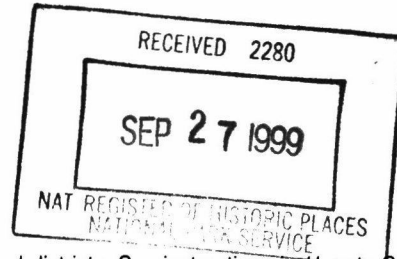


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1291

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 3118-3198 Chestnut Street N/A not for publication

city or town Philadelphia N/A vicinity

state Pennsylvania code PA county Philadelphia code 101 zip code 19104

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] Exc. Dir. Date 9/21/99

Signature of certifying official/Title PA Historical and Museum Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

[Signature]
Edson H. Beall

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

10/28/99

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

COMMERCE/TRADE

COMMERCE/TRADE

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

rail-related

warehouse

specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls brick

limestone

roof synthetic

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Page 1

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

The Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building is situated on the western half of the 3100 block of Chestnut Street in West Philadelphia and spans a distance of 480' between Chestnut and Walnut Streets. Constructed in 1929 in a restrained Art Deco style, the first story is sheathed in limestone with the upper stories clad in buff colored brick with limestone details. Rising six stories above a track level, the building was originally designed as a combination freight station, warehouse and showroom, and is characterized by immense massing typical of industrial architecture. The building stands in good condition and the exterior has been little altered since the date of construction and thus the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

The building is bounded by a subsurface railroad line to the west, a sidewalk along Chestnut Street to the north, the c. 1980 Walnut Street Bridge to the south with a concrete deck that aligns with the first story level of the building, and a large asphalt paved parking lot to the east that continues to 31st Street. Twentieth century Sanborn atlases demonstrate that the parking lot was paved at some point after 1979 on land that previously contained track sidings.

Limestone sheaths the first story of the building in a restrained classical form with a modillioned cornice. The upper stories are clad in buff colored brick, with thin brick pilasters ornamented with limestone Art Deco caps. There are three original window types featured in the building: 3/3 double hung steel sash, 3-light pivot topped by a 3-light fixed sash, and 3-light fixed sash topped by a 3-light pivot.

The building's main elevation fronts 32nd Street, which presents a rather unusual situation, in that a subsurface railroad line runs between the main elevation and the street in an open passageway. The main elevation is nearly symmetrical in form with a central four-bay section flanked by open stair towers which project slightly from the main façade and penetrate the roofline in the form of stepped, gabled parapets with carved limestone ornaments. Nine bays continue to the north of the central section, with eight bays to the south. Each bay is comprised of 3/3 steel sash, grouped in threes. Brick spandrels are located at each floor level with a diamond pattern brick ornament beneath the center window of each bay. Brick pilasters with limestone caps divide the bays. Secondary brick pilasters with limestone caps rise between each window within the bay. The use of pilasters adds a relieving verticality to the sprawling facade. The double hung windows are located on the 5th floor and in the northernmost bay. On the remainder of the façade the center window in each bay contains a pivot lower sash with a fixed upper, with the flanking windows reversed with a pivot upper sash with a fixed lower. Steel casement sash are located on the southern section of the 1st story and date from 1935 renovations. The 1935 renovations primarily involved interior showroom and office renovations and the only exterior alterations that occurred as part of this campaign were the installation of the steel casement sash on the west elevation and the installation of showroom windows along the Walnut Street elevation. A number of modern single light replacement windows are also evident on this elevation. Three entrances are located on the west elevation. At the base of the central open stair towers are two steel doors with transoms. An additional entrance with

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Page 2

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

modern flush steel door is located at the northern end. The 1st story of the northern bay was refaced in c. 1960 with concrete panels. The c. 1960 renovations were limited in scope on the exterior and involved the insertion of a modern door surrounded by concrete wall panels near the northwestern corner of the west and north elevations and the updating of interior finishes in the adjoining lobby area. The remaining first story bays of the west façade contain large stucco panels with 12-light sash above.

The south façade is organized in eight bays comprised of windows grouped in two, three and four, and an open fire stair in the easternmost bay. The two pivot window types are represented on this elevation. The outermost bays contain stepped, gabled parapets with limestone ornaments. The use of pilasters and the diamond brick pattern was continued on the three secondary elevations. The south façade is accessed from the Walnut Street Bridge, a c. 1980 concrete bridge that replaced an earlier bridge. The earlier bridge directly abutted this façade whereas the existing bridge is located approximately six feet from the façade creating an areaway. The construction of the c. 1980 bridge had no significant effect on this façade other than the creation of the areaway. The original train entrances, which are now visible in this areaway, were infilled with cinderblock at some point after the construction of the c. 1980 bridge. The first story contains storefronts that have been bricked-in. Two entrances are located on this façade, both containing modern flush steel doors.

The east elevation is similar in form and fenestration to the west elevation with five center bays flanked by slightly projecting bays with stepped, gabled parapets. Nine bays continue to the north of the center section, with eight to the south. The end bays also contain the stepped, gabled parapets. An original massive concrete truck ramp structure is located along the first and second stories, with one level below grade. The upper stories of the building contain the three original window types.

The north elevation is organized in eight bays with the outermost bays projecting slightly and containing the stepped, gabled parapets with limestone ornaments. The bays contain the three original window types that are grouped in two, three and four. A series of arched openings continue along the first story of this elevation and have been bricked-in. The main entrance is located near the western corner and is a c. 1960s aluminum glazed door and surround. Concrete panels are located on the first story surrounding the entrance.

Each floor contains approximately 88,000 square feet and is serviced by six stair towers, two passenger elevators and nine large freight elevators. Stair towers are located near the southeast, northeast and northwest corners, with a stair near the middle of the eastern wall, and two stairs along the western wall. The stair towers contain painted brick walls with concrete treads and risers with a simple metal pipe rail. The two passenger elevators contain flush metal doors with modern cabs. The passenger elevator near the middle of the western wall retains its original indicator. Nine freight elevators are located throughout the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Page 3

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

Seven of the freight elevators contain cabs that measure 9'4" x 19'11". One freight elevator was designed for automobile use and measures 10'0" x 19'11". One freight elevator was designed for truck use and measures 10'0" x 29'11". Trucks would enter the building through the elaborate concrete ramping system along the east elevation, and could not only directly access the railroad platforms, but could then access each floor by way of the truck sized freight elevator. Each freight elevator contains unornamented steel doors with utilitarian cabs.

Seven tracks originally entered the building from the freight yard across Walnut Street. One of the seven tracks had a switch leading to an eighth track. The tracks were sunken with 5" thick concrete platforms at grade with the door openings to allow for ease of freight transfer. These tracks have been filled in with concrete over the years and the track level contains continuous concrete floors with brick walls and concrete columns. The track level has been partitioned to accommodate the building's mechanical equipment. The upper stories reflect the original utilitarian use with concrete floors, concrete ceilings, brick perimeter walls and exposed piping. Mushroom columns are located in the northern and southern sections of the building, with the central section containing simple squared columns chamfered corners. The first through fifth floors were largely subdivided with modern partitioning c. 1960, while the sixth floor remains open. The utilitarian use of the building is reflected in the absence of any significant interior stylistic details.

In 1935, the first and second floors were renovated to house Raymond Rosen and Co., distributors for Kelvinator and RCA. Historic research has uncovered lengthy descriptions of the extensive Art Deco showroom and auditorium. The showroom and auditorium were likely removed after the Raymond Rosen tenancy ended in the 1950s. Remaining interior elements from this renovation are limited and include a marble fireplace, terrazzo stairs, curved partition walls, "flexboard" walls and several wooden office doors with round windows. The only significant exterior change that was made at this time was the insertion of the steel casement windows on the first story of the west elevation which provided light to the accounting offices and the installation of the storefront windows along Walnut Street. In the early 1960s, General Electric leased the building and reconfigured the interior with modern office partitioning throughout. The upper floors had largely remained as open plans prior to this period, and since there were no significant original interior details, the partitioning had minimal effect on the integrity of the building. As noted, the only substantive exterior change was the insertion of a new door at the building's northwestern entrance.

