

NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING , STRUCTURE , SITE , OR OBJECT  
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: 2101 Washington Avenue

Postal code: 19146-2532 Councilmanic District: 2

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Howell & Brothers Wallpaper Hangings Manufactory

Common Name: Frankford Chocolate Company Building

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Building  Structure  Site  Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition:  excellent  good  fair  poor  ruins

Occupancy:  occupied  vacant  under construction  unknown

Current use: Telecommunications and Automobile Parking

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Page 1

6. DESCRIPTION

See Page 2

7. SIGNIFICANCE

See Page 13

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1865 to 2012

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1865, 1883, 1912, 1964, 1967, 1968, 1975

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: 1865, 83: Unknown 1912: William C Haddock 1964: Unknown 1967, 68: Abraham Levy  
1975: Unknown

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: 1865, 1880: Unknown 1912: William Steele & Sons 1964: Frank Lander 1967, 68: Fleming Co  
1975: Brunett & Van Sciver Inc

Original owner: John A Howell

Other significant persons: Zophar Howell, John Wanamaker, Trần Đình Trường

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Page 25

9. NOMINATOR

Name with Title Dennis Carlisle, Architectural History Writer Email denniscentercity@gmail.com

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date December 12 2017

Street Address 225 South Jessup Street Telephone (215) 805-8620

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19107

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 12 December 2017

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 29 December 2017

Date of Notice Issuance: 2 January 2018

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: 2101 Washington Real Estate LP

Address: 110 E. State Street, Suite 17

City: Kennett Square State: PA Postal Code: 19348

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Designated  Rejected

**Individual Nomination**  
of  
**2101 Washington Avenue**  
to the  
**Philadelphia Register**  
of Historic Places



Image by  
Google Earth

**Prepared by: Dennis Carlisle**

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

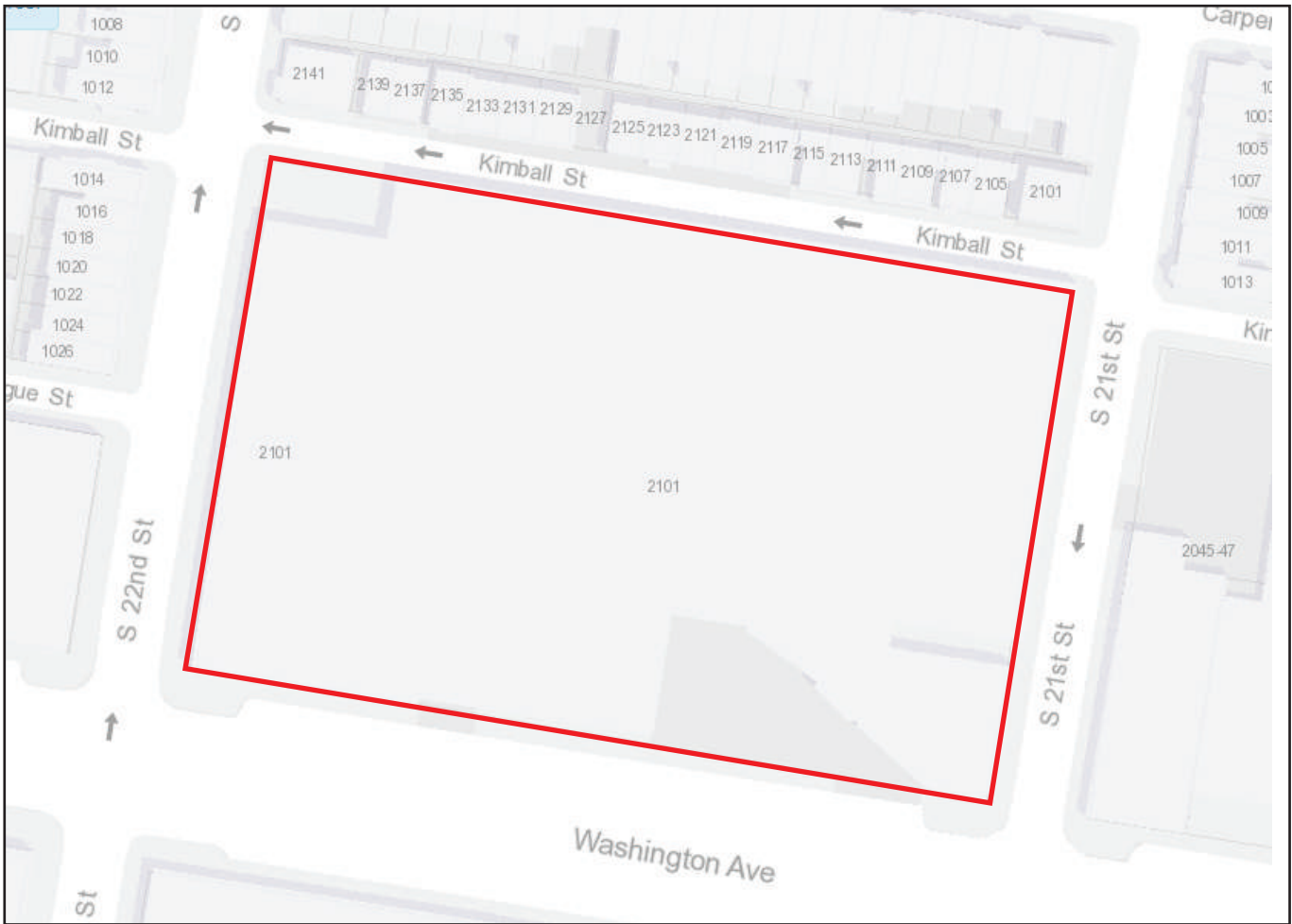


Figure 1: The red line indicates the boundaries of the property. | Image: Phila.gov/map

### PREMISES "A"

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground, with improvements erected thereon, situate on the South side of Kimball Street, the West side of 21st Street and the East side of 22nd Street in the 30th Ward of the City of Philadelphia.

CONTAINING in front or breadth on the said Kimball Street 396 feet and extending of that width in length or depth Southward between lines at right angles said Kimball Street 30 feet more or less to the North line of premises next described.

### PREMISES "B"

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground, with improvements erected thereon, situate on the north side of Washington Avenue, the West side of 21st Street and the East side of 22nd Street in the 30th Ward of the City of Philadelphia.

CONTAINING in front or breadth on the said Washington Avenue 396 feet and extending on that width in length or depth Northward between lines at right angles to said Washington Avenue 222 feet 7 inches more or less to the rear line of premises hereinabove described.

BEING 2101 Washington Avenue

## 6. DESCRIPTION

The original form of 2101 Washington Avenue was constructed in 1865 and has many still-extant additions over the period between 1883 and 1975. Additions that were demolished and replaced are not listed.

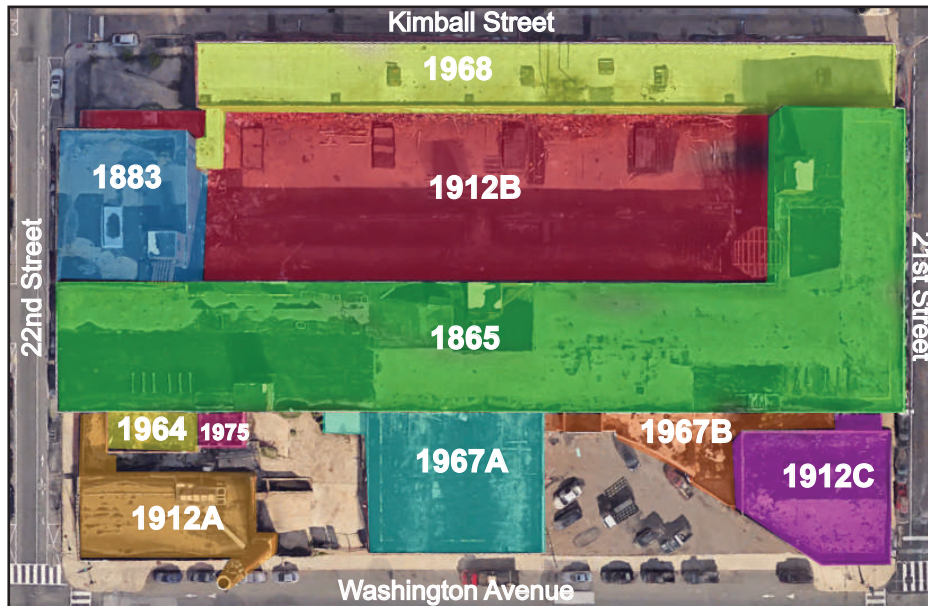


Figure 2: Overhead view identifying all sections by year of construction. | Original image: Google Earth

