

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 (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

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

Street address: 4111 Mantua Avenue

Postal code: 19104

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Keystone Battery 'A'; Armory Garage; Pennsylvania National Guard Sixth Infantry; West Philadelphia Youth Center

Current/Common Name: 4111 Mantua Avenue

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: Storage

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1892 to 1943

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: Constructed - 1892; Altered - 1913, 1914, 1922, 1934, and unknown

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: A. Green

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: _____

Original owner: Keystone Battery A. National Guard Pa.

Other significant persons: Pennsylvania National Guard 6th Infantry; National Youth Administration

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

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization Philadelphia City Planning Commission Date 5/13/19

Name with Title Amanda Stevens, PCPC Intern Email _____

Street Address 1515 Arch Street Telephone 215-683-4615

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA, 19102

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 16 May 2019

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 8 October 2019

Date of Notice Issuance: 10 October 2019

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: TJ Properties Inc

Address: PO Box 30735

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19104

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 13 November 2019

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 13 December 2019

Date of Final Action: 13 December 2019

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Office of Property Assessment (OPA) address is 4111-4117 Mantua Avenue. The deed of sale dated October 4, 2005 from Belmont Affordable Housing, LP to TJ Properties Inc. documents the boundaries as follows:

All that certain lot or parcel of land with the buildings and improvements thereon erected. Situate on the Northeasterly side of Mantua Avenue at a distance of one hundred ten feet eight and three-quarter inches Northwestwardly from the point of intersection of the Northeasterly side of the said Mantua Avenue with the North side of Pennsgrove Street in the Sixth Ward of the City of Philadelphia.

Containing in front or breadth on said Mantua Avenue sixty-five feet and extending of that width in length or depth Northeastwardly between lines at right angles to the said Mantua Avenue one hundred feet.

Bounded Northeastwardly by ground of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Southeastwardly and Northwestwardly by ground now or formerly of the Algonquin Improvement Company and Southwestwardly by Mantua Avenue aforesaid.



Figure 1: Parcel boundary of 4111 Mantua Avenue. Source: City of Philadelphia Department of Records, CityGeo.

6. DESCRIPTION

4111 Mantua Avenue is located in the Belmont neighborhood of West Philadelphia. The two-story brick and brownstone building is situated approximately 110 feet northwest from the intersection of Mantua Avenue and Pennsgrove Street. At a width of 65 feet and length of 100 feet, the property's lot size is large when compared to its immediate context. The size of the lot combined and the building's massing and design gives the property a distinct presence in the largely residential neighborhood. Row houses on the east and west abut the former armory and comprise much of the block. The northern side of the property extends to the property line where the parcel meets the depressed land of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Along the east and west elevations, the roofline is flat and slightly raised in the center and slopes down towards the north and south. The roof is a pyramidal hipped roof sealed by white, sheet metal panels and rises approximately one story above the height of the brick structure (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Exterior view of 4111 Mantua Avenue.



Figure 3: View looking west showing roof and context on street.

South Side

The south or primary façade of the building faces Mantua Avenue (Figures 4-7). The first floor has an ashlar stone base with pressed-brick masonry above. A central, flat arched entrance is set into the ashlar stone masonry and is capped with a stone lintel with an engraved keystone (Figure 4). The doorway is flanked by two lancet window openings with stone masonry surrounds. The upper story of the central bay contains three-part window divided by two mullions. The windows are double-hung with a nine-over-nine configuration. The upper window opening has a stone or cast stone sill and a corbelled brick lintel.



Figure 4: Engraved keystone with initials of “Keystone Battery” and the year the battery was established.



Figure 5: Towers on the western side of the south façade.



Figure 6: South façade view, 2019. City of Philadelphia, Cyclomedia.

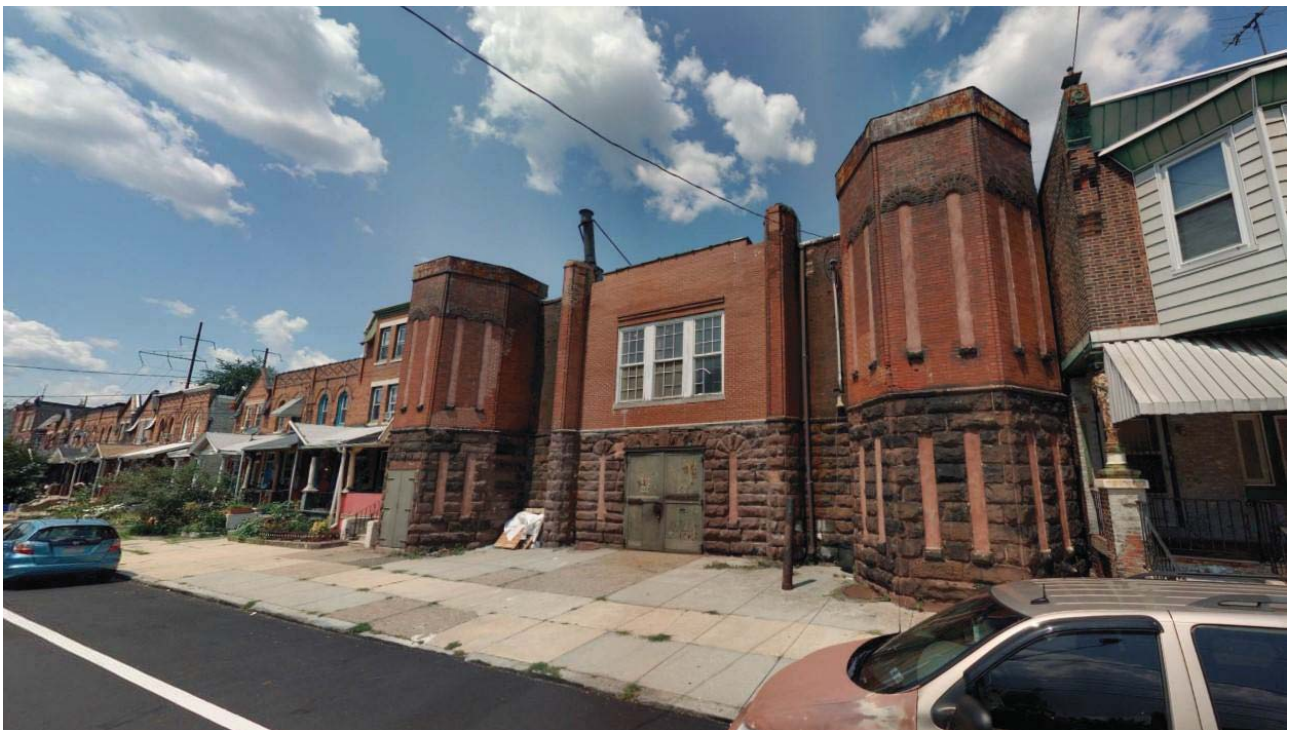


Figure 7: View along Mantua Avenue, 2019. City of Philadelphia, Cyclomedia.