The building retains the form and characteristics of the Art Deco style applied to utilitarian architecture. The functional role of the building is expressed in the interior with its exposed concrete floors, ceilings and columns, and painted brick perimeter walls. The building stands in good condition and retains architectural integrity.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

1929 - 1949

Significant Dates

1929

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

United Engineers & Constructors

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, landmark, survey, engineering record.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Hagley Museum and Library

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 1

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

The Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, located at 32nd and Chestnut Streets in West Philadelphia, has achieved significance as a symbol of the Pennsylvania Railroad's preeminence in local and national railroad freight transportation and as a remnant of the last great period of building activity by the company in the City of Philadelphia. Designed by United Engineers and Constructors, the building represents the application of the Art Deco style on utilitarian industrial architecture and also stands as a representative example of the work of one of the nation's most notable 20th century engineering and construction firms. With a board of directors made up of the city's social elite, the Pennsylvania Railroad invariably commissioned the most prolific architects, engineers and contractors of the time as a testament to their standing at the forefront of stylistic and technological innovations. Constructed in 1929, as part of the Pennsylvania Railroad's *Philadelphia Improvements Project*, the Freight Building demonstrates the company's commitment to capital improvements in the wake of declining revenues resulting from the rise in alternative modes of transportation. The Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building was designed as a state-of-the-art warehouse and transfer point, housing a multitude of functions under one roof. The success in blending the retail and utilitarian uses was achieved by the addition of stylistic architectural detailing to industrial form and massing. The period of significance continues from 1929, the date of construction, to 1949, to meet the National Register's fifty year requirement. The resource gains its significance in the areas of transportation, commerce, and architecture and meets National Register criteria A and C.

32nd and Chestnut Street Site

The site of the Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building has its origins in the dairy industry, as an early destination point for the shipment of milk from remote dairy farms in the surrounding countryside. In the early 1850s, the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad laid a 26.22 mile track which traversed some of the region's most productive dairy farms, and built its main station on the eastern half of the 32nd and Chestnut Street site.¹ A true "farmer's railroad," sections of the road were built by subscriptions of the farmers along the line. As the quantity of milk and other products shipped by rail increased, a separate milk depot became necessary on the site and was built by the railroad prior to 1886. Between 1886 and 1900, the milk shed was acquired by the Pennsylvania Railroad. By 1918, significant changes had occurred on the site, with the demolition of the c. 1886 frame milk depot and the erection of a large brick Merchants Warehouse building in the center of the block with a new frame milk depot spanning across the entire block from north to south on the eastern end. The West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad line ran between the buildings.

¹ The West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad Co. incorporated April 11, 1848 and consolidated with the Philadelphia and Baltimore Central Railroad Company in 1881. Coverdale & Colpitts, Consulting Engineers, *The Pennsylvania Railroad Company; Corporate, Financial and Construction History of Lines Owned, Operated and Controlled to December 31, 1947*, Volume II, Lines East of Pittsburgh (New York: Coverdale & Colpitts, 1945).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 2

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

The Merchants Warehouse Company operated warehouse facilities that specialized in the storage and distribution of raw commodities. There were numerous Merchants Warehouse facilities in Philadelphia in the late 19th century, most notably the 18th Street flour warehouse and the 32nd and Market Streets hay warehouse. The facility at 32nd and Chestnut Streets evidently specialized in the storage and distribution of milk. The Pennsylvania Railroad had a financial interest in the Merchants Warehouse Company, and the Railroad acquired many of their Philadelphia sites in the ensuing years. The Merchants Warehouse building with milk depot remained on the 32nd and Chestnut Street site until 1929, when the site was cleared as part of the Pennsylvania Railroad's *Philadelphia Improvements Project*.

The Pennsylvania Railroad

Evolving from a regional steam powered line in the early nineteenth century to the largest railroad in the world, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company played a critical role in the development of the nation, establishing a transportation network that would link distant agricultural communities with the eastern seaboard cities. The origins of the Pennsylvania Railroad can be traced to the early nineteenth century when the newly organized railroad established a freight line between Philadelphia and Columbia, Pennsylvania to compete with the success of New York's Erie Canal. The Pennsylvania Railroad began passenger service in 1849 and in the same year began its freight service with the purchase of seventy-five freight cars.² Five years later, the main line from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh was completed, carrying 250,095 tons of freight in its first year.³

Since its inception, the Pennsylvania Railroad had a strong presence in Philadelphia with locomotives carrying freight across the city along many major streets to and from the Delaware River. Steam locomotives were used between Pittsburgh and the Schuylkill River, but as a precaution against fire, a city ordinance required that horses pull the cars through Philadelphia. Freight transport initially comprised the bulk of the company's business, but by the 1860s the focus turned toward passenger service.

The Pennsylvania Railroad's first passenger station in Philadelphia was constructed at 32nd and Market Streets in 1864 and remained in use for only a decade when in 1876 a new *Centennial Station* was erected in its place. West Philadelphia's great moment in history came as host of the country's Centennial Exposition. In an effort to capitalize on the event, street railways were built in the park area with a main Pennsylvania Railroad Depot located directly across from the festival's main entrance.⁴ To accommodate the increased traffic to the city, the Pennsylvania

² Elizabeth M. Geffen, "Industrial Development and Social Crisis, 1841-1854," *Philadelphia, A 300-Year History*, Russell F. Weigley, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 323.

³ Geffen, 323.

⁴ Dorothy Gondos Beers, "The Centennial City, 1865-1876," *Philadelphia, A 300-Year History*, Russell F. Weigley, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 468.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 3

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

Railroad constructed a new *Centennial Station* at 32nd and Market Streets to serve as the primary terminal for trains to New York and the west.⁵ A fire in 1896 destroyed the building and it was replaced by the West Philadelphia Station in 1903. Soon after the completion of Centennial Station, the Railroad decided that a new passenger terminal nearer to the center of the city was necessary and plans commenced. While the Centennial Station (and later West Philadelphia Stations) remained one of the Railroad's principal stations in the city, the grand Broad Street Station became the heart of the Pennsylvania Railroad's operations.

William Penn's plan for a two-river city had not been achieved in the first century of settlement with the population heavily concentrated along the Delaware to the east. The city's decision to build a new City Hall at the geographic city center prompted a wave of westward movement of the commercial district in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Philadelphia's two major railroads were also a stimulus for the westward movement of retail development with the construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad's "Broad Street Station," across from City Hall on Broad and Filbert Streets in 1881, and the Reading Railroad's "Reading Terminal" at 12th and Market Streets in 1893.

The four-story, Gothic style Broad Street Station opened on December 5, 1881 with nine tracks under a double train shed that serviced 160 trains daily.⁶ To avoid street crossings at grade, an elevated line was built on a massive stone viaduct that was formally designated the Filbert Street Elevated, but was commonly known as the "Chinese Wall." In only a few years, the Railroad recognized the need to enlarge the Broad Street Station, and Frank Furness was commissioned for the project. The tracks were increased to twelve and later sixteen, and the largest train shed ever constructed (300' wide, 595' long, 108' high) was installed over the two earlier sheds, which were then removed.⁷ The Pennsylvania Railroad boasted that this was the world's largest railroad passenger terminal and that the train shed had the world's largest permanent roof. By 1910, 578 trains daily used the station, which had become renowned not only for the number of trains it served, but for its design and the quality of service afforded to passengers.⁸ With this expansion, the area surrounding the station experienced the greatest influx of commercial development.⁹

The Pennsylvania Railroad's focus during the 1920s was on simplification and consolidation, efforts made necessary following the post World War I labor troubles and depressed revenues that plagued the company. To counter the depressed revenues, the company took steps to improve speed and performance and in 1922 and 1923 the Railroad purchased 475 new freight

⁵ Richard Webster, *Philadelphia Preserved* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), 200.