### Initial Construction (1865):

The 1865-built section consists of a 396-foot-wide, 4-story building of heavy timber construction with a brick facade with 43 bays of windows. It is set back from Washington Avenue, but its east and west elevations both reach the east and west property lines. The structure was originally L-shaped, with the shorter section of the “L” extending northward on the 21st Street side of the building. The western elevation (Figure 5) of the building was originally 60 feet wide with 6 bays and the eastern elevation (Figure 4) was 143 feet wide with 14 bays. Each window opening on the facade has a short arch of brick on top. There is a raised column of bricks between every other bay of windows on both the east and west elevations. The east elevation has a large metal garage door. There is a corbelled brick cornice just below the roof line on almost all sides. The basement is raised, with windows at ground level. An arch of bricks surrounds a doorway on the east facade. All original windows and doors are filled with brick and/or paneling. Pilot houses of two elevators can be found extending beyond the roof line, visible when facing the south elevation. A fire escape is visible on the east elevation. A painted sign, partially faded, reading “FRANKFORD CHOCOLATE CO.” is visible on the south elevation (Figure 3). The roof of the building has a very low pitch that is only noticeable on the west elevation.



Figure 3: South Elevation of the 1865 section with Frankford Chocolate Co. Signage. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 4: East elevation of the 1865 section. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 5: West elevation of the 1865 section. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

### 1883 Addition:

The 1883 addition (Figure 6) consists of a 60' x 72' heavy timber structure with a brick facade on the 22nd Street side of the property extending northward 72 feet from the north elevation of the original 1865 building along the west property line with four bays of windows. The facade is similar to the original building with short brick arches over the window openings and a corbelled brick cornice, but on the west elevation the raised brick columns are between each bay instead of every two bays. The north elevation has three bays of windows with no brick columns in between. A fire escape is visible on the west elevation.



Figure 6: West and south elevations of the 1883 addition. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

### 1912 Addition A:

1912 Addition A is a one-story re-inforced concrete structure with a brick facade at the southwest corner of the property line. The south elevation has seven bays of window openings. The openings are filled with cinder blocks and include one more small window opening and a vent (Figure 9). A thin segment connecting to the south elevation of the 1865 section, facing 22nd street, has four more window openings of the same size, filled with cinder blocks, with the exception of one that has been made into a doorway. The connecting segment has a chain linked fence on its roof. Three much larger window openings are visible on the west elevation, approximately 4/5ths filled with cinder blocks (Figure 7). Three more windows are on the east elevation, filled with glass blocks. There is also a concrete ramp leading below grade (Figure 8). All window openings have a concrete lintel. The east and west elevations have a low pitched roof with terra cotta coping. A 110-foot cylindrical brick smokestack rises from the southeast corner of this addition. Telecommunications equipment is visible on the roof of this section and near the top of the smokestack. All elevations have a corbelled brick cornice.



Figure 7: West elevation of the 1917 addition. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 8: East elevation of the 1917 addition. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



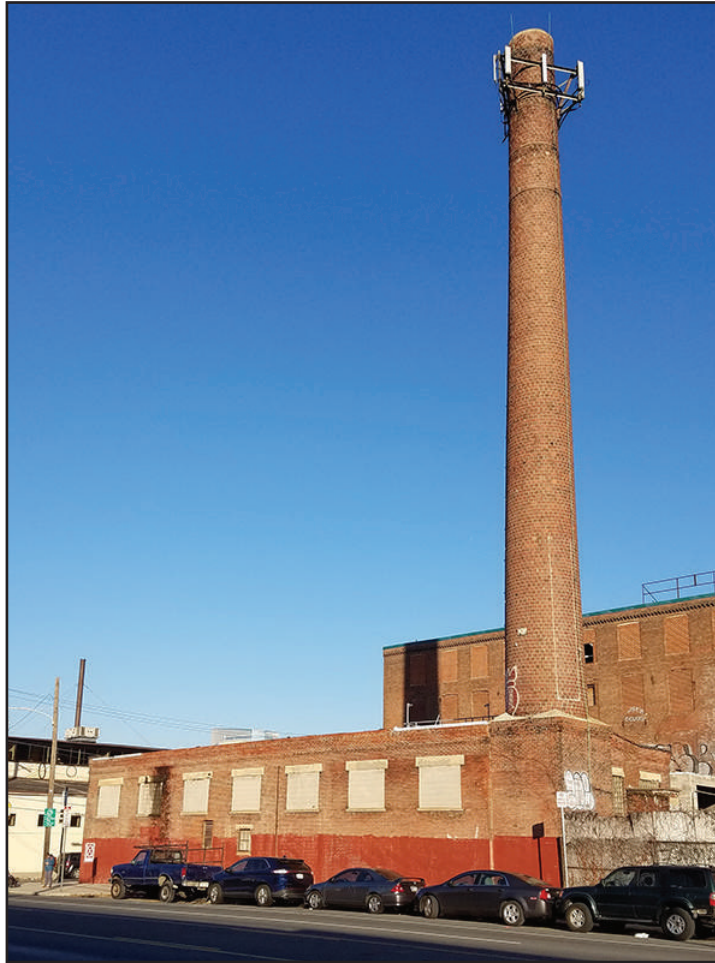


Figure 9: South elevation of 1912 Addition A with smokestack. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

### 1912 Addition B:

1912 Addition B is a one-story concrete structure with a brick facade built in the space between the northern wing of the 1865 section and the 1883 section. It is obscured from view by those sections and the 1968 Addition with the exception of the enclosed driveway and metal garage door that extends from its northwest corner to the 22nd Street property line (Figure 10). This extended piece has an air-handling machine on its roof. A concrete lintel can be found above the garage door. On the north elevation, concrete columns are visible on the facade along with a door and two square openings filled with concrete.



Figure 10: The only segment of 1912 Addition B visible from street level. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

### 1912 Addition C:

1912 addition C is a heavy timber structure with a brick facade at the southeast corner of the property line. It is two stories with a chamfered southwest corner. Large windows, filled with brick, can be found along the east, west, south, and southwest facades (Figures 11, 12, 13). Four of these bricked large window openings on the second floor have smaller aluminum windows. On the first floor facade, 15 windows and 1 door are installed in the brick-filled window openings. A small section of this addition connects it with the 1865 section along the eastern property line. This part of the 1912 addition has two small window openings with an arch of bricks above each one on its eastern elevation (figure 8). The openings are filled with brick and glass blocks. The 1912 addition has a corbeled brick cornice with terra cotta coping (figure 14). All window openings have a concrete lintel with the exception of the two small windows of the connecting segment.



Figure 11: Southwest and west elevations of 1912 Addition C. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 12: South elevation of 1912 Addition C | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 13: East elevation of 1912 addition C. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 14: Detail of brick corbeling and terra cotta coping. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

### 1964 Addition:

The 1964 addition is a one-story steel structure with a cinder block facade that extends south from the west side of the 1865 section and abuts the east elevation of the connecting segment of 1912 Addition A. It has terra cotta coping. A portion of the west elevation of this addition is visible from 22nd Street (Figure 15).



Figure 15: West elevation of the 1964 addition. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

### 1967 Additions:

A) 1967 Addition A is a one-story steel structure with a windowless cinder block facade on its east and west elevations (Figures 17 and 18). It extends south from the center of the 1865 section to the Washington Avenue property line (Figure 16). Four metal garage doors face Washington Avenue. A concrete loading dock extends out of the northwest corner of this addition.

B) 1967 Addition B, abuts the west elevation of 1912 Addition C and tapers in a staggered fashion toward 1967 Addition A (Figure 19). This section is one story with a cinder block facade, two doors, three small windows and one garage door. It has a small segment that fills the space in between the 1912 Addition C and the 1865 section. The open area in front of this addition is paved with asphalt up to the Washington Avenue property line.



Figure 16: South elevation of 1967 Addition A. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 17: East elevation of 1967 Addition A with a portion of 1967 Addition B | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 18: West elevation of 1967 Addition A. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 19: South elevation of 1967 Addition B. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

### 1968 Addition:

The 1968 addition is a one-story steel structure with a cinder block facade that abuts the 1865 section and 1912 Addition B on the northernmost elevations of each. It extends from the northeast corner of the property line at 21st and Kimball Streets and extends 336 feet westward along the northern property line (Figure 20). It has nine small window openings on its north elevation facing Kimball Street that have been sealed with paneling. One large opening near the center of the north elevation is sealed with paneling. There is a metal garage door on the east elevation. Two air conditioning units protrude from the north elevation. A small connecting segment protrudes from the northwest corner of this addition and goes over the 1912 Addition B to connect to the 1883 Addition (Figure 21). There is a small door on the west elevation. Part of the property between this addition and 1912 Addition B is paved with asphalt and concrete, partially enclosed in a chain linked fence (Figures 10 and 24).