Four engaged towers define the main façade. Each corner is anchored by a large octagonal tower which rises just above the roofline (Figure 6). The front-three faces of the large towers are pierced by pairs of split, round-arched lancet windows with molded brick surrounds along the top of the arch. Two smaller towers, flank the central bay and rise above the roofline. Both the large and small towers have the individual faces joined by rounded-brick corners.

4111 Mantua Avenue has been altered multiple times throughout its history. Changes in brickwork on the four towers and central bay point to many alterations, particularly along the roofline. By referencing historic imagery, it was made apparent that these alterations included truncating the stepped gable of the central bay as well as encasement or removal of the battlements of the corner towers (Figure 8). The entire brick portion of the central bay has been replaced, including changes to the central windows. The central bay originally had four lancet windows on the upper section (Figure 9).



Figure 8: Detail of altered roofline and brickwork.



Figure 9: Image of 4111 Mantua looking north taken from a scrapbook compiled between 1843 and 1929. Source: Castner Scrapbook v.15, Sundry Buildings 1, page 23, Free Library of Philadelphia.

By 1922, the central lancet windows had been replaced with a three-part set of nine-over-nine double hung windows (Figure 10). In more recent years, this three-part window has been replaced and many of the lancet windows have been boarded up. A second entrance also replaced the lower portion of the front-most pair of lancet windows on the west large tower. Additionally, the flat arched main entrance of the central bay was altered prior to 1922. The entrance was previously a round arch with a center keystone (Figures 9 and 10).

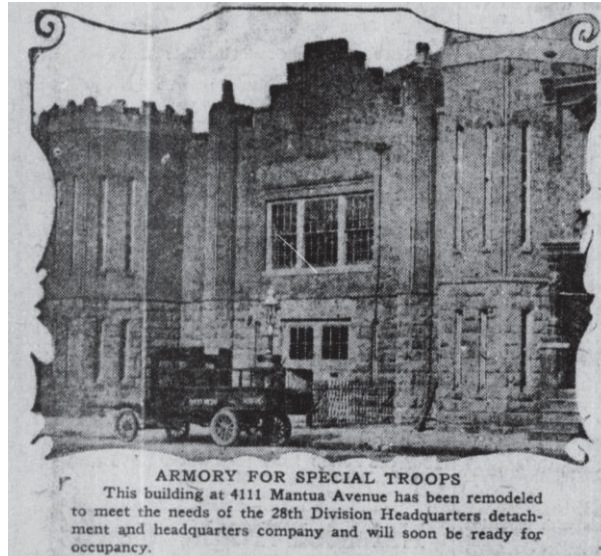


Figure 10: Newspaper image of 4111 Mantua in 1922.

Source: "News of the World Told in Pictures." *The*

Philadelphia Inquirer, 19 Dec. 1922: b15. ProQuest, Web.

East Side

The east side is mostly obscured by buildings that sit adjacent to the property. Only part is visible from the public right-of-way. According to photographic evidence, the eastern envelope once contained multiple fenestrations, but today, the openings have been infilled. Evidence of the infilled windows is visible through the east elevation brickwork (Figure 11).



Figure 11: East elevation

North Side

The north elevation follows the bounding property line of the Pennsylvania railroad, visible in Figure . 4111 Mantua sits on the stone retaining wall that runs parallel to the rail line. Like the east side, the north is an unarticulated brick elevation. Eight fenestrations break the envelope. This elevation is only partially publicly visible behind fencing from the North 41st Street Bridge.



Figure 12: View of the north side of 4111 Mantua in 2013.
Source: Richard Gonzalez, Hidden City Philadelphia.

West Side

The west side of 4111 Mantua is completely obscured from the public right-of-way. Aerial imagery reveals that the west side is a nearly solid brick wall elevation. The only fenestration is a single door near the north end with what appears to be a metal fire escape that descends to the ground level.

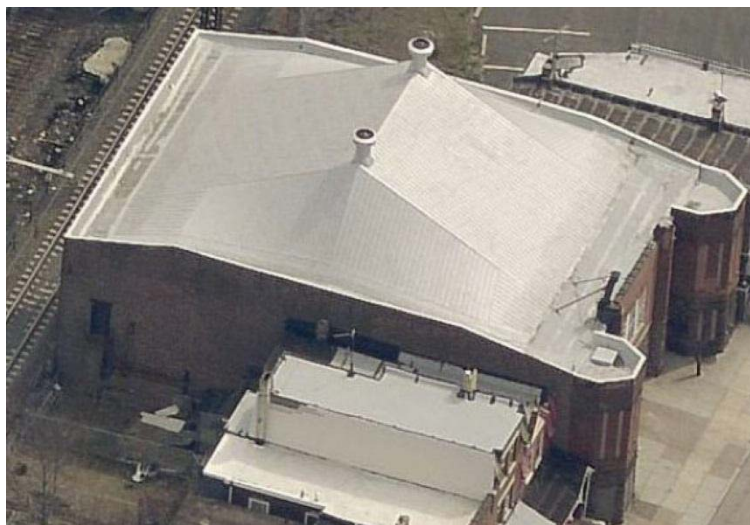


Figure 13: Aerial view of west side. Source: City of Philadelphia, Pictometry.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

The property of 4111-4117 Mantua Avenue is historically significant and should be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places under the following criteria:

- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Introduction

4111 Mantua Avenue greatly contributes to the history of its neighborhood, Belmont, and Philadelphia. The building, which has been under-utilized in recent years, possesses a strong significance tied to the development and character of its context. From its construction in 1892, through the mid-twentieth century, the building and its various occupants have played a significant role in civic engagement in Belmont and Philadelphia. The building and its style are born from a period of increased investment in local militia and guardsmen. Upon construction the property was used as an armory for the Keystone Battery and later the Pennsylvania National Guard. After its military tenure, the building became home to the National Youth Administration – a part of the New Deal program created in the 1930s. It became an important center for actively engaging and supporting youth in West Philadelphia. From military organizations to youth centers, 4111 Mantua was a valuable civic and community facility in the neighborhood.

Criterion (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

The building at 4111 Mantua Avenue has been an important figure in the Belmont neighborhood of Philadelphia. It has continuously contributed to the heritage of the community – both the city as a whole and the neighborhood.