⁶ Edwin P. Alexander, *Down at the Depot; American Railroad Stations from 1831 to 1920* (New York: Bramhall House, 1970), 267.

⁷ Alexander, 268.

⁸ Alexander, 268.

⁹ Webster, 115, 138.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 4

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

locomotives which were more powerful than anything running on the rails at that time.¹⁰ The average rate at which freight was moved over the rails increased markedly in the next few years. In conjunction with the new initiative, the company moved toward increasing the efficiency of the transfer operation and coordinating with other forms of transportation. Growing competition from highway vehicles including automobiles, buses, and trucks had begun before 1929, but was greatly accentuated thereafter. Motor transportation was made faster and more efficient with technological improvements to the vehicles and the increase in the paved mileage of roads. The city's bridge building program of the 1920s further encouraged automobile transportation and this was followed by the rise of the trucking industry. Passenger and freight transportation on the Pennsylvania rails had reached its peak in 1920, but by 1925 the railroad was facing declining revenues.¹¹ Recognizing the impact of competing modes of transportation, the company outlined initiatives to alleviate the pressures of growing competition. In May 1929, Pennsylvania Railroad president, Gen. W.W. Atterbury, authored the feature article in the company's magazine entitled, "Looking Ahead in Transportation; Coordination of Trains, Motor Cars and Airplanes."¹² Pennsylvania's plan would result in new facilities that would expedite the transfer of goods between evolving modes of transportation, and would eventually result in the company's investment in busing and trucking companies and in an airline.

The Pennsylvania Railroad's passenger stations had proved adequate for many years, but the growth of the city in the early decades of the twentieth century and the increased popularity for rail travel resulted in congested rail lines. It was apparent that the railroad had never anticipated serving such numbers and the stub-end design of the Broad Street Station presented difficult and costly operating problems. Stub-end stations required the switching of power to reverse the train and the need to reverse the seats, functions that require both labor and time.¹³ The competing Reading Railroad did not have this problem with its stub-end terminal at 12th and Market Streets since the Reading did not operate through trains into Philadelphia. On the Pennsylvania system, Philadelphia was an intermediate point on their lines from the north, south and west. Trains traveling from New York to points west had to stop at North Philadelphia station, cross the Schuylkill River to Mantua, proceed south to West Philadelphia Station, cross the Schuylkill again at Market Street to enter Broad Street Station. After reversing, the train would then retrace to Mantua and then continue to points west.¹⁴ Adding to this problem, the ¾ mile long "Chinese Wall" occupied valuable real estate and the

¹⁰ George H. Burgess and Miles C. Kennedy, *Centennial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1846-1946* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1949), 594.

¹¹ Burgess and Kennedy, 599.

¹² Gen. W.W. Atterbury, "Looking Ahead in Transportation; Coordination of Trains, Motor Cars and Airplanes," *Mutual Magazine* (May 1929, Publication of the Mutual Beneficial Association of Pennsylvania Railroad Employees [sic], Inc.).

¹³ Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society, [PRT&HS] The Philadelphia Chapter, *The Philadelphia Improvements, Part 1, The Idea & Projects East of the Schuylkill River*, Philadelphia: May 1979.

¹⁴ PRT&HS, *The Philadelphia Improvements, Part 1*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 5

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

low street underpasses obstructed traffic and repressed development to the north.¹⁵ The city was also underway with plans to develop west Market Street and extend the Ben Franklin Parkway into Penn Square. While the notion of expanding the Broad Street Station was explored, it was evident that the location of the station and its trackage encumbered the city's plans for the new diagonal parkway. Being the major landowner, the Railroad stood to profit from the sale of the land, and in 1925, the City and the Railroad entered into a joint venture known as the *Philadelphia Improvements Project*. This undertaking would transform the appearance of Philadelphia more than any other civic improvement project in the twentieth century.

Philadelphia Improvements Project

On July 13, 1925, the Pennsylvania Railroad signed a formal agreement with the city, whereby it would coordinate its improvements with a large-scale exercise in city planning.¹⁶ The primary goal would be to provide an efficient flow of traffic while beautifying the city in the process. Under the plan, the Broad Street Station, its trackage, and the "Chinese Wall," would be removed, opening up a large area of downtown land for redevelopment. In conjunction, a monumental new station for through trains running between New York and Washington would be built on the west bank of the Schuylkill at 30th and Market and linked to the Center City by a broad avenue called Pennsylvania Avenue (later renamed John F. Kennedy Boulevard).¹⁷ West Philadelphia was selected as the hub for through trains since the main line was already established on the west bank of the river, and the area was large enough to permit a loop track that would allow one continuous movement of trains between the north and west (the great irony of the project since this loop was never built). Project planners faced challenges in selecting West Philadelphia as the hub, since the anticipated growth of west Market Street would take time, and since the sections of the city east of Broad Street were not within walking distance of the 30th Street Station. This problem was resolved by the development of an electrified underground commuter station in Center City known as Suburban Station. This station, with its 22-story office tower, would also serve as the headquarters for the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Following the precedent established by the Penn Station project in New York City, the Pennsylvania Railroad created a new unit known as "Chief Engineer Philadelphia Improvements."¹⁸ Robert Farnham, formerly Engineer of Bridges and Buildings, was named to the post.¹⁹ Under this plan, the Railroad was responsible for the major buildings and track

¹⁵ PRT&HS, *The Philadelphia Improvements, Part 1*.

¹⁶ Hagley Museum and Library, Collection 915, Pennsylvania Railroad Chief Engineer, Index, Brief History of the Philadelphia Improvements Project.

¹⁷ Hagley, Chief Engineer, Index, Brief History.

¹⁸ Hagley, Chief Engineer, Index, Brief History.

¹⁹ Hagley, Chief Engineer, Index, Brief History.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 6

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

relocation, while the City was to finance new streets and bridges, and the replacement of the Market Street elevated rail with an underground subway between 22nd and 46th Streets. The Railroad selected Graham, Anderson, Probst & White (successor firm to D.H. Burnham and Co.) of Chicago as the architects, and United Engineers & Constructors, Inc. of Philadelphia as general contractor.²⁰

The *Philadelphia Improvements Project* was comprised of a succession of construction initiatives among which included: the demolition of the Broad Street Station with its tracks and "Chinese Wall," the demolition of the West Philadelphia freight depot, passenger station and associated shops and expansive stock yards, and the construction of 30th Street Station, Suburban Station, Pennsylvania Avenue, the main Post Office facility to the immediate south of 30th Street Station, the Produce Terminal with Cold Storage Facility in South Philadelphia, the Railroad Office Building at 32nd and Market Streets, the demolition of the freight station at 30th and Market and the construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building at 32nd and Chestnut Streets, the construction of the Arch Street viaduct and the Market Street bridge, the channeling of the Market ell under the river and out to 46th Street, and the commencement of system-wide electrification. The estimated construction budget of \$50 million proved to be a very optimistic assessment.

The project spanned almost a decade from 1925-1933. The first element of the plan to be completed was the construction of a new 14-story office building in 1927 at 32nd and Market Streets to house the Railroad's offices, which would be disrupted by the project. A new cold storage warehouse was built beside the produce yard at Oregon and Delaware Avenues in South Philadelphia in 1928.²¹ On November 1, 1929, the Freight Building at 32nd and Chestnut Streets was opened for the storage and transfer of milk and manufactured products.²² While the first section of the underground Suburban Station was opened for electric commuter trains in September 1930, the 20-story Suburban Station office building was not opened until April 1930.²³ In September 1930, the upper level of 30th Street Station was placed in service for trains running to both Suburban Station and the old Broad Street Station which continued to be used by steam-powered locals and express trains to New York and the main line.²⁴ In March 1933, one platform and two tracks on the lower level were placed in service for New York – Washington trains, replacing the old West Philadelphia Station.²⁵ The main station building and concourse, though not completed, were opened in December 1933.

