

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
COMMITTEE ON CERTIFICATION
18 December 1984

The twentieth meeting of the Committee on Certification began at 2:00 P.M. on Tuesday, 18 December 1984 in Room 1313, City Hall Annex.

Present: Edward Pinkowski, Chairman of the Committee on Certification and member Philadelphia Historical Commission
Janet S. Klein, Vice Chairman, Philadelphia Historical Commission
Herbert W. Levy, A.I.A., Architectural Advisor, Philadelphia Historical Commission
James Mooney
Richard Tyler, Historian, Philadelphia Historical Commission
Randal Baron, Executive Secretary

Also Present: Mary Lou McFarland, Executive Director, Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia

Mr. Hyman Myers telephoned prior to the meeting, apologising for his absence. He voted on the nominations and requested that his votes be recorded as part of these minutes.

3700-3706 Chestnut Street: Tabernacle Presbyterian Church
1884-1886: Theophilus P. Chandler, architect

The Tabernacle Presbyterian Church possesses significance primarily for its Gothic Revival architecture, the work of well known Theophilus P. Chandler. The congregation of the Tabernacle Presbyterian Church resulted from the merger of the sixth and seventh Presbyterian churches of Philadelphia in 1873. When the newly merged congregation decided in 1884 to move to West Philadelphia to ensure the church's survival, T.P. Chandler was commissioned to design the new church. Mr. Chandler specialized in designing Gothic Revival stone churches and built numerous examples of such churches throughout Pennsylvania and beyond. His most famous works in Philadelphia include the Swedenborgian church of the New Jerusalem at 22nd and Chestnut, the Scott Wanamaker House and the Bear Pits at the Philadelphia Zoo. The Tabernacle Presbyterian Church is thought to be one of Chandler's most important ecclesiastical landmarks, because of its large size, elaborate design and intricate detail. Every element of this building from its Tiffany windows to its magnificently carved stone window screens and column capitals bespeaks quality design and craftsmanship. The building, in outstanding condition, retains its integrity of structure and design.

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The Committee recommended the certification of 3700-3706 Chestnut Street by a vote of 5-0.

1610 Chestnut Street: Jackson and Moyer Store
1927: William Steele and Sons, architect

The Commercial Style Jackson and Moyer Store possesses significance principally as a finely detailed example of this genre of architecture. Designed and constructed by William Steele and Sons, industrial and commercial contractors, it housed the men's clothing store of Jackson and Moyer from 1928 to 1969. The store's merchandise included "Men's furnishings, hats and caps, automobile sports apparel and chauffeur's uniforms". The firm of William Steele and Sons, commissioned in 1927 to plan this fashionable store, built a wide variety of structures in Philadelphia, including the Drueding Brothers leather factory and infirmary, Connie Mack Stadium and 401 North Broad Street. The Jackson and Moyer Store, thoroughly up to date for 1927, is predominantly Commercial Style with its boxy flat roofed form, flat facade, and large casement windows. The building also incorporates, then current, Art Deco elements such as pylons projecting above the parapet and more formal classical details such as the brass fanlight molding above the store windows and the plaster moldings of the entranceway. A part of the emergence of Chestnut Street, west of Broad, as a fashionable retail avenue, the Jackson Moyer building holds a place in the history of Philadelphia architecture and marketing.

The Committee recommended the certification of 1610 Chestnut Street by a vote of 5-0.

1700 Chestnut Street: Bonwit Teller & Company
1927: Clarence Wunder, architect

The Bonwit Teller & Company building possesses significance as a refined example of the Art Deco Style as expressed in the work of Philadelphia architect Clarence Wunder, and as the first store of the women's clothing firm Bonwit Teller & Company to be built outside of New York City. The architecture embraces the tenants of the Art Deco movement, rejecting the columns, pediments and horizontality of earlier styles and in their place developing a vertically oriented architecture, decorated with stylized Egyptian ornament. The building's verticality derives from its seven story registers of windows and smooth pylons rising up to the projecting parapet. Influenced by the opening of King Tut's tomb, the building's Egyptian ornament includes Pharaoh's heads above each doorway and, on the interior, papyrus leaf column capitals. The architect of the store, Clarence Wunder, (1886-1940) executed several other Art Deco commercial buildings, including the very similar Allens Department Store on Cheltenham Avenue, however the bulk of his work consists of industrial buildings and large apartment houses.