The history of 4111 Mantua begins with the Keystone Battery. The organization formed in 1861 as an infantry company, and a year later it became a battery company. Historically, a battery company was a field artillery team that typically consisting of approximately one hundred men. In 1867 the Keystone Battery (“Battery”) petitioned to be accepted as part of the National Guard of Pennsylvania (NGP), and that same year the Battery was attached to the First Brigade, First Division of the NGP. This was the beginning of the Battery’s service for the state militia. The Battery’s service includes the Civil War, Campaign of 1864, Labor Riots of 1877, Spanish American War, and Coal Strike of 1902.¹ Like many other armories across the country, the Battery rented various spaces in public facilities to train its members and store supplies during its early years; however, as the number of recruits to the Battery increased, it soon began to outgrow its facilities. Thus began the search for a suitable plot of land to construct a permanent armory.

The construction of the armory at 4111 Mantua Avenue stems from the larger cultural context of widespread armory construction that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century. National Guard (“Guard”) and volunteer militias were not a new phenomenon. What was new

¹ Howard-Smith, *The History of Battery A (Formerly known as the Keystone Battery) and Troop A, N.G.P.*

was the construction of armories dedicated for the sole use by these guardsmen. This global trend grew from an era defined by labor unrest. Although present in society prior to this time, the unrest grew stronger in the period after the Civil War. Strikes and riots were largely viewed as European phenomena until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.² In 1877, the country saw one of its worst labor disputes. After railroad workers had their wages cut by 10 percent, strikes broke out throughout the regions covered by the Pennsylvania, Baltimore, and Ohio railways. Police and militias were used to demand that the rail lines be reopened, but when they did, the strike turned into a riot. At the end of the dispute, the country was faced with millions of dollars' worth of damage, immense loss of life and injuries, and a growing sense of fear for future disputes.³ Later disputes, such as the Pullman Strike in Chicago, demonstrated a level of social unrest and upheaval in the United States that had never been seen before.⁴ The Labor Riot of 1877 revealed the discontent held by the United States' working class. Many upper class citizens feared class warfare was imminent.

The Keystone Battery was among the troops called to action during the Labor Riot of 1877. The troops were dispatched to Pittsburgh, where upon arrival they were met by a large mob, estimated to be about 2,500 people.⁵ According to General R.M. Brinton of Philadelphia, the mob became angered as troops tried to push them back and the crowd began throwing stones and firing pistols at the troops. The situation devolved as the troops began firing back – reportedly for self-defense.⁶ In the time the Battery spent in Pittsburgh, they were faced with continued threats from a mob comprised of men, women, children, and even policemen. Both parties were responsible for firing shots and the time in Pittsburgh can be described as a violent affair.

The Labor Riot of 1877 undoubtedly had a great impact on the members of the Keystone Battery amidst the greater atmosphere of fear and unrest. Additionally, the role of such volunteer militias was being called into question. Supporters of the guardsmen argued that they were “the last resort for public peace if the police give way.”⁷ However, in during this period of unrest, the ability of the volunteer militias to quell disputes was questioned. To many, they were untrained men playing at being soldiers, and, in a time of crisis, they were either unprepared or unwilling to handle situations and follow command. Despite their faults, many found the solution to be “revitalization” of the militias – now called the National Guard. Increases in investment, improved training focused on crowd control, and better organized hierarchies of command were some of the strategies used to improve the effectiveness and standing of the National Guard. Overall, the result was a more professional Guard; however, critics argued that the Guard – who were supposed to be neutral – were simply agents of capitalists since the most common disputes they were called in for were labor disputes.⁸ In the late nineteenth century, these critics had no major influence, and the Guard continued to successfully advocate for further state support.

Armories became a crucial component in leveraging funds. National Guard units across the country began moving away from their rented spaces and advocating for the construction of

² Fogelson, 19-20.

³ The exact number of deaths that resulted from the riot is unknown, but by some counts over one hundred individuals were killed.

⁴ Fogelson, 20-23.

⁵ Howard-Smith, 89.

⁶ Howard-Smith, 89-90.

⁷ Fogelson, 37.

⁸ Ibid, 40-42.

armories dedicated to use by the Guard. Practically, before the state could responsibly provide additional weapons and ammunition to the Guard, they needed a secure place to store them. Although it had not been seen in the riots, advocates for the construction of armories argued that the rented or temporary spaces were too much of a risk in the event these armories became the focal point of future riots. Constructing armories was necessary for the safety of both the men and supplies. Furthermore, having an impressive armory was a tool needed to attract respectable volunteers.⁹ Without an adequate facility, the Guard could not be expected to increase their numbers.

It is this context which surrounded the construction of 4111 Mantua Avenue. In the search for a permanent home, the Battery turned its eyes to West Philadelphia. Although the exact reason for this relocation is unknown, some scholars speculate that armories were located in neighborhoods where the likelihood of rioting was low.¹⁰ Another concern in the construction of armories was the availability of large parcels of affordable land, which, although decreasing, was still easier to find in West Philadelphia in the late nineteenth-century than in more central parts of the city (see Appendix, Map 1).¹¹ In August 1892, the Keystone Battery purchased a plot of land on 41st Street and Mantua Avenue and enlisted the architect only known as A. Greene to design their new armory. In addition to the distance from the denser blocks of Center City Philadelphia, the site of 4111 Mantua was also located near the 40th Street Pennsylvania Railroad Station. This provided a convenient way for members to access the facility, as well as allowed for the easy movement of troops in the event they were called into service.

The armory proved to be successful in attracting volunteers, and membership of the organization quickly rose. So much so, that by 1903 the Guard outgrew the facility at 4111 Mantua Avenue and relocated back to Center City Philadelphia. After a short time sitting vacant followed by approximately a decade of commercial use, 4111 Mantua was reclaimed for use as an armory – this time by the Pennsylvania National Guard Sixth Infantry.¹²

In 1903, the Federal Militia Act was passed, transforming state militias into reserves for the army. Armories were no longer at a high risk of being attacked in the event of riots, and the facilities were able to incorporate more civilian functions.¹³ Both the exterior and interior forms of armories began to shift from a defensive look and nature, as seen in Philip H. Johnson's Classical revival style armory constructed in 1916 at Thirty-Second and Lancaster.¹⁴ In 1914 when the Armory Board of the State of Pennsylvania purchased 4111 Mantua Avenue for the Sixth Infantry, they began investing in the structure and reconfiguring it to suit the current needs and standards of the National Guard. In regard to the military aspect of the armory, the alterations saw the structure undergo "complete motorization" in order to accommodate new equipment and technology to be utilized by the Sixth Infantry.¹⁵ By the mid-1920s, the armory also included accommodations for recreational uses, including a dance floor, basketball cage,

⁹ Ibid, 45-46.