²⁰ Hagley, Chief Engineer, Index, Brief History.

²¹ Burgess and Kennedy, 622.

²² Chris Baer, Railroad expert at the Hagley Museum and Library Manuscripts department has the date of November 1, 1929 recorded in his personal database.

²³ Hagley, Chief Engineer, Index, Brief History.

²⁴ Hagley, Chief Engineer, Index, Brief History.

²⁵ Hagley, Chief Engineer, Index, Brief History.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 7

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

Despite the onset of the Depression, the Pennsylvania Railroad's primary initiatives were largely carried through, having been well financed and carefully planned. Struggling to cope with the economic burden of the times, the city reprioritized its initiatives and city beautification was moved to the bottom of the list. Federal labor projects and funding helped the railroad, but did little for the city's portion of the budget. The completion of the post office proved to be the federal government's only significant contribution to the project. With the advent of World War II and the shortages of supplies and labor, completion of the project was prevented. The Philadelphia Improvements Project was not restored until the 1950s when the Market Street ell was finally lowered to the subway tunnel that had sat nearly completed and vacant for two decades and the grand Broad Street Station was finally demolished.

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, 32nd and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia

In 1929, the Merchants Warehouse Building and Milk Depot that stood at 32nd and Chestnut Streets were demolished and plans were drawn up for a new Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building. On January 23, 1929, the Railroad authorized the expenditure of \$3,000,000 for the project and when the building was placed in service in November 1929, the actual expenditures indicated a slight overrun of \$16,548.73.²⁶ The onset of the Depression appears to have hindered the Railroad's ability to initially rent the warehouse space since the interior was not completed and fully rented until 1935.

The Pennsylvania Railroad commissioned United Engineers & Constructors of Philadelphia, general contractors for the *Philadelphia Improvements Project*, for the design of the new Freight Building. There is no evidence to suggest that Graham, Anderson, Probst & White had any involvement in the design of the Freight Building, and given the importance placed on engineering efficiency, it would seem logical that the project was granted solely to United Engineers. United Engineers & Constructors was incorporated in 1928 as a consolidation of four successful and well-established engineering and construction organizations: Dwight P. Robinson & Company, Inc., Day & Zimmermann Engineering & Construction Co., Public Service Production Co., and The UGI Contracting Co. This combination brought a broad background of construction experience to the new company. The goal of the merger was to produce the best engineering and construction firm in the world, a goal that was realized within a few years, as the company ranked as the largest organization in its field in the country.²⁷ In its first year, United Engineers & Constructors completed \$68 million in business including projects in South America and Europe.²⁸ The company built steam-power plants, electric

²⁶ Letter from Chief Engineer to J.F. Deasy, VP, Operation, November 31, 1933. Collection 915, B-1552, folder 27. Hagley Museum and Library.

²⁷ "The Origin of a Concept," promotional literature published c. 1930 by United Engineers & Constructors, Courtesy of the United Engineers & Constructors Archives.

²⁸ "The First Hundred Years; The Golden Age of Growth," promotional literature published by United Engineers & Constructors, Courtesy of the United Engineers & Constructors Archives.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 8

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

generating stations, railroad passenger and freight terminals, hospitals, prisons, offices and apartments. Railroad commissions would comprise a significant portion of the company's work in the ensuing years, building on the success of the Philadelphia Improvements Project. Promotional literature of the period published by United Engineers, features the 9,150,000 cubic foot Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, as one of the company's most impressive accomplishments.²⁹ In December 1969, United Engineers & Constructors, Inc. became a subsidiary of Raytheon Company.

As part of the company's efficiency initiative, the new Freight Building was designed to surpass any warehouse and transfer facility in the Railroad's operation. Previously, distributors were forced to operate in two locations, with sales offices and showrooms in the central business district and warehouse and shipping facilities in the distant warehouse sections along rail lines. This arrangement did not permit the supervision and coordination that are made possible when these functions are housed together. This arrangement grew unsatisfactory to distributors who demanded a new type of building in a more prominent and accessible location.³⁰

The new Freight Building was engineered to meet the demands of both the Railroad and the distributors with great efficiency of operation, and a central facility for showrooms and warehouse. The building was constructed of reinforced concrete, which afforded greater fire resistance than the earlier brick and wood warehouses, especially when combined with modern sprinkler systems. The strength offered by reinforced concrete also allowed for greater flexibility in stacking, which was particularly important in such a large building where certain sections would be rented while other sections sat vacant.

Immediate success was recognized in this new building type, and in 1929 plans were proposed by the competing Reading Railroad for their Terminal Commerce Building (completed 1931) which followed the Pennsylvania's precedent. The Reading's Terminal Commerce Building was designed as a combination office, showroom, parking garage, warehouse and freight station and its immense footprint extends 528' by 225'.³¹ Unlike the Pennsylvania Railroad's Freight Building, the Terminal Commerce Building was designed to appear as two buildings with an Art Deco office tower fronting Broad Street and the utilitarian designed warehouse section relegated to the rear of the site. The design of the 12-story warehouse section expresses the functional role with yellow-brick curtain walls punctuated by factory-type windows with simple brick pilasters between each window bay. To compete with the Pennsylvania's facility, the

²⁹ Various pieces of promotional literature published by United Engineers & Constructors, Courtesy of the United Engineers & Constructors Archives.

³⁰ "Unique, Terminal Commerce Building," promotional brochure, c. 1931, quoted in, Frederick L. Richards, Philadelphia Historical Commission, "Terminal Commerce Building," National Register Nomination. June 20, 1996.

³¹ Frederick L. Richards, Preservation Consultant, Philadelphia Historical Commission; Revised by Barbara Dertouzos, Terminal Commerce Building National Register Nomination. Revised June 20, 1996.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 9

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

Terminal Commerce Building featured seven 8' wide 10' high and 20' long, 10,000 pound capacity elevators with the capability of carrying automobiles.

One of the most significant features of the Pennsylvania Railroad's Freight Building was the elaborate ramping system along the east elevation, that allowed for trucks to directly enter the building, drive directly to the railroad platforms, and then access each floor by way of the truck sized freight elevator – a feature incorporated by the Reading Railroad into their Terminal Commerce Building.

A surviving set of original floor plans provides evidence of the original floor plan and usage for each floor of the Pennsylvania Railroad's Freight Building. As indicated on the original plans, the 1st floor contained a large cold storage room with adjoining freezer room. The remainder of the first floor was intended to be leased for office/showroom space and in the absence of an immediate tenant, temporary storefront windows were installed and the first floor was left unfinished. The second floor was divided into two spaces with a wire enclosure wall that ran east-west across the building. Three scale pits appear on the 2nd floor drawings. The 3rd floor was divided into two spaces with a 9" thick brick wall. Warehouse worker's restrooms were located only on the northern side. The 4th floor was also divided into two spaces with a 9" thick brick wall. Restrooms for the warehouse workers were located in the north section. The fifth floor was divided into four sections with brick walls running east-west. These sections were interconnected and could be accessed through a limited number of doorways. Restrooms were located in three of the four sections, and a "hospital room" was located in one section. The sixth floor was an open plan with a restroom and auto washing stand along the west wall. As noted in the description section, each floor has been altered from its original plan with most floors subdivided to create smaller office spaces.