Bonwit Teller and Company began in New York in 1895 as a speciality house devoted to fine apparel for women. They expanded to Philadelphia in 1908 and eventually built the store at 1700 Chestnut in 1927. In this store, Bonwits devised new marketing techniques such as the televised fashion show. The chain has since

expanded to fifteen stores nationwide. The Bonwit Teller store remains a fine intact Art Deco building in the fashionable commercial zone of west Chestnut Street.

The Committee recommended the certification of 1700 Chestnut Street by a vote of 5-0.

6260 City Line Avenue: Overbrook Train Station
1858: Pennsylvania Railroad, builders

The Overbrook train station, built in 1858, possesses significance as the earliest surviving station on the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and for its cottage gothic architecture, reflecting the residential nature of early train stations and the design vogue made popular by the writings of Andrew Jackson Downing.

The Overbrook train station is the oldest surviving station of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which played an important role in the nineteenth century, transporting immigrants and travellers westward, expanding the industries of the City through transport of freight, and creating a string of Philadelphia suburban communities. The community of Overbrook Farms owes its development to the railroad station on City Line Avenue. When this suburb developed in the late nineteenth century, 94% of its heads of household commuted to offices in Center City Philadelphia.

The wooden cottage gothic architecture of the Overbrook station became popular in the 1850s due to the efforts of the writer Andrew Jackson Downing, who praised gothic architecture for its sympathy with pastoral surroundings. He also felt that the nature of the building material should dominate the choice of design. The Overbrook station follows closely this design philosophy, using vertical board and batten siding to mirror a tree's vertical growth and lacy millwork to emphasize wood's unique lightness and strength. The station, recently inspected by engineers, retains its structural and architectural integrity.

The Committee recommended the certification of 6260 City Line Avenue by a vote of 5-0.

4278-4280 Griscom Street: John Ruan House
1796

The Ruan house, built in 1796, possesses significance as a rare example of an 18th century mansion in Philadelphia and the only house of its age and size left in Frankford. Additionally the house, built by John Ruan, served as the home of this well respected medical doctor and community leader for fifteen years.

The John Ruan house is an unusually large though simple example of late Georgian architecture. At the time of its building Frankford formed a small settlement clustered along the Philadelphia

Bristol Pike and the Frankford Creek. Although Frankford dates back to the colonial period, the Ruan house, measuring 40 feet by 30 feet, is an exceptionally large building for its time and place. Stylistically, the house contains many of the classic elements of Georgian design. On the exterior these elements include the rectangular massing divided into five symmetrical bays, the gabled roof, still retaining some of its original wooden shingles, the hand pressed brick walls circled by a brick string course, several 6/6 sash windows, and a handsome punch and gougework cornice. On the interior the Georgian style finds expression in the center hall plan, carved wooden mantels and delicately winding wooden staircase.

John Ruan the builder of the house, was a medical doctor and community leader who practiced both in Frankford and Philadelphia for many years. Born in 1771 in St. Croix, the West Indies, John Ruan was educated at Princeton and recieved his medical degree from the University of Edinburgh in 1793. Dr. Ruan built his house in 1796 to shelter his family and his practice. He was also a member of the board of managers of the Frankford Bristol Pike, trustee of the Frankford Academy and elected Chief Burgess of Frankford in 1806

The Ruan house, built by locally prominent, Dr. John Ruan, remains as a unique example of a Georgian house in Northeast Philadelphia.

The Committee recommended the certification of 4278-4280 Griscom Street by a vote of 5-0. The consensus was to wait to certify 4282 Griscom Street, the Ruan House addition, until furthur imformation on the building could be found.

3001 Schoolhouse Lane: Edward Steel Estate, Woodside
1875: Addison Hutton, architect

Woodside, located at 3001 Schoolhouse Lane, possesses significance as a fine country house designed by the important Philadelphia architect Addison Hutton, as home to two prominent Philadelphians, Edward T. Steel and Francis R. Strawbridge, and finally as one of the few remaining large estates on Schoolhouse Lane in Germantown, a street which developed as a community for the very wealthy in the late 19th century.