Figure 20: East and north elevations of the 1968 addition. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle



Figure 21: West and north elevations of the 1968 addition. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

### 1975 Addition:

The 1975 addition is a cinder block structure that abuts the east elevation of the 1964 Addition and the south elevation of the 1865 section. It appears to be without an eastern wall (Figure 22). The open area between this addition, 1912 Addition A, and 1967 Addition A is paved with concrete and enclosed by a chain linked fence at the Washington Avenue property line (Figures 2, 8, 9, 18, 22).



Figure 22: South elevation of the 1975 addition. | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

## 7. SIGNIFICANCE

The former Howell & Brothers Wallpaper Hangings Manufactory at 2101 Washington Avenue is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historic Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property satisfies Criteria for Designation (a) and (j) of Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code. The former Howell & Brothers Wallpaper Hangings Manufactory meets the following criteria:

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

### **Compliance with Criteria A and J (see Historic Context for more details and sources):**

2101 Washington Avenue represents the heritage of Philadelphia as a manufacturing center in the 19th Century and helped catalyze the growth of the Washington Avenue industrial corridor.

The Howell & Brothers factory was at one point the largest wallpaper factory in the United States. This important firm led the 19th Century wallpaper industry in innovation and quality--it was the first American wallpaper firm to produce machine-made wallpapers and the only Philadelphia firm that was a founding member of the "Wallpaper Pool" in the 1880s. The company won awards for its work, both domestically and internationally, throughout most of the period that the business operated (*[a] interest or value as part of the development of the Nation, [j] exemplifies the economic heritage of the community*).

Its location on the Washington Avenue industrial corridor along the former Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad (later called the Washington Avenue Branch) reminds us of that avenue's industrial past. The property is among the oldest and most intact 19th Century industrial buildings along its length. (*[a] interest or value as part of the development of the City, [j] exemplifies the historical heritage of the community*). When the initial section was built in 1865, it was considered the largest manufactory of its kind (*[a] interest or value as part of the development of the Nation*).

The property's significance, however, goes beyond its 19th Century life. The facility's longest use came from John Wanamaker's company. John Wanamaker used the complex as a furniture warehouse to support his iconic store at 13th and Market, which held within it, according to his company's literature, the largest furniture store in the world. During the time 2101 Washington Avenue had this use, the property was improved with some of its most significant architectural elements.

As one of the most significant Philadelphians in the city's history, John Wanamaker's connection to 2101 Washington Avenue gives it an additional importance beyond its significant 19th Century history (*[a] associated with the life of a person significant in the past*).

The facility's use in the late 20th Century as a chocolate factory illustrates its utility. While numerous factories shut down during this period in the city's history, 2101 Washington managed to remain in industrial use until the start of the 21st Century, well after the freight railroad line along Washington Avenue was shut down. Its late 20th Century additions add to the property's unique configuration. During its tenure as the Frankford Chocolate and Candy Company, 2101 Washington Avenue was one of the largest producers of chocolate Easter bunnies (*[a] interest or value as part of the cultural characteristics of the Nation*).

In the Philadelphia of the 21st Century, real estate development has exploded to levels unseen in this city in decades. Numerous historical buildings are being demolished or heavily altered for new developments. It is imperative that 2101 Washington Avenue be protected from demolition and given an extra layer of protection in the face of major alteration by placement on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.



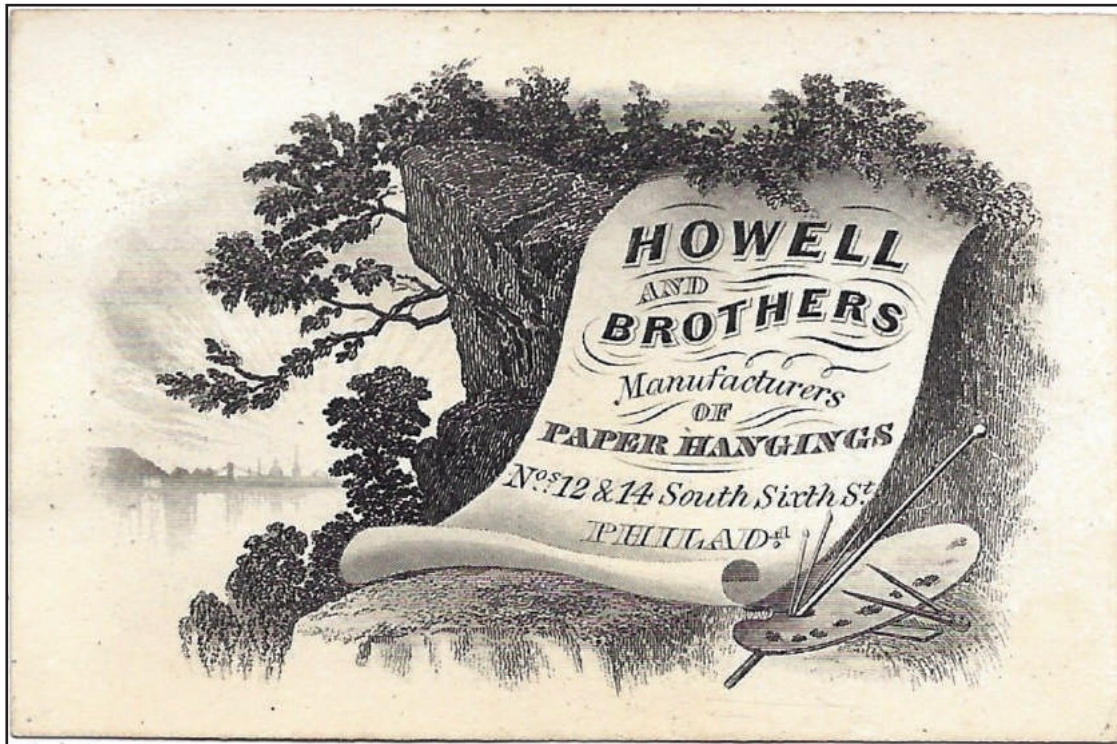


Figure 23: Howell & Brothers Trade Card, Circa 1870s. | Source: Collection of Bolling & Co, www.bollingco.com

## Historic Context:

### Early wallpaper manufacturing in the United States and the origins of Howell & Brothers

Wallpaper was not generally used as a decorative element for interiors in North America until the mid 18th Century. During that period, individuals would specially order “paper hangings” from dealers in London or Paris. By 1745, a Charles Hargrave began offering imported wallpapers as part of his retail trade in Philadelphia. The first known American manufacturer of wallpapers was John Rugar of New York City, but his business failed. He was succeeded by other manufacturers in Boston and Philadelphia but they too found failure. In 1790, a pair of Frenchman known as Boulu and Charden began the first successful wallpaper manufactory in America, followed by the firm of one William Poyntell. The third major wallpaper manufacturing firm was the father-and-son team of John and John Brazier Howell, who came to Albany, New York from England in 1793. The Howells had experience in wallpaper manufacturing in England and reproduced the same methods in a few rooms of their Albany home.<sup>1</sup>

The Howells continued operating their company in Albany, eventually partnering with a Lemuel Steel to become Howell & Co. Steel would go on to purchase the Albany concern when John B. Howell and his family moved their wallpaper company to New York City, then Baltimore. The Howells set up a permanent wallpaper manufacturing and sales presence in Philadelphia between 1813 and 1820.<sup>2</sup>

By the 1830s, John B. Howell’s five sons, George, Zophar C., John A., William, and Darius had become involved with the company, listing their place of business as “Howell & Brothers, paper hangers, 70 Chestnut.” in 1835.<sup>3</sup> Zophar C. Howell became primary proprietor of the company in 1830.<sup>4</sup>

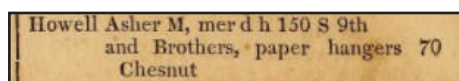


Figure 24: Howell & Brothers listing from 1835. | Source: *Desilver’s Philadelphia Directory and Stranger’s Guide for 1835 & 1836*

<sup>1</sup> Ackerman, Phyllis. *Wallpaper: Its History, Design, and Use* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1923), 68-69