¹⁰ Ibid, 85.

¹¹ Ibid, 93.

¹² Philadelphia Deed Book ELT 338, page 572, &c. June 11, 1914.

¹³ Beugoms.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Special Troops' Armory Ready Soon," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 17, 1922, p. 26, <https://proxy.library.upenn.edu/login?url=https://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2072/docview/1830804212?accountid=14707>.

and other entertainment.¹⁶ Although the facility was still utilized to practice drills, these recreational activities marked the transformation of 4111 Mantua Avenue into a sort of men's club for National Guard members. Fortification gave way to social interactions, and rather than being a formidable structure in neighborhoods, armories began to integrate themselves into the fabric of neighborhoods.

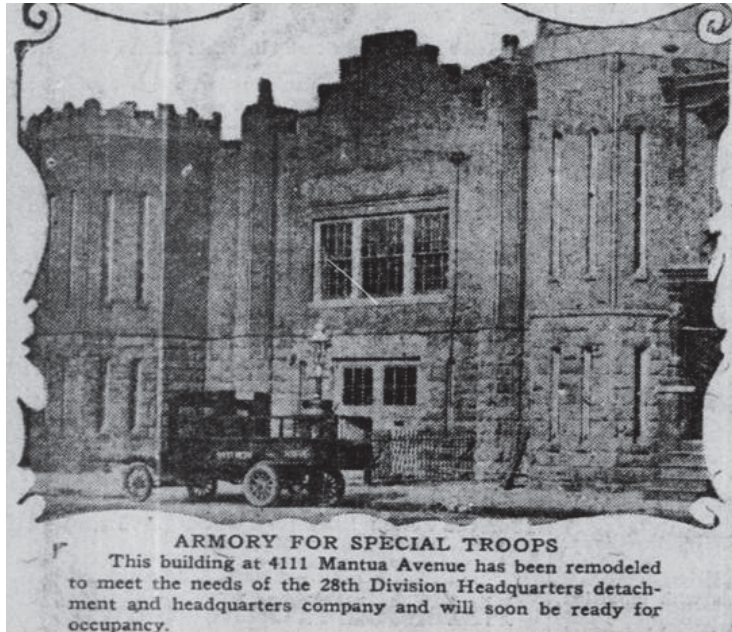


Figure 14: Newspaper image of 4111 Mantua in 1922. Source: "News of the World Told in Pictures." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 Dec. 1922: b15. ProQuest, Web. 2018.

The property of 4111 Mantua Avenue remained in the ownership of the Armory Board of the State of Pennsylvania for thirty years, but its function changed during this time. After years of serving as a facility for the Pennsylvania National Guard Sixth Infantry, the property became the home for a federal agency – the National Youth Administration. In June of 1940, after the building had yet again sat vacant for approximately five years, the National Youth Administration (NYA) opened a center. The NYA center, also known as the West Philadelphia Youth Center, played an important role in the development and support of youth in the neighborhood of Belmont and the larger West Philadelphia area.

The NYA was one of many New Deal agencies formed during the term of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The NYA was part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In the context of a time where youth unemployment rates were rising, the NYA sought to provide work training and financial support to youths age sixteen to twenty-five. Courses were offered in general skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Additionally, the NYA operated two programs: the Works Project Program and the Student Aid Program. The Works Project Program provided job-training to out-of-school and unemployed youth while the Student Aid Program gave work-study financial support and training for students enrolled in high school and above.¹⁷ The organization

¹⁶ "High School Students Invited to Join Guard," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 30, 1924, p. 2, <https://proxy.library.upenn.edu/login?url=https://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2072/docview/1830894839?accountid=14707>.

¹⁷ Roosevelt Institute Education, "National Youth Administration," Roosevelt Institute, August 30, 2011, <http://rooseveltinstitute.org/national-youth-administration/>.

supported both boys and girls, and provided invaluable vocational training, educational support and income.

In West Philadelphia in 1940, the killing of a teenager in a street war between youth gangs became the focal point and justification in an effort to introduce facilities and programs for youth in West Philadelphia. A committee was formed in response to the killing, and one of their main actions was to put pressure on the NYA and the WPA to open a community center in West Philadelphia. The committee held that because there was no such center, youth had too much free time, leading to an increased involvement in undesirable or unproductive activities, such as gangs.¹⁸ Their efforts were successful in advocating to the NYA, and when the West Philadelphia Youth Center opened in 1940, it was one of the only community activity programs in West Philadelphia. The center at 4111 Mantua Avenue provided many activities for youth to take part in, including: arts and crafts, dramatics, free music lessons, first aid clinic, woodwork classes, sewing, access to a free library of over 500 books, basketball, boxing, and wrestling.¹⁹ In addition, the center operated a summer camp, ran a home economics course which allowed girls to qualify for housework at decent wages, and fed approximately 65 undernourished and underprivileged youth each day. Within the first year, the center served over 72,000 youth from Belmont and surrounding neighborhoods.²⁰ In a short time, the West Philadelphia Youth Center became an important institution in Philadelphia, serving both black and white youth in the city.

In addition to serving the youth of the neighborhood and city, 4111 Mantua Avenue continued to maintain its military roots and connections. Towards the end of the tenure of the NYA in the building, the facilities were also utilized by the Citizens' Military Training Camp, comprised of 82 men; Seventh Day Adventist medical cadet corps; comprised of 115 men; and Emergency Aid, a women's organization which provided flowers to hospitals.²¹

Perhaps the most significant auxiliary military use of the facility was that of Company M of the Pennsylvania Defense Training Corps (PDTC). The PDTC was created during the state of national emergency declared by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941 in response to the events occurring abroad during World War II. As a result of the state of national emergency, the Pennsylvania National Guard was called into active service, leaving a need for an organization to be available in the case of local or state emergency. The PDTC was formed to fill this gap, and the Philadelphia-based Company M became an important local unit. Company M was an African American unit of the PDTC that operated out of the center at 4111 Mantua. The unit, under the command of Lieutenant Fleming Pitts, allowed black men to train and study military and other defense strategies in a time when they were not permitted to enlist in the Pennsylvania National Guard. Company M trained in tactics such as "home defense in the case of air raids, duty in

¹⁸ "New Organization Result of West Philly Gang Killing," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 20, 1940, p. 2, <https://proxy.library.upenn.edu/login?url=https://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2072/docview/202069240?accountid=14707>.