When the building opened in November 1929, its primary use was as a milk platform for the Pennsylvania Railroad and for Abbotts Dairies. The upper floors served as warehouse space for several companies including, American Stores Co., Handon Boiler Corp., Landon Radiator Co., C. Lindback, Milter Labs, and Rundle Manufacturing.³² A letter from the Chief Engineer in 1935 indicates that aside from the cold storage and freezer area, the remainder first floor of the warehouse was never completed, perhaps due to the onset of the Depression.³³ On February 23, 1935, the Real Estate Department of the Railroad signed a five year lease agreement with Raymond Rosen & Co. to begin September 1, 1935, whereby the Railroad and Raymond Rosen would jointly fit-out the Walnut Street side and portions of the 32nd Street side of the first and second floors for showroom and office space. Included in this work were costs associated

³² Philadelphia Address Telephone Directory, Fall 1929.

³³ Letter from Chief Engineer to F.J. Fell, Jr., VP & Comptroller, July 10, 1935. Collection 915, B-1552, Folder 27. Hagley Museum and Library.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 10

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

with new doors and windows along Walnut Street, steel sash along 32nd Street, concrete floor, plumbing, heating, plastering, lighting, painting, and air conditioning.³⁴

Raymond Rosen & Co. was the exclusive distributor in the Philadelphia area for: Kelvinator products including refrigerators, heating units, and air conditioning units; RCA including radio sets manufactured in Camden; National Metal Corporation, manufacturers of washing machines; and Prima Manufacturing Co., manufacturers of washing machines. Raymond Rosen & Company's 7th Street plant had sold 300 carloads of equipment in 1934 and they were in demand of a larger centralized facility.³⁵

At the time of completion, the Raymond Rosen & Co. facilities were described as "the last word in style and present day efficiency, permitting the highest cooperation between distributor and dealer," "without a doubt an outstanding event in the history of modern and scientific industry."³⁶ Raymond Rosen & Co. had found a location with railroad delivery platforms allowing the Pennsylvania cars to unload their volumes of products safely and in record time. The new site had adequate warehouse space so that the costly parts could be stored and protected until a demand was issued. The showroom displayed every wonder of the modern age and in a setting to accentuate the greatness of the Raymond Rosen & Co. enterprise. Several features including a terrazzo stair, several wooden office doors with circular glass panes, and an elegant marble fireplace survive as testament to the company's success. Raymond Rosen & Co. remained a primary tenant for two decades.

While Abbotts Dairies had moved their operations to an adjacent building by 1935, the Pennsylvania Railroad continued to use the building for its milk platform, freight station and scale house. Other tenants in 1935 included the Great A & P Tea Company (general offices and warehouse), American Stores Co., Continental Distilling Corp., Gel Warehouse, and Merchants Warehouse Co. For nearly three decades from c. 1935 until c. 1960, the building's primary tenants aside from the Railroad were the Raymond Rosen & Company and A & P Food Stores.

In 1958, the Pennsylvania Railroad was forced to merge with the New York Central Railroad, a step that failed to halt the downward spiral of this former empire.³⁷ In the reorganization effort, the Railroad moved out of the 32nd and Chestnut Streets Freight Building.

In the early 1960s, General Electric signed a lease agreement for the building, initially for its Missile and Ordinance Division, later the Missile and Space Vehicle Division (renamed the

³⁴ Miscellaneous correspondence between Chief Engineer and Raymond Rosen & Co. Collection 915, B-1552, Folder 27. Hagley Museum and Library.

³⁵ Letter from J.P. Gauff to T.J. Skillman, Chief Engineer's Office, March 14, 1935. Collection 915, B-1552, Folder 27. Hagley Museum and Library.

³⁶ "Mayor Moore to Open New Raymond Rosen Building," *The Philadelphia Public Ledger*, September 22, 1935.

³⁷ Clark, *Philadelphia, A 300-Year History*, Russell F. Weigley ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 659.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 11

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

Missile and Spacecraft Division), and finally for the Re-Entry Division.³⁸ As defense funding dried-up in the 1970s, GE diversified and for a time the building housed the divisions of Medical Systems, Environmental Systems, and Housing Systems in addition to Re-Entry. Diversification was short-lived and within a few years Re-Entry was the sole division in the facility. It was during the General Electric tenure that the open floor plans on many floors were subdivided with partitioning to create engineering and office spaces. General Electric remained as the primary tenant until the early 1990s when the building was purchased by the University of Pennsylvania.

Transportation/Commercial Significance

Built to house a multitude of functions under one roof, the Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building served as a prototype for railroad freight facilities around the nation and thus possesses significance under transportation. The Freight Building represents the Pennsylvania Railroad's extraordinary effort in the wake of declining revenues from the rise of alternate modes of transportation to create a building that integrated its national freight lines with warehouse, trucking terminal, and showroom, all under one roof. Significance is also gained in its position as an integral part of the *Philadelphia Improvements Project*, the transportation initiative that transformed the city's landscape more than any other project in the twentieth century. The building is also significant in the area of commerce, as a prototype for a new railroad building type – one that would house warehouse and showroom uses, in conjunction with proximity to transportation in a prime city location. The success of the primary commercial tenant, Raymond Rosen & Co., was due in part to the ability of the company to coordinate their operations in one central facility, something that was not possible before the construction of this building.

Architectural Significance

Designed by United Engineers & Constructors, one of the nation's most influential engineering and construction firms, the building was engineered to surpass any warehouse and transfer facility in the Railroad's operation and thus the building gains significance under architecture. Considering this to be one of their most important early commissions, this building was featured by the company in promotional literature of the period. With the success of the Philadelphia precedent, United Engineers would become specialists in railroad facility design and were awarded commissions by railroads throughout the nation. Additional significance is gained for the successful application of the Art Deco style on a utilitarian building, representing the Pennsylvania Railroad's standing at the forefront of stylistic and technological innovations. The

³⁸ Interview with Phillip Ritter, Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society, Philadelphia Chapter.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 12

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

use of tall thin pilasters, 3/3 windows and applied limestone ornament, reflects the successful melding of the industrial form and massing with the aesthetic appeal necessary for commercial and showroom uses.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

SOURCES

MAPS AND ATLASES

Baist, George William. *West Philadelphia District of Baist's Detail Property Atlases of the City of Philadelphia*. 7 volumes. Philadelphia: George William Baist, 1900.

Bromley, George W. and Walter S. *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, West Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley & Co., 1918. Corrected to September 1923 by F.H.M. Klinge.

Bromley, George W. and Walter S. *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, West Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley & Co., 1927.

Scott, J.D. *Atlas of the 24th and 27th Wards, West Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: J.D. Scott, 1878.

Smith, J.L. *Atlas of West Philadelphia, 24th and 27th Wards*. Philadelphia: William G. Baist, 1886.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Philadelphia Address Telephone Directories. Listing of building tenants.

Social Registers: *Blue Book*, Social Register from 1880s. Listing of residences of the social elite.

INTERVIEWS

Baer, Christopher. Railroad Expert, Hagley Museum and Library, Manuscripts Department.

Ritter, Phil. Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society, Philadelphia Chapter.

Xaras, Theodore. Pennsylvania Railroad Technical and Historical Society, Philadelphia Chapter.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Alexander, Edwin P. *Down at the Depot; American Railroad Stations from 1831 to 1920*. New York: Bramhall House, 1970.

Atterbury, Gen. W. W. "Looking Ahead in Transportation, Coordination of Trains, Motor Cars and Airplanes." *The Mutual Magazine*. Philadelphia: Publication of the Mutual Beneficial Association of the Pennsylvania Railroad Employees, Inc., May 1929.

Beers, Dorothy Gondos. "The Centennial City, 1865-1876." *Philadelphia, A 300-Year History*. Russell F. Weigley, ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982.

Brooks, Terrence. *Pennsylvania Railroad: the Early Days*. Los Angeles: Trans-Anglo Books, 1964.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

Burgess, George H. and Miles C. Kennedy. *Centennial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1846-1946*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1949.