Addison Hutton who was the architect for the numerous additions that transformed a small stone house into the spectacular mansion it is today, is well known as one of Philadelphia's finest architects of both public buildings and country estates. Hutton's most famous works include P.S.F.S. on Walnut Street, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and Arch Street Methodist Church. Hutton, being a Quaker himself was commissioned by many old Quaker families to design country house estates. Using an amalgam of popular styles of the late 19th century such as Gothic Revival, Queen Ann, Stick Style and Tudor, Hutton created his own unique interpretation of the country house. Woodside, designed in 1875 in the middle of Hutton's career, incorporates many of the design elements seen in his more famous later houses such as Ballytore for Isaac Clothier and Torworth for Justus Strawbridge.

Edward T. Steel who hired Hutton to create Woodside, was a Quaker and important Philadelphia citizen. Steel began a wholesale cloth business that became the largest of its kind in the City in the late 19th century. He also served as a member of the Centennial Board of Finance which planned the Centennial Exhibit of 1876, and reigned as president of the Board of Education between 1879 and 1892. Mr. Steel was one of the first of the wealthy residents of this section of Germantown, who built a string of estates along Schoolhouse Lane.

Woodside remains as a handsome example of the work of Addison Hutton, as the residence of leading Philadelphian Edward T. Steel and as one of the few remaining estates in this section of Germantown.

The Committee recommended the certification of 3001 Schoolhouse Lane by a vote of 5-0.

1114 Walnut Street: Forrest Theater
1927: Herbert J. Krapp, architect

Built in 1927, the Forrest Theater possesses significance to Philadelphia and the country as a fine example of theaters developed by the pioneering Shubert Organization of New York City, and the work of Herbert J. Krapp, architect of numerous fine theaters. The significance of the theater is enhanced by its well executed Beaux Arts classical architecture and by the fact that it stands as one of only three major dramatic arts houses left in the City and the only one that has not been altered beyond recognition. Its chief local importance rests on its history of providing Philadelphians with fifty seven years of first rate theater.

The Shuberts of New York were the first of the large scale speculative theater owners and developers in the country. Between 1912 and 1928, the Shuberts built fourteen theaters in New York, creating the beginnings of the Shubert theatrical empire. Almost immediately they expanded to other cities including Philadelphia where they built three theaters. At the height of their influence, the Shuberts owned over 400 theaters nationwide.

Herbert J. Krapp the architect of the Forrest Theater designed the majority of the theaters for the Shuberts in New York and indeed the majority of the theaters in Times Square. The New York City architect made both structural and architectural innovations in theaters including the use of cantilevered steel balconies and screen like terra-cotta facades in a variety of styles. The Forrest Theater, being the next to last theater designed by Krapp for the Shuberts, is one of his very finest, combining an innovative steel structure with refined Beaux Arts classical design on the exterior, and exuberant Adam Style decoration on the interior.

The Forrest Theater, the last intact theater left in the City has additionally provided Philadelphia with the very finest in theatrical entertainment since 1928, and continues to this day.

The Committee recommended the certification of 1114 Walnut Street by a vote of 5-0.

1025-1027 Westview Street: Belvedere
1930: Mellor, Meigs and Howe

This Norman inspired house, called Belvedere by its architect, possesses significance for its extraordinary design by the important firm of Mellor, Meigs and Howe; for its outstanding craftsmanship; and for its association with prominent Philadelphians, Leopold Stokowski, and Morris Leeds.

In 1925 Leopold Stokowski, noted conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, bought a piece of land in West Mount Airy and engaged Mellor, Meigs and Howe to draw up designs for a house. Due to personal problems, Mr. Stokowski sold the land and plans to Morris Leeds in 1929. Mr. Leeds, the cofounder of the Leeds and Northrup Company, a major producer of meters and instrumentation, commissioned Mellor, Meigs and Howe to oversee the building of the house, beginning in 1930. The house was designed and built as a romantically interpreted Norman country manor, which George Howe termed "Wall Street Pastoral" because of the large number of financiers who commissioned these houses. The building, following the traditions of the Arts and Crafts movement incorporated the finest craftsmanship, including the expert stone masonry of the DiTommaso Company, Yellin ironwork, and Mercer Tiles. The house and carriage house retain their historical and architectural integrity.