¹⁹ "West Philly's New Center to Open June, 16," *Philadelphia Tribune*, June 6, 1940, p. 3, <https://proxy.library.upenn.edu/login?url=https://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2072/docview/531541851?accountid=14707>.

²⁰ "Fire 6 NYA Supervisors in Purge," *Philadelphia Tribune*, August 21, 1941, p. 8, <https://proxy.library.upenn.edu/login?url=https://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2072/docview/531557861?accountid=14707>.

²¹ "W. Phila. Youth Center to be Kept Open by NYA," *Philadelphia Tribune*, Sep 20, 1941, p. 2, <https://proxy.library.upenn.edu/login?url=https://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2072/docview/531629609?accountid=14707>.

collaboration with police in riots, disasters or strikes and the more prosaic job of assisting in patrolling where grate crowds of people are present and taking part in parades,” and it became one of the leading units in the corps.²² This training under the PDTC was viewed as an important foundation for desegregating the Pennsylvania National Guard and providing the men with training that would aid efforts to enlist.

Two years after the West Philadelphia Youth Center opened, it faced the threat of closure. When the United States entered World War II at the end of 1941, military-focused spending became a top priority. Within this context, the NYA could not justify spending so much on community projects rather than national defense. In 1942, the center’s director, George Allen, was fired and the center was closed. Immediately there was backlash from the community, and opinions held that the dismissal of Allen and closure of the center negatively impacted the area. An article in the *Philadelphia Tribune* from 1941 reported “West Philadelphia is notorious for its poor facilities for recreation for its youth and this center is the only one of its kind in a wide area in that section of the city.”²³ Many people utilized the center for training, employment, recreation, education, and even nutrition. Without the center, the many in West Philadelphia were left without a facility to support their activities and engage them in their free-time. The West Philadelphia Youth Center was a valued community institution and its closure would not go uncontested. The fight to keep the center was successful, and after three weeks of closure, Allen was rehired and the center reopened.²⁴ However, the victory was short-lived. Ultimately, the NYA was discontinued in 1943, and 4111 Mantua Avenue, along with many other youth centers, was shut down. Since its closure, the building’s function continuously shifted, intermixed with periods of vacancy. For about three decades, the property was used by the tobacco distributor, the M. Schoenfeld Company. Following this period, the building sat vacant for about a decade until it was purchased by the Stukes Center, a care facility for those with disabilities, and used as their diagnostic and therapeutic center until 1996 when the property was turned over to the city. After yet another decade of vacancy under city ownership, the property was purchased by T.J. Properties, an affordable housing developer that works in the Belmont neighborhood. Under the ownership of T.J. Properties, the building was slowly repaired with the intent to convert into affordable apartments; however, today the building is just being used as storage.²⁵

²² "Company M Will be Ready." 1941. *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), Dec 06, 11. <https://proxy.library.upenn.edu/login?url=https://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2072/docview/531586180?accountid=14707>.

²³ "W. Phila. Youth Center to be Kept Open by NYA," *Philadelphia Tribune*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See Appendix 2.



Figure 15: View along Mantua Avenue, 2019. City of Philadelphia, Cyclomedia.

Criteria (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; and (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen:

Prior to the Civil War, permanent armories were not often utilized by the Pennsylvania National Guard. Instead, companies rented rooms and space in public buildings, such as riding halls and taverns.²⁶ A permanent solution was needed to support the guardsmen. The construction and design of 4111 Mantua Avenue is characteristic of a time when local guardsmen and militias were the recipients of broader support in cities.

The National Guard (“Guard”) in particular played an important role in society. These institutions were seen as important actors in “turn[ing] young men into good citizens.”²⁷ In order to achieve this and attract qualified recruits, adequate facilities were required.²⁸ The Guard were a source of national pride – part of a larger spirit of nationalism, patriotism, and militarism that was popular in the United States in the 1880s and 1890s.²⁹ Public and private investment allowed for the construction of proper facilities that would meet the needs of the Guard as well as attract new recruits.

The construction of armories was not solely based on the spirit of national pride. The second half of the nineteenth century was full of unrest among the working class. In response, troops of the National Guard were deployed to help control situations. During the 1877 Labor Riots, National Guard armories, or more accurately the spaces being rented, were at risk of attack by rioters. This created an atmosphere of extreme caution that persisted even decades later. In a publicly accessible, rented space, both volunteers and their state-funded weapons, ammunition, and other supplies were left vulnerable and at risk in the event of an uprising. It became increasingly important to guardsmen and their supporters to construct defensible and formidable armories. As a result, both state and private parties began investing in the construction of armories across the United States to safeguard men, weapons, and ammunition.

The castellated Gothic style—also known as “military Gothic”—became the preferred architectural style for armories in the United States.³⁰ A “castellated” style is distinguished by solid walls with battlements and towers; with characteristics that are castle-like. It was particularly popular in the 1880s to 1910s, and by the end of the nineteenth century, the castellated Gothic style was deemed to be the most appropriate for armories.³¹ Armories built in the style achieved the perfect balance between form, function, and symbol. Function wise, the style strategically provided the necessary defenses through thick stone walls, limited openings, and even functional battlements.

²⁶ Jean-Pierre Beugoms, “Armories,” The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/armories/>.

²⁷ Robert M. Fogelson, *America's Armories: Architecture, Society, and Public Order*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 60.

²⁸ Fogelson, 45.

²⁹ Ibid, 65.

³⁰ Ibid, 149.

³¹ Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. and Architectural and Historical Research, LLC, *Final Historic Context Study*, Kansas City, Missouri: Army National Guard, Washington D.C., 2008, p. 4-5.



Figure 16: Early photograph of the Keystone Battery "A" Armory.