Coverdale & Colpitts, Consulting Engineers. *The Pennsylvania Railroad Company; Corporate, Financial and Construction History of Lines Owned, Operated and Controlled to December 31, 1947*. Volume II, Lines East of Pittsburgh. New York: Coverdale & Colpitts, 1945.

"The First Hundred Years, The Golden Age of Growth." Promotional literature published c. 1930 by United Engineers & Constructors, Inc. Courtesy of United Engineers & Constructors, Inc. Archives.

Fleming, B.B. "The Morning Milk; Interesting Transportation Operation Rendered by the Pennsylvania R.R. in Keeping a River of Milk Flowing to Large Cities." *The Mutual Magazine*. Philadelphia: Publication of the Mutual Beneficial Association of the Pennsylvania Railroad Employees, Inc., May 1929.

Geffen, Elizabeth M. "Industrial Development and Social Crisis, 1841-1854." *Philadelphia, A 300-Year History*. Russell F. Weigley, ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982.

"Mayor Moore to Open New Raymond Rosen Building." *Philadelphia Public Ledger*. September 22, 1935.

"The Origins of a Concept." Promotional literature published c. 1930 by United Engineers & Constructors, Inc. Courtesy of United Engineers & Constructors, Inc. Archives.

Pennsylvania Railroad Collection, Hagley Museum and Library. Chief Engineer files. Collection 915.

Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society, The Philadelphia Chapter. *The Philadelphia Improvements, Part 1, The Idea & Projects East of the Schuylkill River*. Philadelphia: May 1979.

Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society, The Philadelphia Chapter. *The Philadelphia Improvements, Part 2, 30th Street Station*. Philadelphia: September 1980.

Philadelphia Address Telephone Directory. Various dates.

Richards, Frederick L. Philadelphia Historical Commission. "Terminal Commerce Building." National Register Nomination. June 20, 1996.

Webster, Richard. *Philadelphia Preserved*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976.

Weigley, Russell F., ed. *Philadelphia, A 300-Year History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982.

Wilson, William Bender. *History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company*. Philadelphia: Henry T. Coates & Co., 1895.

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building
Name of Property

Philadelphia County, PA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 8	4 8 3 0 2 0	4 4 2 2 4 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia Rose Hamilton/Associate
organization Powers & Company, Inc. date July 14, 1999
street & number 2230 Mt. Vernon Street telephone 215-236-9006
city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19130

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All that certain lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected as described below:

Tax Parcel #1

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the East House Line of 32nd Street (90' wide) and the southerly side of Chestnut Street (80' wide); thence extending South 78 degrees 59 minutes, East along the said Southerly side of Chestnut Street 459' 11½" to a point; thence extending South 15 degrees 48 minutes 15 seconds West 482 feet ¼ inches to a point on the Northerly side of Walnut Street (80 feet wide); thence extending North 78 degrees 59 minutes West along the said Northerly side of Walnut Street 419 feet 8 ¾ inches to a point on the East House Line of 32nd Street (90 feet wide); thence extending North 11 degrees 01 minute East along the present confirmed East House line of 32nd Street (90 feet wide) 480 feet 4 inches to a point on the said Southerly side of Chestnut Street, being the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

Containing 211,271 square feet more or less.

Tax Parcel #2

All that certain lot or piece of ground beginning at the point of intersection of the Southerly side of Chestnut Street (80 feet wide) with the Westerly side of 31st Street (60 feet wide); thence from said point of beginning extending South 11 degrees 01 minute 00 seconds, West along the said Westerly side of 31st Street, 480 feet 4 inches to a point on the Northerly side of Walnut Street (80 feet wide); thence extending North 78 degrees 59 minutes 00 seconds West, along the said Northerly side of Walnut Street 27 feet 0 inches to a point; thence extending North 11 degrees 01 minute 00 seconds East 480 feet 4 inches to a point on the Southerly side of Chestnut Street; thence extending South 78 degrees 59 minutes 00 seconds East, along the said Southerly side of Chestnut Street, 27 feet 0 inches to the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

Containing 12,969 square feet more or less.

Tax Parcel #3

All that certain lot or piece of ground lying below a horizontal plan located 12 inches below the underside of the lowest horizontal bridge structure supporting the elevated railroad extending Northwardly and Southwardly between Chestnut Street and Walnut Street and lying above a horizontal plane 180 feet above the confirmed curb elevation on the south side of Chestnut Street and beginning at a point in the Southerly line of Chestnut Street (80 feet wide) distant 27 feet measured North 78 degrees 59 minutes West along said line of Chestnut Street from the Westerly line of 31st Street (60 feet wide) extending from said beginning point the following five courses and distances:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, Philadelphia County, PA

- 1) South 11 degrees 01 minute West parallel with said Westerly line of 31st Street 480.333 feet to the Northerly line of Walnut Street (80 feet wide);
- 2) North 78 degrees 59 minutes West along the same 68.340 feet to the Southeasterly corner of parcel number 4, the following two courses and distances being along Easterly lines of parcel number 4;
- 3) North 19 degrees 50 minutes 38 seconds East 93.439 feet;
- 4) North 11 degrees 01 minute East 388 feet to said Southerly line of Chestnut Street; and
- 5) South 78 degrees 59 minutes East along the same 54 feet to the place of beginning.

Containing 26,600 square feet more or less.

Tax Parcel #4

All that certain lot or piece of ground lying below a horizontal plan 60 feet above the confirmed curb level on the South side of Chestnut Street and above a horizontal plan 180 feet above the confirmed curb level on the south side of Chestnut Street and beginning at a point in the Southerly line of Chestnut Street (80 feet wide) distant 81 feet measured North 78 degrees 59 minutes West along said line of Chestnut Street from the Westerly line of 31st Street (60 feet wide); extending from said beginning point the following fourth courses and distances:

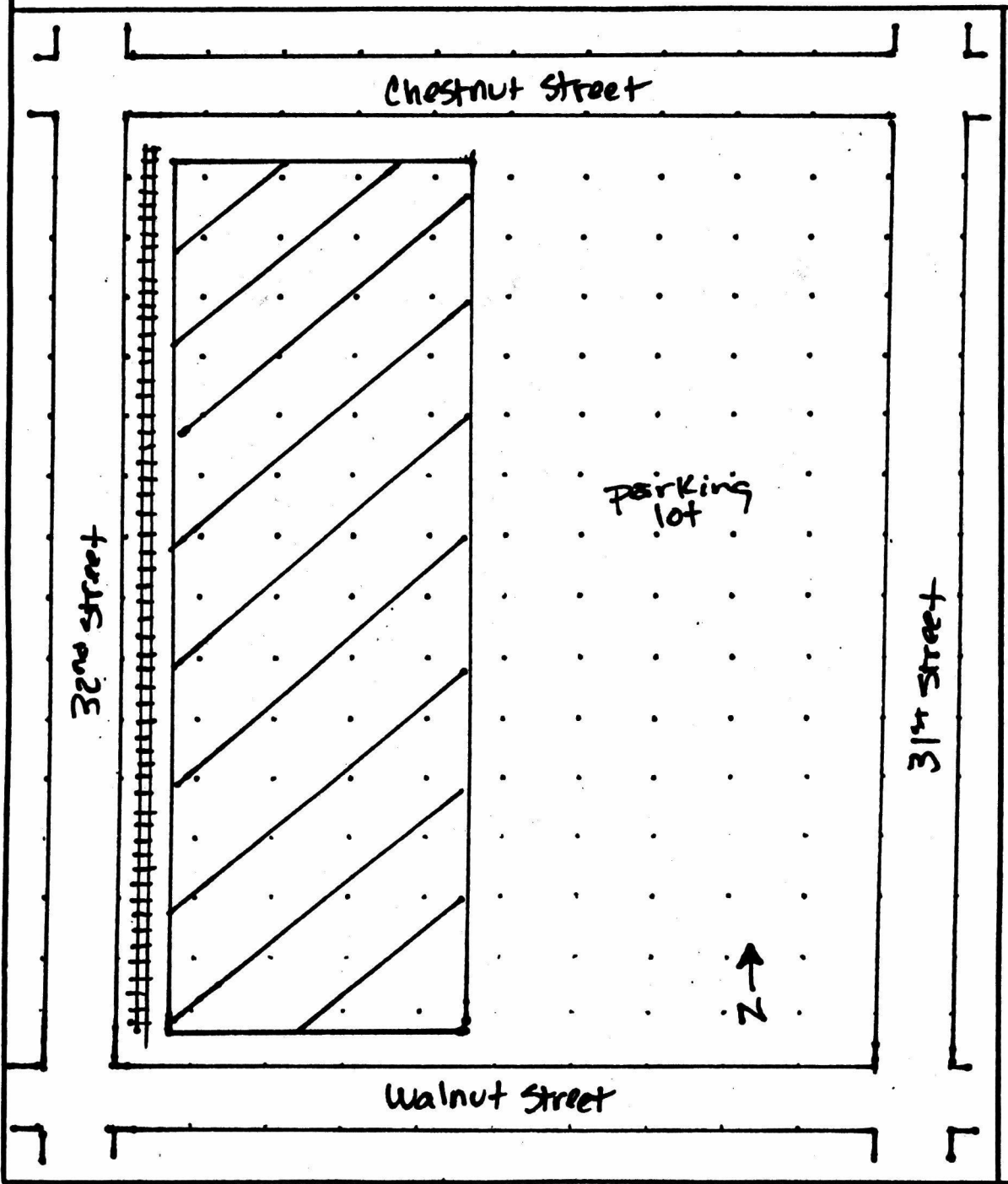
- 1) South 11 degrees 01 minute West parallel with said Westerly line of 31st Street 388 feet;
- 2) South 19 degrees 50 minutes 38 seconds West 93.439 feet to the Northerly linen of Walnut Street (80 feet wide);
- 3) North 78 degrees 59 minutes West along the same 25.890 feet; and
- 4) North 15 degrees 48 minutes 15 seconds East 482.015 feet to the place of beginning.

Containing 9,000 square feet more or less.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries as described are the legal and historic boundaries of the nominated property.

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building
Philadelphia, PA
Sketch Site Plan



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia

DATE RECEIVED: 9/27/99 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/12/99
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/28/99 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/11/99
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 99001291

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10/28/99 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the
National Register**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

February 1999

Powers + Company, Inc.

North and Main (West) Elevations, Looking SE

Photo #1



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building
Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

February 1999

Powers + Company, Inc.

Main (West) and South Elevations, Looking NE

Photo #2



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building
Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

February 1999

Powers + Company, Inc.

South and East Elevations, Looking NW

Photo #3



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

February 1999

Powers + Company, Inc.

Parapet Detail, West Elevation, Loading East

Photo # 4



EYE HAZARD
EYE PROTECTION
MUST BE WORN
IN THIS AREA

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

February 1999

Powers + Company, Inc

Basement Track Level, Looking North

Photo #5



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Towers

February 1999

Powers + Company, Inc.

5th Floor East Wall, Looking South

Photo #6



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

February 1999

Powers + Company, Inc.

6th floor, Looking South from Center Section

Photo #7



F
15

DO NOT CLIMB
ON THIS DOOR
OR RAILCAR

NO SMOKING
AT ANY TIME

FREIGHT ONLY
NO PASSENGERS

NO PASSENGERS
OR OTHER
LOADS ON THIS
DOOR

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

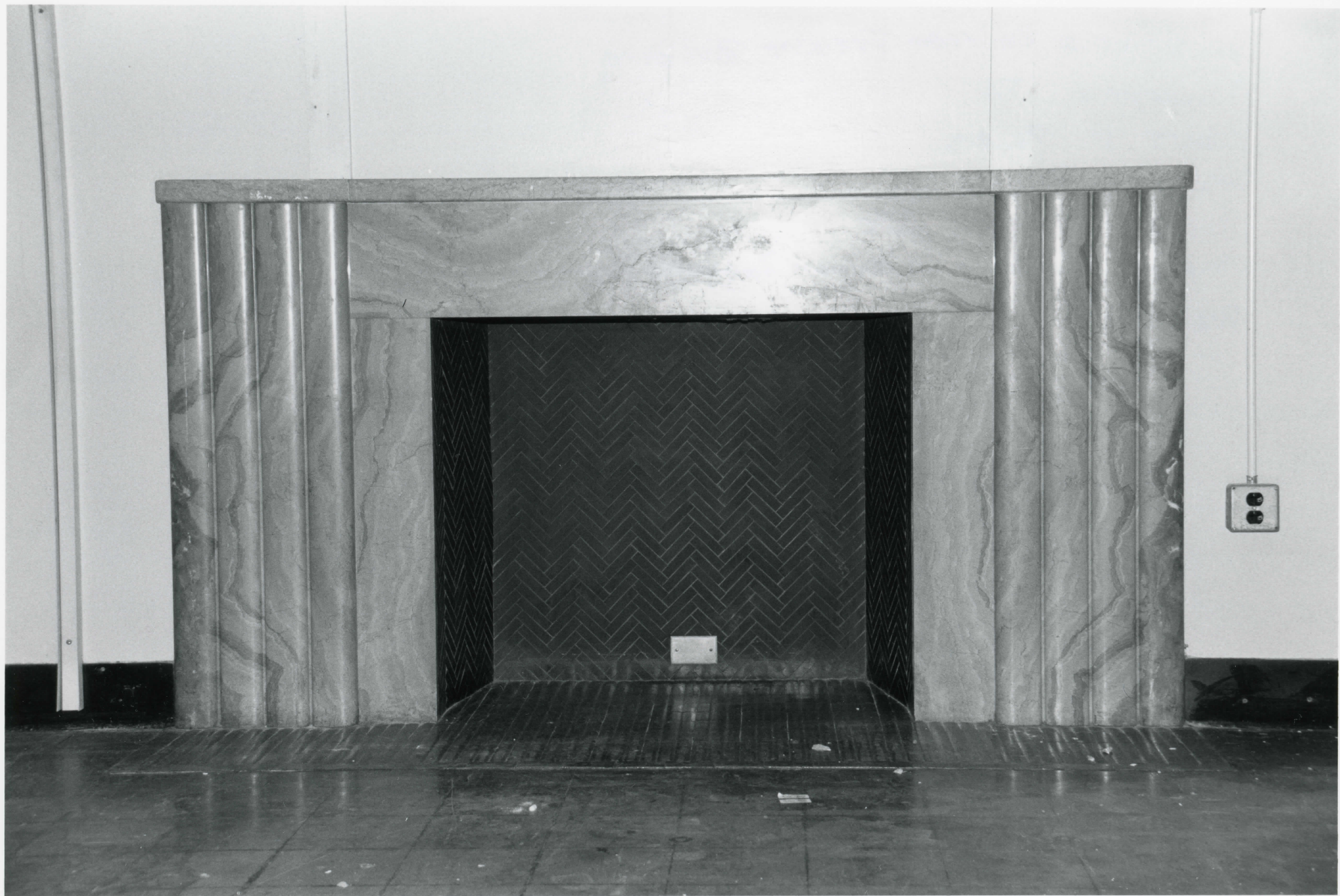
Robert M. Gowers

February 1999

Powers+ Company, Inc.

Typical Freight Elevator

Photo #8



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

February 1999

Powers + Company, Inc.

1st floor, fireplace in former Raymond Rosen + Co. office, looking west

Photo #9



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

February 1999

Powers + company, Inc.

