flanked by two pier-like elements. Carved tile paneling with gothic trace highlight the ground floor. The upper stories, each five bays wide, display a much modified buttress delineating each opening. Carved stone gothic trim, similar to that found on the Ballinger building decorates the second floor window openings. Flattened stone arches punctuate the third floor openings; straight stone lintels cap the fourth. Above the fourth floor windows, a stone cornice crowns followed by a brick balustrade crowns the building. With the exception of the Wawa Food Market storefront, the exterior has not been subjected to change; and the interior only the most modest of change.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1914, 1921, 1922 **Builder/Architect** Ballinger & Perrot/Ballinger Company
Horace Castor. Cramp & Company, Contractor

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Since the mid eighteenth century, when English revivalist George Whitefield led several successful missions to the city, Philadelphia had served as a strong religious center for the Methodist Church in America. The building complex, located at 1701-1709 Arch Street, including the Wesley Building/Robert Morris Hotel and the Philadelphia Tract Society, Methodist Church Building bears witness to this continuing tradition. The original Wesley Building, named for the movement's founder, John Wesley, was erected for use as the church's headquarters and administrative center for their various organizations including the Board of Home Missions and the Philadelphia Tract Society. The later addition of the Robert Morris Hotel, above the office space, provided modest lodgings for visiting Methodists and the traveling public.

Among the major tenets of the Methodist religion is a strong sense of personal and social morality. Their new headquarters at the corner of 17th and Arch Streets became the hub for the publication of religious materials by the tract societies and the proselytizing efforts of the Home Missions. The building's location at 17th and Arch Streets, combined proximity to the city's developing civic boulevard -- the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, with accessibility to both the Methodist Church at Broad and Arch Streets and the central business district at City Hall.

In 1914, the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church commissioned the architectural firm of Ballinger and Perrot to create a six story office structure. Constructed of steel frame and clad in a matt-glazed terra cotta finish, the building was designed in the Gothic style. This studied interpretation of ecclesiastical design was clearly selected in reverential recognition of the client's religious affiliation.

According to an advertisement published in Who's Who in Philadelphia, (vol. 2, 1925), in 1920, plans were made to double the available office space with a 6 story addition to the original building. Having determined the economic return on such a space would not warrant its construction, the Church entertained the alternative plan of installing hotel space above the existing Wesley tower. The following year, the Board of Missions commissioned the original architects, then operating as the Ballinger Company, to design an eight story addition to be known as the Robert Morris Hotel. Again, Ballinger's magnificent Gothic style, terra cotta design was employed for the additional stories. While the hotel was commissioned and financed by the Methodist Church an independent proprietor was procured to manage the operation; Adhering to religious beliefs, the Robert Morris was a "dry hotel" with no liquor served or allowed in the rooms.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .2

Quadrangle name Philadelphia - N.J.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	18	4	815	51815	414	212	51510
Zone	Easting			Northing			

B

Zone	Easting			Northing			

C

Zone	Easting			Northing			

D

Zone	Easting			Northing			

E

Zone	Easting			Northing			

F

Zone	Easting			Northing			

G

Zone	Easting			Northing			

H

Zone	Easting			Northing			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point on the northwest corner of 17th and Arch Streets; thence west along the north side of Arch Street 80 feet to the eastern property line of said lot; thence north along the east property line 117 feet to an alley 2 feet 10½ inches; thence east along

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth R. Mintz

organization ELIZABETH R. MINTZ date February 29, 1984

street & number 301 Cherry Street telephone (215) 592-0465

city or town Philadelphia state Pa.

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

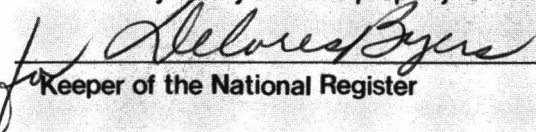
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 3/29/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 5/10/84


Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Wesley Building, Philadelphia County
Item number 8

Page 2

There is no evidence that Robert Morris, noted financier of the American Revolution, had any direct connection with the Methodist Church, however, the period of the hotel's construction coincided with the approaching Sesqui-Centennial celebration. Perhaps in a climate of heightened patriotism, the Church selected an historical figure, as in the case of Trumbauer's Benjamin Franklin Hotel, to denote their premises.

Having relinquished any further development rights within the Wesley Building, yet requiring additional space, the Philadelphia Conference Tract Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, commissioned Horace W. Castor to design a four story office building (1707-09) Castor's 1922 structure, while not as dramatic, is compatible with Ballinger's Gothic design.

In the vein of the American Baptist Publication Society (National Register), later known as the Crozier Building and the Witherspoon Building (National Register), headquarters for the Presbyterian Publishing Society, the creation of the Wesley Building further supported Philadelphia's position as a critical center for the evangelical efforts of American's major religious denominations.