Technological advancements in regard to iron and steel structural members allowed for the construction of large, open drill halls that could accommodate the Guard as they practiced various maneuvers.³² The application of medieval militaristic features characteristic of defensive architecture created a powerful symbol of strength, security, and formidability. This includes features such as battlements, towers, turrets, and narrow fenestrations – all features characteristic of medieval castles and other forms of fortification. The goal was to project strength and permanence while maintaining functionality, and according to the historians, the castellated Gothic style accomplished just that.³³

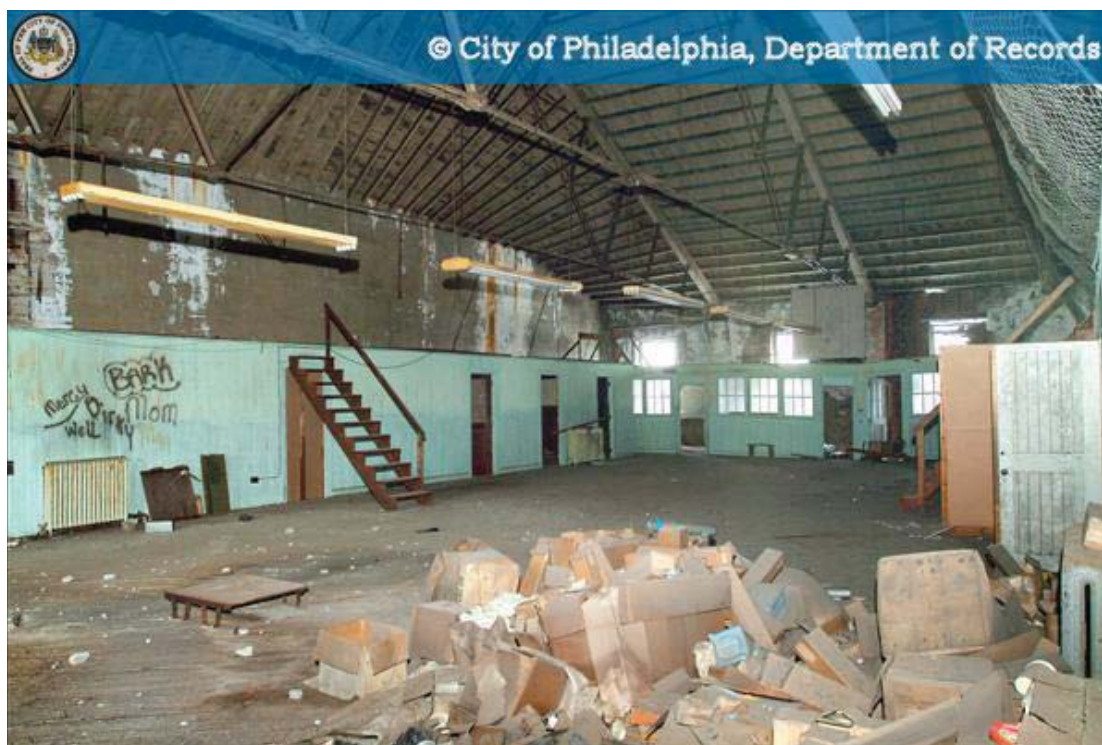


Figure 17: Interior photograph of drill hall at 4111 Mantua Avenue, 2005. DOR Archives. PhillyHistory.prg. Accessed 7 October 2019.

As the style spread, it was most commonly utilized in highly urbanized areas, such as Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, and Chicago. The Armory of the First City Troop Philadelphia Calvary, designed by Furness & Hewitt in 1874, was Philadelphia's first and one of the nation's earliest castellated armories (Figure 18). This armory was located at S. 21 and Ludlow Streets on the Southwest corner. In 1901, after the Furness & Hewitt armory suffered damage from a storm, the First Troop commissioned a new armory at Twenty-Third and Chestnut Streets. The firm Newman, Woodman, & Harris were hired to design the new structure, and once again the castellated Gothic style was chosen to be applied to the site, which still stands today, and is known as the 23rd Street Armory (Figure 19).³⁴

³² Fogelson, 152.

³³ Beugoms.

³⁴ Ibid.

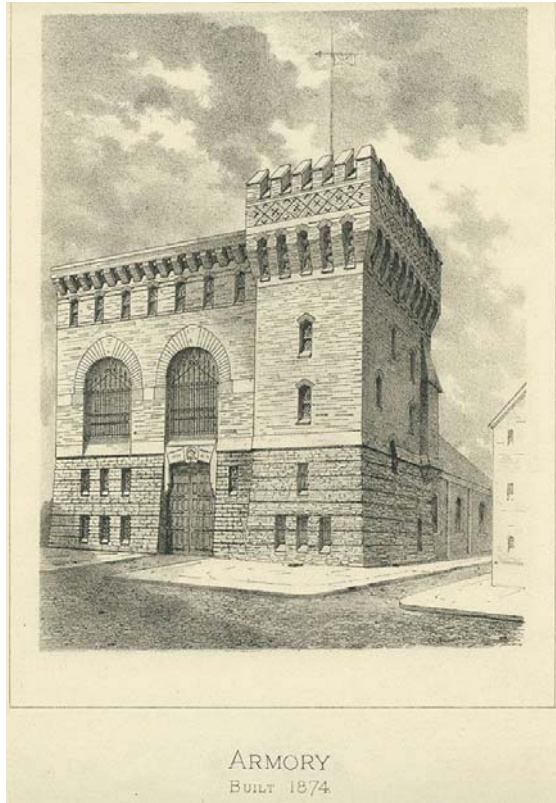


Figure 18: Lithograph of the Armory of the First City Troop Philadelphia Calvary. Free Library of Philadelphia Digital Collections.



Figure 19: First City Troop Philadelphia Calvary located at 23rd and Chestnut Streets.

Although 4111 Mantua was not the first castellated Gothic armory in the city, it is part of this larger national and local trend. Despite the alterations that have taken place over the years, 4111 Mantua is an excellent example of a castellated Gothic style armory. The former armory presents many of the signature attributes of the style. This includes the use of octagonal towers, lancet windows, stone base, and application of battlement although the latter has been encased. Elements of the castellated Gothic style are particularly relevant for militaristic structures. In the case of 4111 Mantua, these elements were likely not needed for direct defensive purposes; however, the symbolism of the elements translates to the function of the structure as an armory and training facility. The desire for a formidable base is apt in this case, as well, since members of Keystone Battery—the regiment that was responsible for the construction of the armory—were involved in the 1877 Labor Riots in Scranton and likely maintained a sense of worry that their own armory would be at risk in the event of future unrest.³⁵ The building was constructed as an armory, and at the end of the day it needed to have the trappings necessary for the security of those utilizing the space and the weapons and ammunition that would be stored there.