<sup>2</sup> Depew, Chauncy M. *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, (New York: D.O. Hayes & Co, 1895), 505-507

<sup>3</sup> Desilver, Robert. *Desilver’s Philadelphia Directory and Stranger’s Guide for 1835 & 1836* (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1835), 94

<sup>4</sup> *Historical and Commercial Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: A.F. Parsons, 1892), 112

In 1844, Howell & Brothers were the first American wallpaper manufacturers to import a steam-powered machine for printing wallpaper, enabling them to manufacture a much lower-priced product and in much greater abundance.<sup>2</sup> By 1847, Howell & Brothers found massive success, winning five awards for the excellence of their products and moving to a new headquarters at 116 Chestnut Street. At this point they offered paper hangings in the style of “borders, fire board prints... decoration fresco paper for parlors. The latest and most approved styles of architectural designs: Columns with Capitols, Pilasters and Panneling statues, Pedestals... double window curtain paper”. Their advertisements claimed that they were the only factory in the country which produce most of these papers.<sup>5</sup> The company had retail stores in New York City<sup>6</sup> and Baltimore.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 25: 1846 Lithograph illustrating Howell & Brothers location at 116 Chestnut (now 300 block)  
 Source: Philadelphia on Stone Exhibition, Library Company of Philadelphia

By the 1850s, the Howell & Brothers operation had grown very large. A new and separate location was needed for a factory that would be able to meet the growing company’s needs. A large four-story factory on a 396’ x 80’ footprint was constructed at 19th and Spruce Streets along with a smaller supplementary factory on the 1100 block of Catharine Street. By 1860, the company was producing 5,000 tons of wallpaper per year and included velvet-, gold-, and satin-surfaced wallpapers. The new factory employed 200.<sup>8</sup> The address of the company’s Philadelphia retail operation changed from 142 to 622 Chestnut Street.<sup>10</sup> In 1864, Howell & Brothers moved to a large retail building at the corner of 9th and Chestnut Streets<sup>11</sup> that would burn down in 1869.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 26: Circa 1850s illustration of the 19th and Spruce factory from a bill of sale. |  
 Source: Collection of Bolling & Company, www.bollingco.com

5 Howell & Brothers Advertisement. *Pennsylvania Telegraph* [Harrisburg] 18 May 1847

6 Howell & Brothers Advertisement. *Evening Post* [New York] 19 June 1846

7 Sheldon & Co.'s *Business Or Advertising Directory, Containing the Cards, Circulars, and Advertisements of the Principal Firms of the Cities of New-York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Etc.* (Boston: John F. Trow, 1845), 32

8 Bishop, John Leander, et al. *A History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860, Comprising Annals of the Industry of the United States in Machinery, Manufactures and Useful Arts, with a Notice of the Important Inventions, Tariffs, and the Results of Each Decennial Census.* 3rd ed., vol. 3, (E. Young, 1868), 72

9 Howell & Brothers Advertisement. *Lancaster Intelligencer*, 2 Dec. 1851

10 McElroy, A. *McElroy's Philadelphia City Directory for 1859.* (Philadelphia: 1859)

11 Howell & Brothers Advertisement, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 January 1864

12 "Calamity on Chestnut Street" *Daily Evening Bulletin* [Philadelphia, PA] 14 Jan. 1869

## 2101 Washington Avenue in the 19th Century: Howell & Brothers Manufactory on Washington Avenue

In 1865, presumably due to rising land values near Rittenhouse Square and to better accommodate deliveries, Howell & Brothers built a new facility on a large property at 21st Street and Washington Avenue along the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad corridor.<sup>13</sup> The original parcel of land was the combination of two irregular-shaped contiguous parcels that were roughly bound by Washington Avenue, 21st Street, 22nd Street, and Carpenter Street, with the exception of an irregular strip of land along the south side Carpenter Street and a rectangular parcel at the northeast corner of 22nd Street and Washington Avenue, which is probably the reason that the factory building was set back from the street.<sup>14</sup> That corner parcel was acquired by the Howells in 1867.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the L-shaped building that still stands (see Description), there was also a one-story, 74' x 54' "wash room" building at the southeast corner of the property along with a one-story, 40' x 64' boiler house with a smoke stack and a two-story, 19' x 82' stable in the area now occupied by the 1916 addition<sup>16</sup> (figure 28).

The new factory was described by Edwin T. Freeley in the 1867 edition of *Philadelphia and Its Manufactures*:

"...believed to be the most extensive in the United States and certainly one of the largest in the world. It is located on Washington avenue between Twenty-first and Twenty-second streets and covers an area of two acres. The main building is an immense brick structure four hundred feet long, and five stories in height with a basement. Extending at right angles with the main building are two wings that an average depth of two hundred feet [the wash room mentioned above is here counted as a wing]. On the first floor are nine machines that have the capacity of printing twenty thousand yards of Paper in a day. Three of these machines will print twelve colors at a time. Adjacent to the printing room is a large room, sixty by one hundred feet, in which the colors are mixed. There are no less than fifty large mills employed in this department in preparing colors. On the second and third floors the clay is ground and prepared, which is used to cover the blank paper and forms a basis on which the colors rest. In the fourth story are the Bronzing and Varnishing departments and also rooms for the Designers and Engravers of blocks. Each design for a separate color, is first cut on a block of pear tree wood and the outlay for this purpose in a leading establishment like this, where new designs are constantly being made, is very large. The facility with which Wall Paper is manufactured by the modern processes is most remarkable. Hundreds of rolls of blank paper can be printed in a variety of colors, dried, reeled, and be ready for market in a few hours. In Messrs. Howell's factory, forty tons of paper are consumed weekly, and about fifty millions of yards of Paper Hangings are produced annually, or a quantity, in miles, greater than the circumference of the globe."<sup>17</sup>

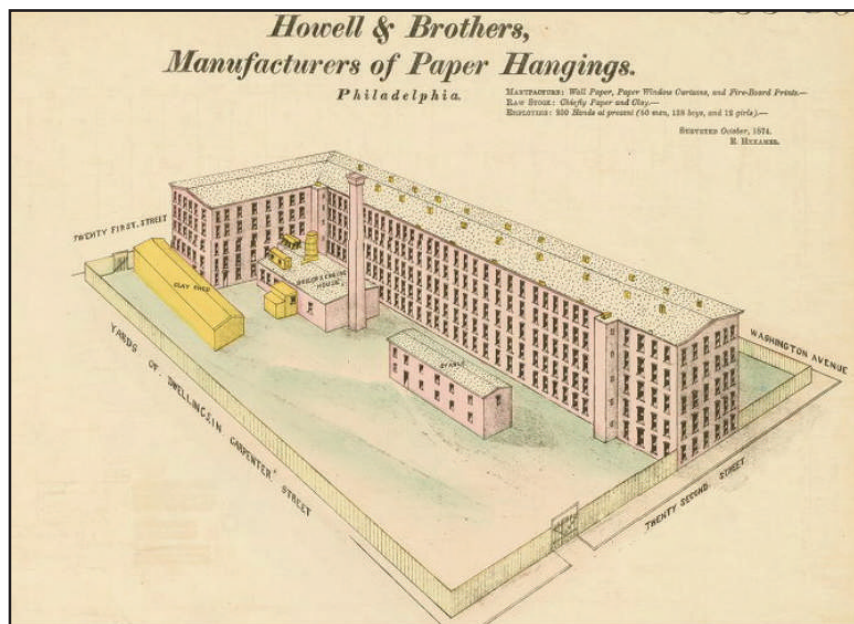


Figure 27: 1874 Orthogonal View of the Howell & Brothers Paper Hangings Manufactory, looking southeast.  
Source: *Hexamer General Surveys*, Volume 9, Plate 807

13 "Building Improvements" *Daily Evening Bulletin* [Philadelphia, PA], 7 Nov. 1865

14 Deed from John A. Howell to George Howell, et. al., 10 October 1865 (filed 20 December 1865) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Plan Book 7-S, Page 8, City Archives of Philadelphia

15 Registry Plans A,B,G. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Deed Book 7-S-8, Department of Records, City of Philadelphia

16 Ernest Hexamer, "Howell & Brothers, Manufacturers of Paper Hangings, Philadelphia" *Hexamer General Survey*, Volume 1, Plate 26 (Philadelphia, 1866).