Architecturally, the significance of the Wesley Building/Robert Morris Hotel is multi-faceted. In the age of the high rise tower, modern building technology enabled the use of steel frame construction which internalized the structural support, leaving the exterior a clean canvas for the architect's design. In this instance, Ballinger employed glazed terra cotta tile, a material known for its durability and economy, to create a magnificent Gothic style skyscraper. Primarily an ecclesiastical design mode, the architect successfully translated this style for a church related edifice; its function clearly inferred by the tracery arch windows and delicate crockets. Moreover, the terra cotta skin handsomely highlights the delicateness and complexity of the exterior detailing.

Rising only six stories, the original Wesley Building served as a forerunner, in every respect including architectural styling, to the skyscrapers which would dominate the streetscape of the modern city. Within eight years of its construction, the Art Deco style came into vogue. During this period Gothic motifs found a peculiar, yet aesthetically satisfying relationship as a major design solution for the soaring high rise tower. Most notably, Eliel Saarinen's 1922 submission for the Chicago Tribune Building design competition, a great Art Deco Tower and Gothic overtones, captured the imagination of the architectural community. Although never constructed, his design brought the Gothic style out of the realm of "church construction" bringing it into the main stream of sophisticated twentieth century design.

While, the incorporation of additions into existing buildings is not uncommon as evidenced by the Victory Building (1007-13 Chestnut) and Ballinger Company's later efforts at Globe Ticket Company (112 N. 12th Street), the most common method was to increase the width with a side by side addition. The Wesley Building is a more unusual case of "piggy-backing" an eight story addition on top of an existing structure, a complex architectural and engineering feat. The Ballinger Company, noted for their engineering technology, succeeded in creating an exact replica of the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Philadelphia County

Continuation sheet Wesley Building, Item number 8

Page 3

building's detail, facade material and fenestration for the Robert Morris Hotel. The interlacing of these buildings is so successful that only a fleeting second of doubt occurs in the viewers mind that this building was not originally constructed as a 14 story Gothic style office tower.

The architectural significance of Horace Castor's four story addition lies, primarily, in its successful incorporation of the Gothic style and specific detail elements, linking this later addition to the larger Wesley Building.

The firm of Ballinger and Perrot, designer of the Wesley Building, one of the city's oldest and most respected architectural offices, played a major role in the history of Philadelphia architecture. The evolution of the Ballinger Company begins with the architectural engineering firm of Geissinger & Hales. Established in the 1880's, the office specialized in industrial and commercial projects. Walter F. Ballinger joined Walter H. Geissinger & Edward Hales' firm in 1889, in a business capacity. In 1895 Ballinger replaced Geissinger, as a principal in the firm. The partnership of Hales and Ballinger continued until Hale's retirement in 1901, at which time Ballinger entered into a partnership with Emile G. Perrot, formerly the chief draftsman at Hales and Ballinger.

Unlike Ballinger, Perrot received his professional training in architecture, and likely held the lion's share of responsibility for design during his 18 years with the firm. Following academic training at Spring Garden Institute, the Franklin Institute and University of Pennsylvania, Perrot worked in several office before joining Hales and Ballinger. Among his early experience was working with E.F. Durang, architect for the Catholic Church. Durang's Gothic church designs undoubtedly influenced the later work of Perrot, including the Gothic-inspired Wesley Building.

The firm of Ballinger and Perrot is credited with many innovations in industrial design, including pioneering the use of reinforced concrete, as well as the unit grid system for reinforced concrete, the latter, an invention of Emile Perrot. During the 20th century, they would expand their practice to include institutional, residential and ecclesiastical design. Early on, the partners established themselves as architects for the Methodist Church, owing, no doubt, to Ballinger's religious affiliation with the church. In the early years of their practice Ballinger & Perrot were responsible for a number of Methodist Churches in the Philadelphia area including Conshohocken M.E. Church and Sunday School (1906); Kynett Memorial Methodist Church (1902), The Methodist Hospital (1902); Mount Airy Methodist Church (1906) and the Ambler Methodist Church (1208).

The firm of Ballinger and Perrot continued until 1920, at which time Ballinger bought out the concerns of his partner and established the Ballinger Company. By 1924, the expanding company had opened an office in New York City. A prolific, architectural firm, the Ballinger Company has continued to maintain a high profile in twentieth century architectural engineering and design.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Philadelphia County

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Wesley Building, Item number 8 Page 4

Horace Castor also had strong ties to Methodist Church. During his career he was responsible for numerous Methodist Church buildings, including the Eppworth Methodist Church at 5540-5546 Race Street (1899), the Allison Methodist Church at 438 N. 63rd Street (1902) and the West York Street Methodist Church at 17th and York (1907-08). Castor perhaps not as well known as other Philadelphia architects, enjoyed a prolific and lucrative design career spanning almost 50 years. The early part of his career was concentrated in Frankford, where in 1895, he formed a partnership with employee George R. Sterns. The firm of Sterns & Castor continued until 1916, producing numerous designs for residences, churches, and industrial and commercial structures. Castor later worked on his own, designing structures throughout the city, including the recently demolished Scottish Rite Temple at Broad and Race Streets (1925) and the Old Terminal Building for the Municipal Airport (1940).