Conclusion

4111 Mantua Avenue has played an important role in the in the development of Belmont and the City of Philadelphia. Through its lifetime 4111 Mantua has adapted to its social context and been home to multiple community institutions. Its architecture and function as an armory represent a time of national and local civil unrest and the desire for defense and control. Regulation changes altered the operation and function of the National Guard, and as a result, the defense purpose of the property gave way to civic operations. Over its life the building was a social space for guardsmen and later youth of West Philadelphia under the NYA and Company M of the PDTC. The programs provided recreational, social, and educational opportunities to support the training, growth, and development of both black and white citizens who utilized the space. The architectural and social heritage of 4111 Mantua Avenue merit its addition to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

³⁵ Logan Howard-Smith and J.F. Reynolds, eds. *The History of Battery A (Formerly known as the Keystone Battery) and Troop A, N.G.P.* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The John C. Winston Co., 1912, p. 85.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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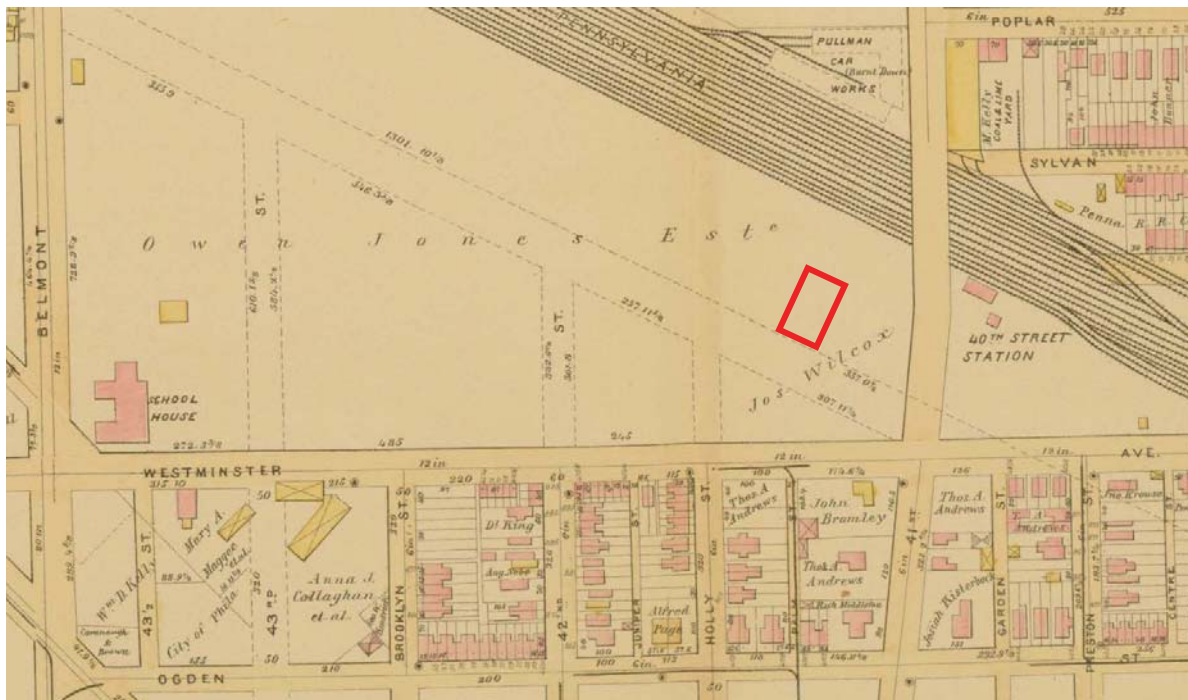
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Howard-Smith, Logan and J. F. Reynolds, eds. *The History of Battery A (Formerly known as the Keystone Battery) and Troop A, N.G.P.* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The John C. Winston Co., 1912. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433045224585;view=1up;seq=1>.

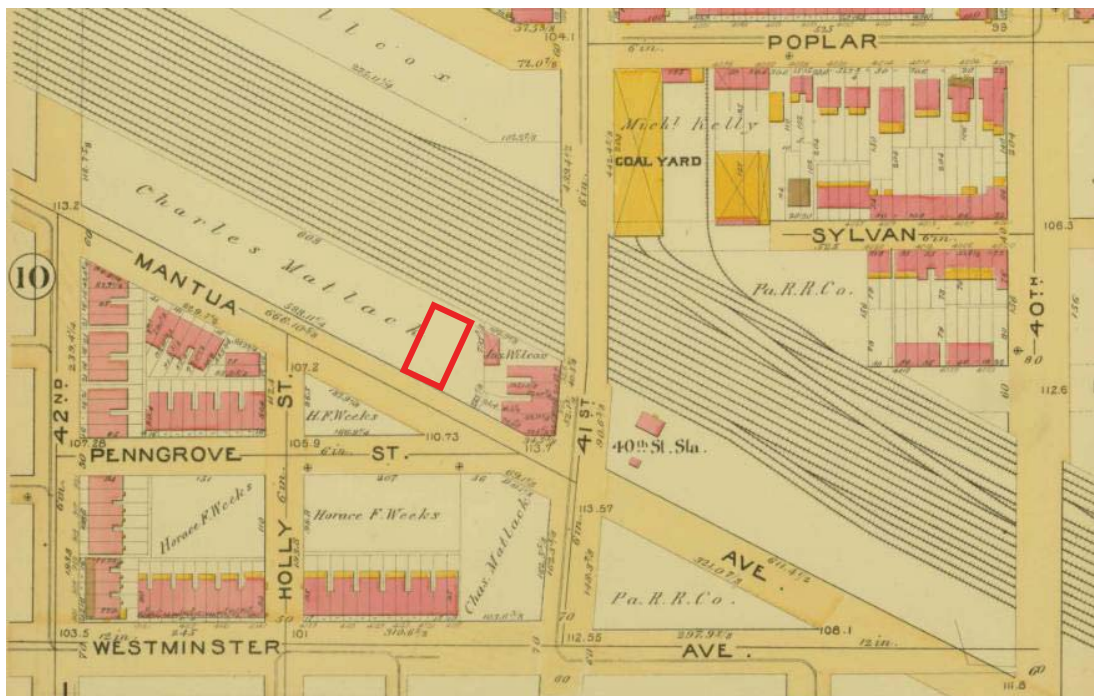
Roosevelt Institute Education. "National Youth Administration." Roosevelt Institute. August 30, 2011. <http://rooseveltinstitute.org/national-youth-administration/>.