17 Freeley, Edwin T. *Philadelphia and its Manufactures* (Edward Young: Philadelphia, 1867), 608

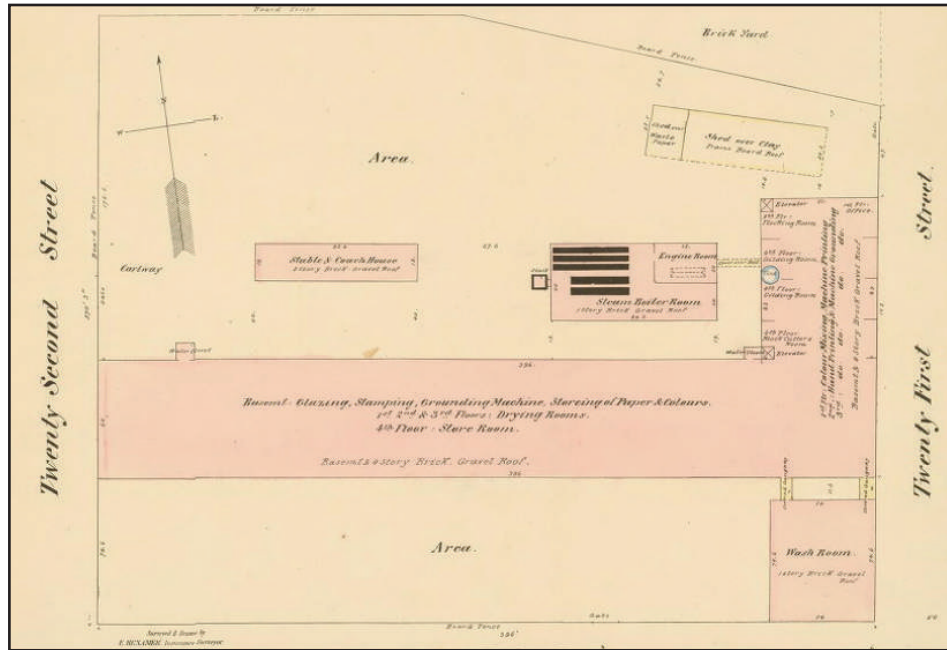


Figure 28: 1866 survey of the Howell & Brothers Paper Hangings Manufactory  
 Source: Hexamer General Surveys, Volume 1, Plate 26

Howell & Brothers continued to gain notoriety for the quality of their work through the 1860s and 70s. Their wallpaper was used in the newly-constructed Academy of Music,<sup>18</sup> the company was the only wallpaper maker to receive an honorable mention at the International Exposition in Paris,<sup>17</sup> and they exhibited their machinery and processes at the Centennial International Exposition of 1876.<sup>19</sup>

In 1883, a 90' x 396' portion on the northern edge of the Howell & Brothers Washington Avenue property was subdivided off and split into forty-four 18' x 30' properties on either side of a new segment of Kimball Street. They were sold to a Francis Prevost, who three days later sold them to builder Robert Kaighn,<sup>15</sup> who built two-story houses on either side.<sup>20</sup> Zophar C. Howell purchased two of the houses in December 1884.<sup>15</sup> Only five still stand.



Figure 29: The five remaining Robert Kaighn-built homes on the 2100 block of Kimball Street | Photo: Dennis Carlisle

18 "The Academy of Music" *Daily Evening Bulletin* [Philadelphia, PA] 17 Sep. 1866  
 19 "Centennial Exposition Memoranda", *Potter's American Monthly* Vol. 8, no. 57 (September 1876), 233  
 20 *American Architect and Building News* Jul-Dec 1883. Vol. 14, no. 399, (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1883), 44

The same year, an addition was added to the 1865 factory(see Description). The addition was used to store completed wallpaper rolls and produce pattern books.<sup>21</sup>

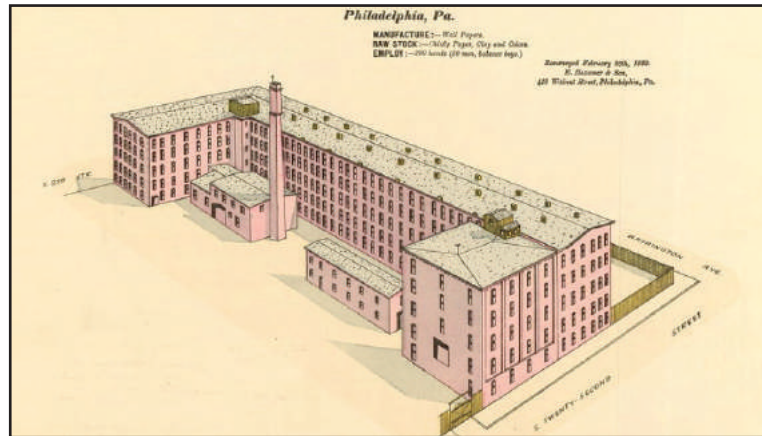


Figure 30: 1889 Orthogonal View of the Howell & Brothers Paper Hangings Manufactory, looking southeast. | Source: Hexamer General Surveys, Volume 23, Plate 2229

### The Wallpaper Pool and the end of Howell & Brothers

By the late 1870s, smaller wallpaper manufacturing operations around the country had the means to produce a lower quality product at a lower price, threatening the profits of the larger concerns and bringing down the quality standards of the entire industry. The largest manufacturers attempted to undersell each other, but the situation was not sustainable. In 1880, thirteen of the largest wallpaper concerns in New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia led by James S. Warren of the New York City-based wallpaper firm Warren, Fuller, & Co, arranged what became colloquially referred to as the “Wallpaper Pool”. The pool, calling itself American Wallpaper Manufacturers Association, set prices between members according to a schedule that was determined on September 15th of every year. Members shared profits every month based on certain conditions. Howell & Brothers was the only Philadelphia firm that was a member of the pool, though a handful of smaller Philadelphia wallpaper concerns were associate members that participated in the regulated pricing but not the profit-sharing and other benefits of full members.<sup>22</sup>

The Wallpaper Pool was successful at first, but some manufacturers started to surreptitiously breach the conditions of the agreement. Some undersold the set prices and others falsified their reports to the Association. In 1885, Howell & Brothers was accused of altering the appearance of lower quality wallpapers to resemble higher quality papers.<sup>24</sup> The Wallpaper Pool was also setting prices much higher than the industry could bear, which was blamed for the violations of the agreement. Fines were imposed on violators but not enforced. The Wallpaper Pool dissolved in 1887 and prices tumbled. In 1892, the largest manufacturers, which included Howell & Brothers, consolidated into a trust called the National Wallpaper Company. The Howell Brothers sold the company to the trust but retained ownership and control of the Washington Avenue property.<sup>23</sup>

The National Wallpaper Company closed some of the smaller factories in its network and started to sell to retailers directly, cutting out the middlemen. This action led to the terminated workers and salesmen to form their own wallpaper manufacturing operations that competed with the National Wallpaper Company. The new factories were favored by the general public and formed their own trust called the Continental Wallpaper Company in 1898. Despite this consolidation, competition from independent manufacturers was strong enough to lead to the dissolution of both trusts in 1900.<sup>23</sup>

The firm dissolved under the name Howell & Brothers, Ltd in 1902. It is still listed in operation upon Zophar C. Howell's death in October of that year,<sup>25</sup> but the November 1902 announcement of the addition of a foundry to the property (now demolished) indicates that by that point, the American Can Company was engaged to lease the facility.<sup>26</sup>

21 Ernest Hexamer, "Howell & Brothers, Paper Hangings Manufactory" Hexamer General Surveys, Volume 23, Plates 2228,2229 (Philadelphia, 1889).