1st floor, elevator indicator above passenger elevator # 4

Photo #10



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

April 1999

Powers + Company

East Elevation showing Eastern Half of Site
Looking SW

Photo #11



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building
Philadelphia, PA

Robert M. Powers

April 1999

Powers + Company

East Elevation Showing Loading Area,
Looking West

Photo #12



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia PA

Robert M Powers

April 1999

Powers + Company

Eastern Half of Site, Looking South

Photo #13

Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M Powers

April 1999

Powers + Company

Corrugated Shed Attached to Ramp
Structure, Looking SW

Photo # 14



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

Robert M Powers

April 1989

Powers + Company

Cinderblock Addition and Cooling Unit

Attached to Ramp Structure, Looking SW

Photo # 15



Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building

Philadelphia, PA

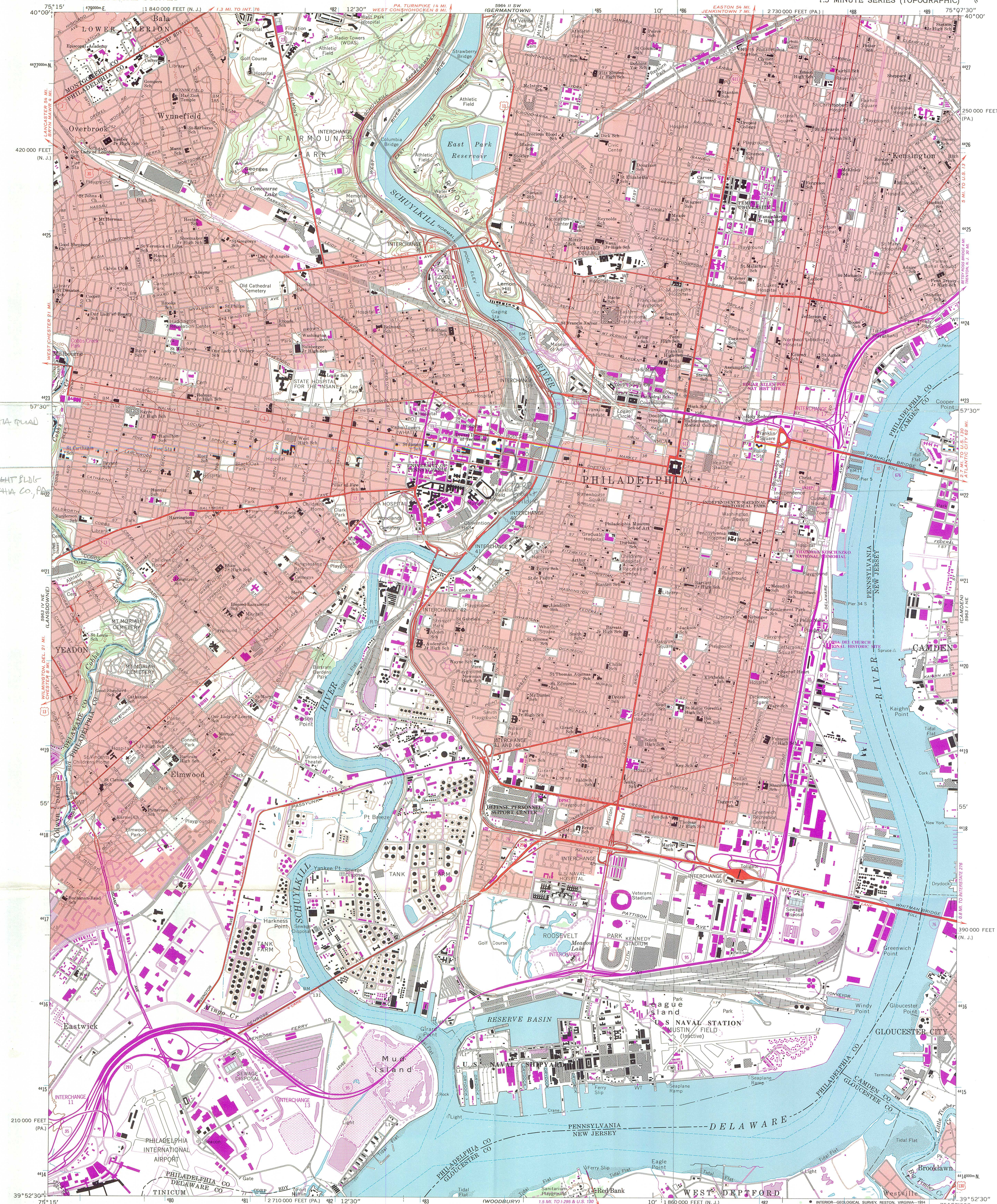
Robert M Powers

April 1999

Towers + Company

East Elevation of Ramp Structure,
Looking NW

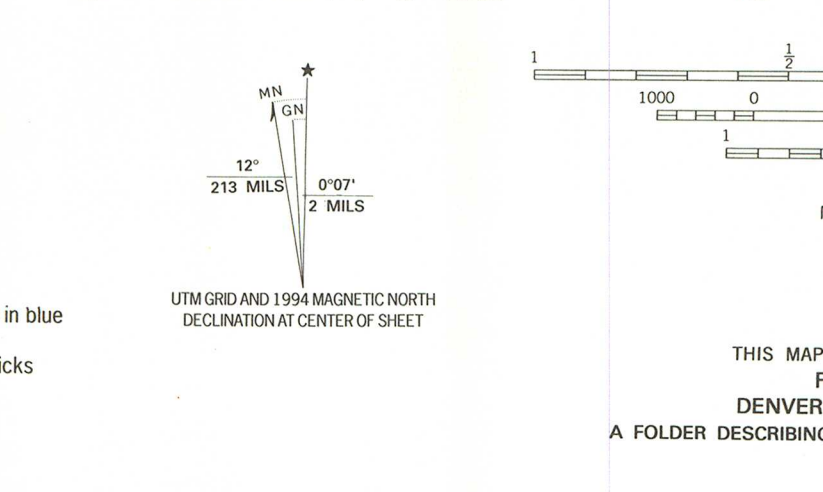
Photo #16



PHILADELPHIA QUAD
13
483020
4422430

PA RR FREIGHT BLDG
PHILADELPHIA CO, PA

Mapped by the U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey
Revised by the U.S. Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and USCE
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1946. Topography by planetable surveys 1947. Revised by
the U.S. Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1965
Field checked 1967
Projection: Pennsylvania coordinate system, south zone
(Lambert conformal conic)
10,000-foot grid ticks: Pennsylvania coordinate system,
south zone and New Jersey coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue
1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks
The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute
intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled by the U.S. Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1990 and other sources. This information not field checked Map edited 1994

Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

PHILADELPHIA, PA - N.J.
39075-H2-FT-024

1967
REVISED 1994
DMA 5963 1 NW - SERIES V831



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL
COMMISSION
One Parkway
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102
683-4590
Fax 683-4594

WAYNE S. SPILOVE
Chairman

RICHARD TYLER, Ph.D.
Historic Preservation Officer

8 September 1999

Brenda Barrett, Director
Bureaus for Historic Preservation
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
P.O. Box 1026
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108-1026

Dear Ms. Barrett:

At its meeting of 8 September 1999, the Philadelphia Historical Commission considered the nomination of the Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Building, 3118-3198 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Prior to the meeting each member of the Commission received a copy of the nomination.

I reviewed with the Commission several aspects of the statement of significance with emphasis on transportation and on the role of the Pennsylvania Railroad in the City's development and long range planning. The Commission agreed unanimously, with three recusals owing to affiliations with the University of Pennsylvania, that this district meets criteria A and C of the National Register and recommended its entry on the National Register.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Tyler".

Richard Tyler
Historic Preservation Officer