The Committee recommended certification of 1025-1027 Westview Street by a vote of 4-0. Mr. Myers abstained due to a conflict of interest.

22 South 23rd Street: Armory of the 1st Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry
1901: Henry Gillette Woodman

The Armory is the second permanent home of the Troop, which was organized on November 17, 1774, in Carpenters Hall, three weeks after the First Continental Congress. Twentyfive prominent Philadelphians gathered to form the first cavalry troop in the Country's history to protect the City and the Continental Congress in case of hostilities. The Troop, which acted as Washington's personal guard in the Revolution and is now integrated into the National Guard, has served honorably in every major conflict of the Country's history. The present Armory, built in 1901 was designed by Henry Gillette Woodman, a young architect who fought with the Troop in the Spanish American War. The Armory is Mr. Woodman's only major building, because he died in 1901 from Typhoid that he contracted while fighting in the Caribbean. The building follows in a tradition of late 19th Century castle-like Armory design that can be seen throughout the Country. The descriptive castle architecture was intended to project an image of fearsome might and solidity as well as being decorative and ceremonial. The building, still serving as the Troop's home, retains its architectural and structural integrity.

The Committee recommended the certification of 22 South 23rd Street by a vote of 5-0.

301 South 19th Street: Townhouse Apartments
1924: Ballinger Company, architects

The Townhouse Apartments possess significance as one of the few residential commissions executed by the well respected architectural firm W.F. Ballinger and as a part of the emergence of luxury apartment houses in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood. Established in the 1880s and continuing to this day the Ballinger Company specialized in industrial and commercial projects, however they built several apartment houses near Rittenhouse Square in the first quarter of the 20th century. The steel frame and terra-cotta clad Townhouse was constructed using "state of the art" building technology and materials. The building "an unusual example of Ballinger's residential work is much more highly detailed and sophisticated in finish than the firm's few other examples of this building type". The post W.W.II era saw the building of a number of luxury highrise apartments in the Rittenhouse area as real estate pressures increased in the fashionable neighborhood. The Townhouse Apartments remain in good condition, adding to the character of the mixed neighborhood of luxury rowhouses and apartments.

The Committee felt that the building lacked sufficient architectural merit to recommend certification at this time. The motion was made to table the certification until it could be considered as a part of a Rittenhouse historic district. The vote was 4-0 in favor of tableing the certification.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 3:15 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Randal Baron

MEMORANDUM

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

DATE 10, January 1985

TO : See Distribution Below

FROM : Randal Baron

SUBJECT: Certified Historic Structures

Enclosed please find the new listings of historic structures certified by the Philadelphia Historical Commission at its meeting of 3 January, 1985. These structures include:

1610 Chestnut Street
1700 Chestnut Street, Bonwit Teller
3700 Chestnut Street, Tabernacle Presbyterian Church
6260 City Line Avenue, Overbrook Train Station
4278-4280 Griscom Street
3001 Schoolhouse Lane
1114 Walnut Street, Forrest Theater
1025, 1027 Westview Street
22 S. 23rd Street, Armory of the 1st City Troop

Please insert these pages in the Philadelphia Historical Commission Register.

pc: David Wismer (7)
Rudolph Paliaga
Robert Solvibile
Bill Skwersky
Jane Quigley
Albert Pace
Jack Smythe
Ellen Brennen
Milton Chermin

MEMORANDUM

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

TO : Committee on Certification Members
FROM : Randal Baron
SUBJECT: Next meeting of the Committee on Certification

DATE 10 December 1984

The next meeting of the Committee on Certification will take place on Tuesday, 18 December 1984, at 2:00 P.M. in Rm. Room 1313, City Hall Annex.

The following items are on the agenda:

1610 Chestnut Street, Jackson and Moyer Store
1700 Chestnut Street, Bonwit Teller Company
6260 City Avenue, Overbrook Train Station
4278-4280 Griscom Street, John Ruan House
3001 Schoolhouse Lane, Woodside
1114 Walnut Street, Forrest Theater
1025/1027 Westview Street, Belvedere
22 S. 23rd Street, Armory of the First City Troop, Phila.
City Cavalry

I also expect to have a form for 3700 Chestnut St. Tabernacle Presbyterian Church which I will distribute at the meeting.