22 "The Wallpaper Pool" *The New York Times*. 7 May 1882

23 *Report of the Industrial Commission*. Vol. 13, (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1901), 282-285

24 "A Troubled Pool" *Philadelphia Inquirer* 15 June 1886

25 "Death of Zophar Howell: Veteran in Wallpaper" *The Paper Mill and Wood Pulp News* [New York] 11 Oct. 1902

26 "Property Owners Are Spending Many Millions For New Buildings" *Philadelphia Inquirer* 30 Nov. 1902

## 2101 Washington Avenue in the 20th Century: Tin Cans, Wanamaker, and the Chocolate Factory

The American Can Company was founded in 1901 by the consolidation of 60 independent manufacturers.<sup>27</sup> The rapidly-expanding company made use of the former Howell factory for approximately nine years before building their own plant at Beach and Palmer Streets in the Fishtown section of Philadelphia in 1911.<sup>28</sup> The Howell Family continued to retain ownership of the property until 1909, when it was sold to real estate investor John H. Carr.<sup>29</sup> Earlier the same year, Carr also purchased the 22 houses on the south side of Kimball Street adjacent to the former Howell property.<sup>15</sup>

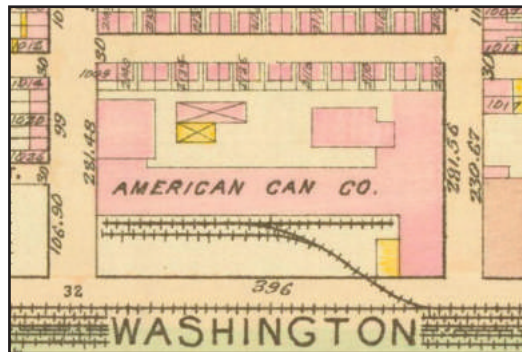


Figure 31: American Can Company at 2101 Washington Avenue in a 1910 property map. |Source: Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, 1910. (G.W. & Bromley Company, Philadelphia, 1910)

After the American Can Company moved in 1912, John H. Carr leased the property to John Wanamaker. Carr had an existing relationship with Wanamaker, having assigned a lease of a New York City property to him in 1903.<sup>30</sup> Wanamaker, the famous Philadelphia merchant, had just opened his flagship 13th and Market store on December 30, 1911. The Wanamaker Furniture Store within the large department store occupied the 5th, 6th, and 7th floors by 1926 and was marketed as the largest of its kind in the world.<sup>31</sup> The former Howell & Brothers became the furniture warehouse and distribution point for the furniture store.<sup>32</sup> The proximity to the railroad on Washington Avenue was probably the reason Wanamaker was motivated to locate his furniture warehouse here-- Wanamaker emphasized the importance of his delivery department.<sup>33</sup>

The Wm. Steele & Sons Company has begun operations on a power house, 86 x75 ft. one story, and a warehouse, 273 x 148 ft., one story, for John Wanamaker, Twenty-first to Twenty-second street on Washington avenue. The necessary equipment for the power house is to be purchased by the Wanamaker engineers.

Figure 32: Report of construction on 1912 Additions A and B. | Source: The Iron Age, Volume 89

Wanamaker immediately began improvements on the property, first by simultaneously building the Powerhouse and Shipping Department additions (1912 Additions A and B in the Description),<sup>34</sup> then the Wood Sawing addition on the southeast corner of the parcel in 1912 (1912 Addition C in the Description).<sup>35</sup> William C. Haddock, the former Director of Public Works for the City of Philadelphia and Wanamaker's Superintendent of Construction on the Wanamaker Building,<sup>36</sup> served as architect and William Steele & Sons was builder.<sup>37</sup>

27 Ziegler, Raymond J. *Business Policies and Decision Making*. (New York: Meredith Publishing, 1966), 183

28 *American Machinist*. Vol. 34, 2 Mar. 1911 (New York: Hill, 1911), 424

29 Deed of Sale from the Howell Corporation to John H. Carr, 1 Dec. 1909 (filed 7 Dec. 1909) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Plan Book 7-S, Page 8, Philadelphia City Archives

30 *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*. Vol. 71, 9 May 1903 (New York: F. W. Dodge Corporation, 1903), 937

31 *A Friendly Guide to Philadelphia and the Wanamaker Store* (Philadelphia, John Wanamaker, 1926), 52-53

32 *Insurance Maps of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. Vol. 6 (Sanborn Map Company, 1918), 518

33 Appel, Joseph H. *The Business Biography Of John Wanamaker Founder And Builder America's Merchant Pioneer From 1861 To 1922*. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1930), 189

34 *The Iron Age*, Vol. 89, (New York: David Williams Company, 1912), 1070

35 *Official Hand Book, City Hall, Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: City Publishing Company, 1901), 25

36 *Merchants Record and Show Window*. Vol. 22-23, (Chicago: Merchant's Record Company, 1908), 39

37 Application for the Erection of New Buildings, Permit #8207, Plan #1888, 18 Oct. 1912, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Archives

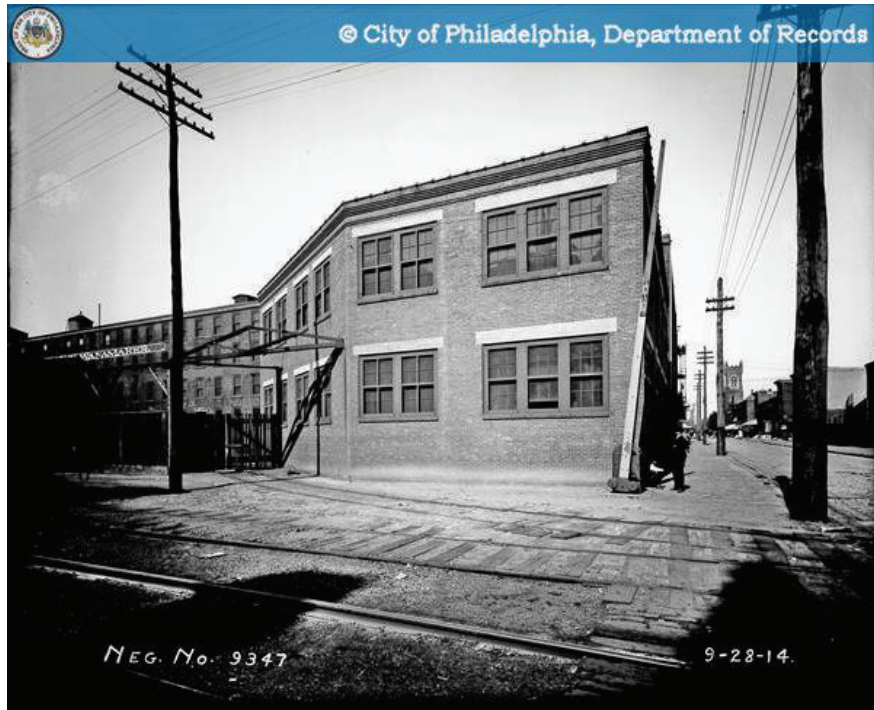


Figure 33: 1914 Photograph of the northwest corner of 21st Street and Washington Avenue. | Source: PhillyHistory.org, a project of the City of Philadelphia Department of Records

Wanamaker purchased the former Howell & Brothers property and the row of houses on the south side of the 2100 block of Kimball Street in 1914.<sup>38</sup> Among many upgrades to the facility, the warehouse was connected to the Pneumatic Tube Service network in the city, just as the Wanamaker Building was.<sup>39</sup>

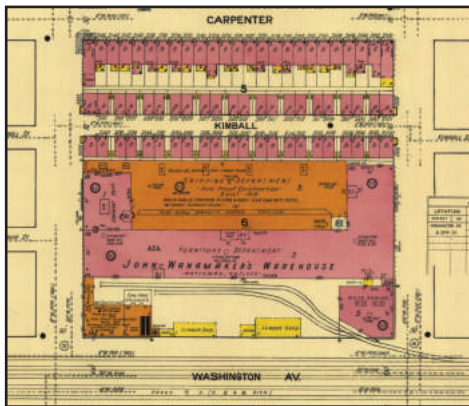


Figure 34: 1918 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map  
Source: Insurance Maps of Pennsylvania, Volume 6



Figure 35: Circa 1930 Aerial Photo | Photo: Dallin Aerial Survey Company. Map Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia

The property continued as a Wanamaker's warehouse and distribution point until 1963, when the facility was acquired by the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC).<sup>40</sup> The Frankford Candy & Chocolate Company came to occupy the building later that year and used it as their factory and headquarters. Founded in 1947, the Frankford Candy and Chocolate Company (now called Frankford Candy) began as a seasonal producer of chocolate Easter bunnies and Santa Claus figures for sale in local confectionary stores. Eventually, the company expanded production to candies and other treats for sale year-round. While at 2101 Washington, Frankford Candy and Chocolate became one of the top producers of chocolate Easter Bunnies.<sup>41</sup> In addition to production, Frankford Candy & Chocolate also distributed chocolate products from Canada.<sup>42</sup>

38 Deed of Sale from John H. Carr to John Wanamaker, 10 Nov. 1914 (filed 11 Nov. 1914) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Plan Book 7-S Page 8, City Archives of Philadelphia