Better known for their industrial and commercial structures, Ballinger created a highly individual building for the Methodist Church which payed homage to the beliefs and ideals of its owner/occupant. The Wesley Building/Robert Morris Hotel is an unusual and excellent example of ecclesiastical architecture magnificently interpreted in the skyscraper mode. Designed to house the various evangelical efforts of the Church this structure is a rare surviving example of the Gothic style. Ballinger & Perrot/the Ballinger Company's design for this unique edifice is a testament to their aesthetic sensibilities and their keen understanding of the desired image, which the building projects.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Wesley Building, Philadelphia County
Item number 9

Page 1

Architectural Annual of the T-Square Club, 1915 p. 171

Who's Who in Philadelphia, v. 2 1925 p. 191

City of Philadelphia Building Permit Records

Philadelphia Athenaeum - Architect's Files - Ballinger & Perrot, Ballinger Company,
Horace Castor

Moak, Jefferson, Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination - 1707-09 Arch St.

Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide - 29:11(March 18, 1914)
36:35 (August 31,1921)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Wesley Building, Philadelphia County
Item number 10

Page 2

the south side of said alley 80 feet to the outlet at Seventeenth Street; thence south along the west side of Seventeenth Street 117 feet to the point of beginning.



METHODIST BUILDING, 17th and Arch Streets, Philadelphia
Ballinger & Perrot, Architects

Entire fronts of CREAM COLORED GLAZED TERRA COTTA made by
CONKLING-ARMSTRONG TERRA COTTA CO.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Wesley Building
Philadelphia County
PENNSYLVANIA

Working No. APR 10 1984
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/5/85
Date Due: 5/10/84 - 5/25/84
Action: ACCEPT 5/10/84
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	date _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



CENTRAL PENN NATIONAL BANK

WAY FOOD MA

ROBERT MORRIS HOTEL

EVERYBODY'S NUTS

Robert Morris Hotel
1701 Arch St., Phila., PA
August, 1981
view looking northwest from
17th St.

George E. Thomas, photographer
Clio Group, Inc.
3961 Baltimore
Phila., PA 19104

JAN 26 1982



Robert Morris Hotel
1701 Arch St., Phila., PA
August, 1981
view looking northeast from
Arch St.

George E. Thomas ,photographer
Clio Group, Inc.
3961 Baltimore Ave.
Phila.,PA 19104

JAN 26 1982



Robert Morris Hotel
1701 Arch St., Phila., PA
August, 1981
2nd floor lobby

George E. Thomas, photographer
Clio Group, Inc.
3961 Baltimore Ave.
Phila., PA 19104

JAN 26 1982



Robert Morris Hotel
1701 Arch St., Phila., PA
August, 1981
2nd floor lobby

George E. Thomas, photographer
Clio Group, Inc.
3961 Baltimore Ave.
Phila., PA 19104

JAN 26 1982



Robert Morris Hotel
1701 Arch St., Phila., PA
August, 1981
2nd floor ballroom

George E. Thomas, photographer
Clio Group, Inc.
3961 Baltimore Ave.
Phila., PA 19104

JAN 26 1982



MAIL COLLECTION TIMES

WEEK DAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
12:00	9:00	12:00	12:00	12:00

REMARKS: WHEN MAIL IS DELIVERED COLLECTOR MUST SIGN AND PLACE STAMP

Next Day Delivery

Mail Carried by Special Delivery Service
 Special Delivery Service is available for mail to be delivered the next day.

LETTER BOX



U.S. MAIL

CUTLER MAIL SYSTEM CO.
 CINCINNATI, OHIO
CUTLER MAILING SYSTEM
 AUTHORIZED BY PATENT

Robert Morris Hotel
1701 Arch St., Phila., PA
August, 1981
view of mail box, 1st floor
lobby