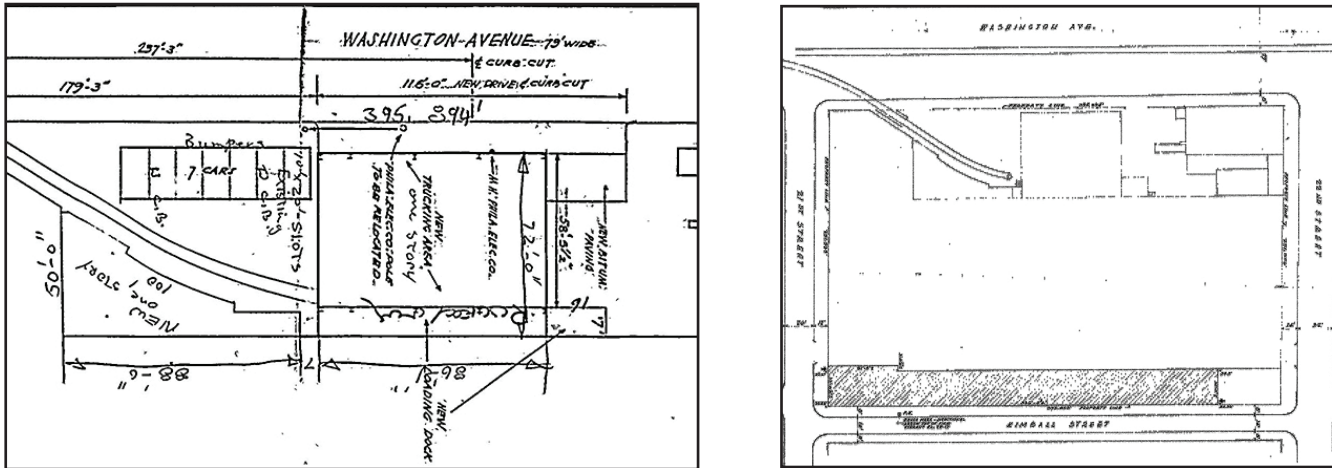
39 *Pneumatic Tube-service: Hearing Before the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, United States Senate, Sixty-fourth Congress, Second Session, on H.R. 19410; an Act Making Appropriations for the Service of the Post Office Department for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1918* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1917), 400

40 Deed of Sale from John Wanamaker, a Philadelphia Corporation to the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (filed 31 Oct. 1963) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Deed Book C.A.D 44, page 187, Philadelphia Department of Records

41 "The Frankford Story." Frankford Candy, 13 Feb. 2017, [www.frankfordcandy.com/frankford-story](http://www.frankfordcandy.com/frankford-story).

42 "Candy recalled" *The Citizen Advertiser* [Auburn, NY] 8 March 1974

Upon occupying 2101 Washington Avenue, Frankford Candy & Chocolate Company altered it for their needs and built a small addition in 1964,<sup>43</sup> two additions on the Washington Avenue side of the property in 1967,<sup>44</sup> and replaced the Kimball Street houses on the north end of the property with a large addition in 1968.<sup>45</sup> Soon after the company acquired the property in 1975 under the name 2101 Realty Corp,<sup>46</sup> another very small addition was added<sup>47</sup> and the windows on the upper floors of the original Howell Brothers sections of the complex were enclosed in bricks<sup>48</sup> (see Description).



Figures 36 and 37: Plans submitted by architect Abraham Levy with building permit applications for the 1967 and 1968 additions. Source: Zoning Archive, City of Philadelphia. Phila.gov/zoningarchive.

In 1997, Frankford Candy added cellular phone transmission equipment to the 1912 smokestack.<sup>49</sup> The company officially moved to their current location at 9300 Ashton Road in 2005. In 2007, the property was sold to Trần Đình Trường under the name Alphonse Hotel Corporation.<sup>50</sup>

### 2101 Washington Avenue in the 21st Century: Attempts at Redevelopment in a new Philadelphia

Trần Đình Trường was owner of the largest shipping concern in South Vietnam in the 1970s. After the Fall of Saigon, he claims to have helped over 3,000 civilians escape Vietnam using his company's trucks and ships. Afterward, he came to America and purchased several hotels in New York City and became a controversial figure through his lack of stewardship for the properties he owned. Later in life, he was known for his large donations to philanthropic and disaster relief efforts.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 38: Rendering for Residential-Commercial conversion of 2101 Washington Avenue proposed by Trần Đình Trường. | Source: Campbell Thomas & Co Architects & Planners via thisoldcity.com

43 Application for Zoning Permit and/or Use Registration Permit, Application #37421H, 7 July 1964, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Department of Licenses and Inspections  
 44 Application for Zoning Permit and/or Use Registration Permit, Application #76768H, 23 Aug. 1967, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Department of Licenses and Inspections  
 45 Application for Zoning Permit and/or Use Registration Permit, Application #85542H, 15 May 1968, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Department of Licenses and Inspections  
 46 Deed of Sale from Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation to 2101 Realty Corp, 10 Mar. 1975 (filed 5 June 1975) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Deed Book D.C.C. 874, Page 450, Philadelphia Department of Records.  
 47 Application for Zoning Permit and/or Use Registration Permit, Application #46744, 8 Aug. 1975, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Department of Licenses and Inspections  
 48 Application for Zoning Permit and/or Use Registration Permit, Application #42085, 1 May 1975, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Department of Licenses and Inspections  
 49 Application for Zoning Permit and/or Use Registration Permit, Application #961004006, 10 Oct. 1996, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Department of Licenses and Inspections  
 50 Deed of Sale from 2101 Realty Corp to Alphonse Hotel Corporation, 7 Feb. 2007 (filed 13 Feb. 2007) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Document ID 51631102, Philadelphia Department of Records  
 51 "Mr. Tran's Messy Life and Legacy" *The New York Times*, 24 July 2014.



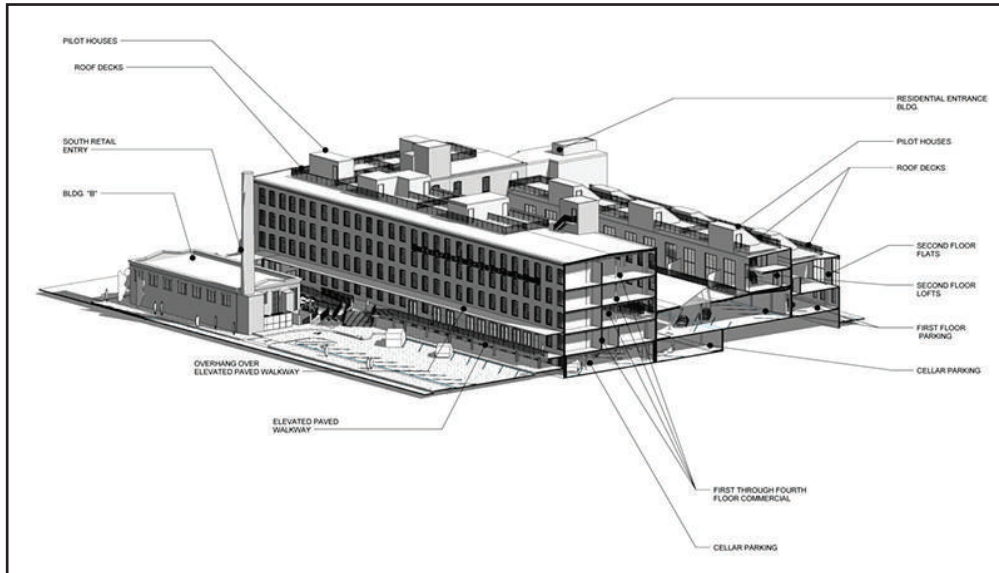


Figure 39: Cross-section of proposed Residential-Commercial conversion of 2101 Washington Avenue proposed by Trần Đình Trường. | Source: Campbell Thomas & Co Architects &\* Planners via thisoldcity.com

Trường's plan for the property was a partial demolition of several of the one-story sections of the building and conversion into a mixed-use residential-commercial complex called the New Vietnamese Center. The plan was rejected by the Zoning Board of Adjustments but a scaled-down version of the plan was approved just two months<sup>51</sup> before Trường died on May 6, 2012.<sup>52</sup> The only alterations to the property executed during his ownership of the property were upgrades to the cellular transmission equipment<sup>53</sup> and large banners that hung from the facade, the tattered remains of which are still visible today (figure 40).



Figure 40: One of the banners placed on the facade of 2101 Washington Avenue as it appeared in 2010. | Photo: Peter Woodall via hiddencityphila.org

In 2015, an entity called 2101 Washington Real Estate, LP purchased the property<sup>54</sup> and has since proposed demolition of the one-story rear sections of the complex, a mixed-use residential-commercial conversion of the remaining structures, and the construction of townhouses on the site.<sup>55</sup>

52 "Frankford Chocolate Factory at 21st and Washington Ave. is finally for sale." *The Passyunk Post* [Philadelphia] 12 Nov. 2012

53 Zoning/Use Permit #116488, 6 Dec. 2007, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Department of Licenses and Inspections.