JAN 26 1982

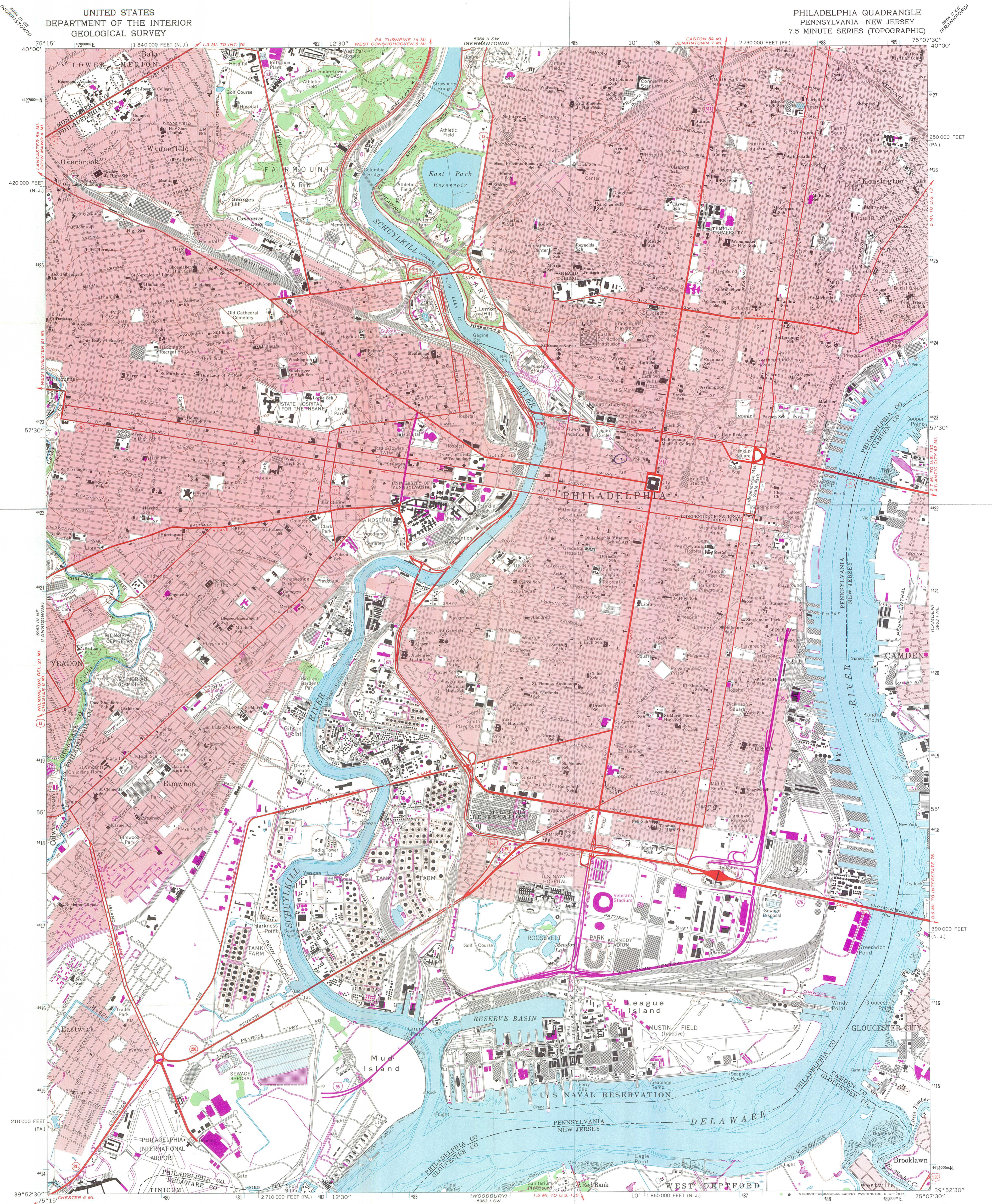
George E. Thomas, photographer
Clio Group, Inc.
3961 Baltimore Ave.
Phila., PA 19104



Robert Morris Hotel
1701 Arch St., Phila., PA
August, 1981
view of main stairs from
entrance

George E. Thomas, photographer
Clio Group, Inc.
3961 Baltimore Ave.
Phila., PA 19104

JAN 26 1982



Mapped by the U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1946. Topography by planimetric surveys 1947. Revised by the Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1965. Field checked 1967
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 280 (1967). This information is not intended for navigational purposes.
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grids based on Pennsylvania coordinate system, south zone, and New Jersey coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

SCALE 1:24,000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 5.8 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

PHILADELPHIA, PA.—N. J.
N3952.5—W7507.5/7.5

1967
PHOTOREVISED 1973
AMS 5963 I NW—SERIES 8V31

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty
- Medium-duty
- Light-duty
- Unimproved dirt
- Interstate Route
- U.S. Route
- State Route

RECEIVED
JAN 26 1982
NATIONAL REGISTER



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

WILLIAM PENN MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES BUILDING

BOX 1026

HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120

April 6, 1984

Jerry Rogers, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1100 L. Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Enclosed please find two nominations for your review and possible placement in the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions concerning these nominations, please feel free to contact me at (717) 783-8946.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Greg Ramsey".

Greg Ramsey, Chief
Division of Preservation Services
Bureau for Historic Preservation

GR:sk