54 Deed of Sale from Alphonse Hotel Corporation to 2101 Washington Real Estate, LP, 3 Nov. 2015 (filed 12 Nov. 2015) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Document ID 52987745, Philadelphia Department of Records.

55 "Apartments, Townhouses proposed for Frankford Chocolate Factory" Curbed Philly. 15 Nov 2015 <https://philly.curbed.com/2017/11/15/16654498/frankford-chocolate-factory-philadelphia-redevelopment>

## Historic Context: Washington Avenue Industrial Corridor, a Brief History

In 1838, the nascent Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad Company (PWB) asked the Pennsylvania Legislature to widen Prime Street, south of pre-consolidation Philadelphia, to 100 feet to accommodate a double railroad track that would terminate at Broad Street. The company was at that time constructing the Newkirk Viaduct, a bridge over the Schuylkill River at Gray's Ferry that would allow trains to enter and exit Philadelphia. Both were completed and began operation on December 25th, 1838.<sup>56</sup>

Between 1838 and 1852, horses pulled the train cars from the Newkirk Viaduct to Broad and Prime Streets. Once the Southern and Western Railroad Station was completed at Broad and Prime, the trains were powered by steam and could connect with the Southwark Railroad, which ran down the east side of Prime Street to the Delaware River. In addition to becoming a major transportation hub for passengers traveling all points south from Philadelphia, freight could also be shipped on the line as well. In 1866, construction of the Susquehanna Bridge over the Susquehanna River at Havre De Grace was completed. This enabled shipping to be uninterrupted to Baltimore and connected points.<sup>56</sup> This led larger industrial and warehousing concerns to target the Washington Avenue (renamed in 1858<sup>57</sup>) Corridor. Among the first of these was Howell & Brothers, Manufacturers of Paper Hangings (figure 41).

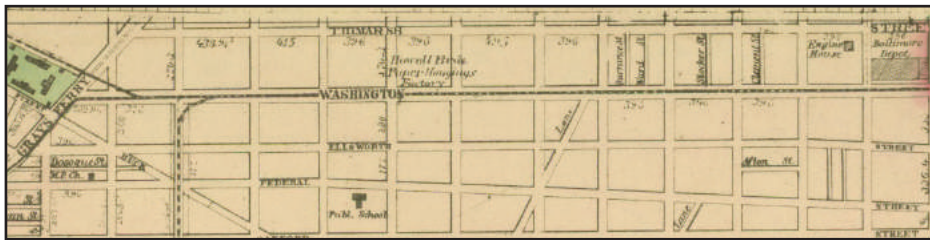


Figure 41: 1867 map showing Howell & Brothers as the only development on Washington Avenue west of Broad Street. | Source: Map of the Whole Incorporated City of Philadelphia, 1867. (R.L. Barnes, Philadelphia, 1867).

The Pennsylvania Railroad Company gained control of the PWB in 1881 and transferred the passenger station to Broad Street Station in January 1882. The line along Washington Avenue now became entirely dedicated to freight.<sup>56</sup> Over the next few decades, large industrial concerns sprang up along all parts of Washington Avenue between the Washington Avenue wharf on the Delaware River and Gray's Ferry Avenue, making it an important spine of industry for the city (figure 39).

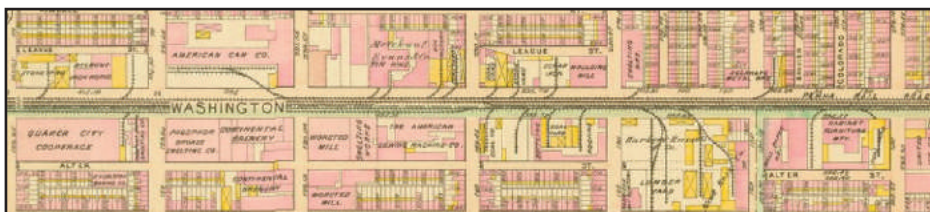


Figure 42: This 1910 Map shows the railroad sidings connecting industrial and warehousing concerns to the freight line on Washington Avenue. Source: Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, 1910. (G.W. & Bromley Company, Philadelphia, 1910)

The industrial corridor along Washington Avenue remained active through the middle of the 20th Century. When manufacturing in the city and country declined in the 1970s and 80s, Washington Avenue lost most of its industry,<sup>58</sup> though some outliers like the Frankford Chocolate and Candy Company continued operating here to the end of the century.<sup>41</sup> The Washington Avenue Branch, as the freight line came to be known, was shut down in 1985 under the control of Conrail.<sup>59</sup>

In the 21st Century, the Washington Avenue corridor came into use by building supplies distributors and auto-centric retail shopping strips/pad sites. New development and renewed residential interest in areas north and south of the corridor have drawn new interest in its redevelopment.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Wilson, William Bender. History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company: With Plan of Organization, Portraits of Officials and Biographical Sketches. (Philadelphia, Henry T. Coates & Company, 1895), 299-331

<sup>57</sup> Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia, 1858. (Philadelphia, Bicking & Guilbert, 1858), 257

<sup>58</sup> "The Battle for the Soul of Washington Avenue" Philadelphia Magazine. 16 Aug. 2015 <http://www.phillymag.com/citified/2015/08/16/washington-avenue/>

<sup>59</sup> Traffic World, Vol. 204. (Chicago, Traffic Service Corporation, 1985), 115

## Conclusion

2101 Washington Avenue satisfies criterion (a) for designation and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. As one of the earliest industrial facilities to take advantage of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad freight line along Washington Avenue, it has value as part of the development of the City. By being the third successful wallpaper manufacturer in our country's history, by being the first American wallpaper manufacturer to utilize machine-made wallpapers, and by being at one point the largest wallpaper factory in the country, 2101 Washington Avenue has interest and value as part of the development and heritage of the Nation. By being associated with John Wanamaker, one of the most important Philadelphians in the city's history, 2101 Washington Avenue is associated with the life of a person significant in the past. Due to being one of the largest producers of chocolate Easter bunnies in the world when occupied by the Frankford Chocolate and Candy Company, it has value as part of the development of the cultural characteristics of the Nation.

2101 Washington Avenue also satisfies criterion (j) for designation and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Due to its catalyzation of growth along the Washington Avenue industrial corridor, it exemplifies the historical heritage of the community. Due to its representation of Philadelphia both domestically and internationally as a major manufacturing center, it exemplifies the economic heritage of the community.

For these reasons, 2101 Washington Avenue should be included on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.



Figure 43: Frieze (USA), 1892; Manufactured by Howell and Brothers ; machine-printed; 181.5 x 50 cm (71 7/16 x 19 11/16 in.); Gift of Victorian Collectibles; 1979-91-70 | Source: Collection of Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

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*Internet Archive*

<https://archive.org/>

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*Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network*

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<https://libraries.psu.edu/about/collections/sanborn-fire-insurance-maps>

### **Philadelphia City Records**

*PhilaDox EWeb: Search Index and Images on documents recorded since January 1, 1974*

<http://epay.phila-records.com/phillyepay/web/>

*Philadox Historical Index*

<http://philadox.phila.gov/phillyhistoricalindex/index.html>

*Zoning Archive*

<https://www.phila.gov/zoningarchive/>

### **Photographs and Images (not taken from other online resources)**

*Bolling & Co, the art of antique wallpaper*

<http://bollingco.com>

*Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum*

<https://www.cooperhewitt.org/>

*The Hidden City Daily*

<http://hiddencityphila.org>

*Digital Collections, Library Company of Philadelphia*

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*Philly History, a project of the Philadelphia Department of Records*

<http://phillyhistory.org>

## **Online Resources Continued**

### **Newspapers**

*Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

*New York Times Article Archive*  
<http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html>

*Old Fulton, New York Postcards: Search over 40,743,000 Historical Newspaper Pages from the USA & Canada*  
<http://fultonhistory.com>

*PA Newspaper Archive: Significant historical Pennsylvania newspapers*  
<http://panewsarchive.psu.edu/>

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*Curbed Philly*  
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*Frankford Candy*  
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*The Passyunk Post*  
<http://www.passyunkpost.com/>

*Philadelphia Magazine*  
<http://phillymag.com>

*This Old City*  
<http://thisoldcity.com>

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*Philadelphia City Archives*  
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