APPENDICES

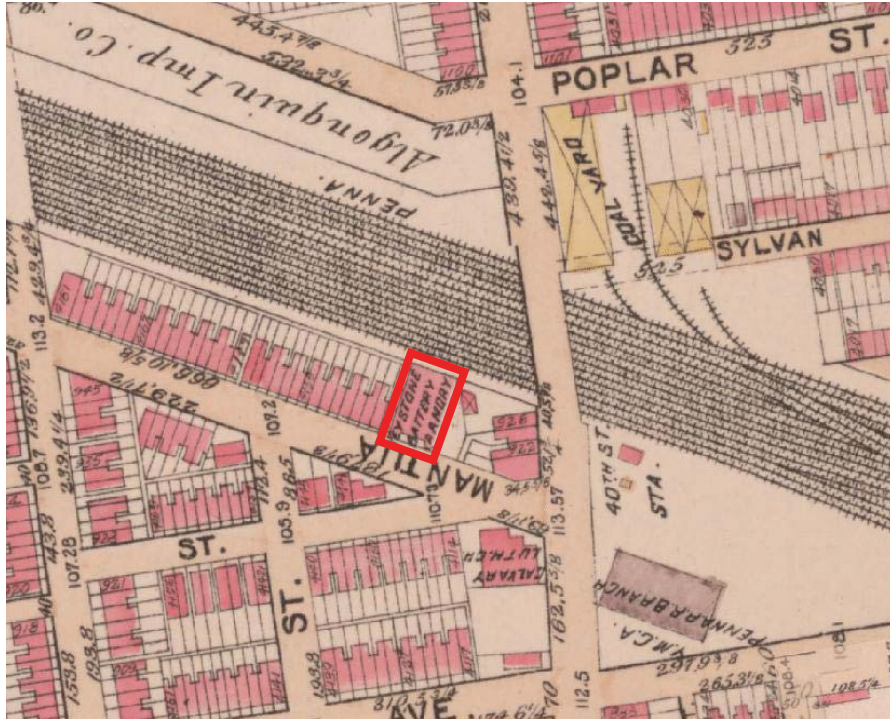
1. Maps



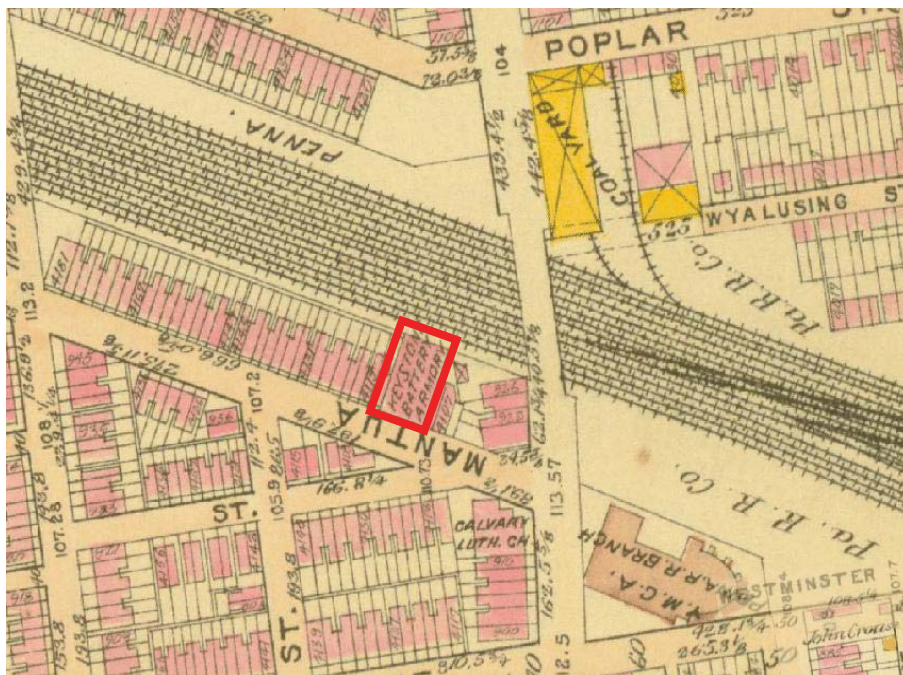
Map 1: 1886 atlas showing the open land next to the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, through which runs the plotted but not yet constructed Mantua Avenue, and the approximate location of 4111 Mantua Avenue. Source: William G. Baist, *Atlas of the 24th and 27th Wards, West Philadelphia—Plate 11*. Athenaeum of Philadelphia.



Map 2: 1892 atlas showing the construction of Mantua Avenue, and the approximate location of the soon-to-be-constructed Keystone Battery at 4111 Mantua Avenue. Source: W.S. Bromley, *Atlas of the 24th and 27th Wards, West Philadelphia—Plate 18*. Athenaeum of Philadelphia.



Map 3: 1895 Philadelphia Atlas, G.W. Bromley. Source: Athenaeum of Philadelphia.



Map 4: 1910 Philadelphia Atlas, G.W. Bromley. Note structures have now been built on both sides of 4111 Mantua. Source: Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

2. Chain of Title

August 17, 1892, Charles Matlack to Keystone Battery A. National Guard of Pa.

Property: Situate on the Northeasterly side of Mantua Avenue at a distance of 110' 8.75" Northwestwardly from the point of intersection of the Northeasterly side of the said Mantua Avenue with the North side of Pennsgrove Street in the Sixth Ward of the City of Philadelphia. Containing in front or breadth on said Mantua Avenue 65' and extending of that width in length or depth Northeastwardly between lines at right angles to the said Mantua Avenue 100'. Bounded Northeastwardly by ground of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Southeastwardly and Northwestwardly by ground now or formerly of the Algonquin Improvement Company and Southwestwardly by Mantua Avenue aforesaid.

Price: \$3,521

Source: Deedbook 222, Page 227 &c.

September 26, 1904, Sheriff James L. Miles to Annie E. Foote

Property: No changes.

Price: unknown

Source: Sheriff Deedbook 218, Page 35 &c.

Note: Record could not be found. Information was determined from a brief description in the 1914 deed of sale.

June 11, 1914, Annie E Foote to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by the Department of Military Affairs, acting by and through the Armory Board of the State of Pennsylvania

Property: No changes.

Price: \$11,500

Source: Deedbook ELT 338, Page 572 &c.

January 18, 1944, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by the Department of Military Affairs, acting by and through the Armory Board of the State of Pennsylvania to M. Schoenfeld Company, Inc.

Property: No changes.

Price: \$6,850

Source: Deedbook CJP 453, Page 389 &c.

November 7, 1960, M. Schoenfeld Company, Inc. to Harry Prosen

Property: No changes.

Price: \$24,900

Source: Deedbook CAB 1498, Page 138 &c.

May 10, 1982, Harry Prosen to Mary Stukes

Property: No changes.

Price: \$35,000

Source: Deedbook EFP 462, Page 504 &c.

June 9, 1989, Mary Stukes to Stukes Center Inc.

Property: No changes.

Price: \$1

Source: Deedbook FHS 1397, Page 312 &c.

March 18, 1996, Sheriff John D. Green; Stukes Center Inc. to City of Philadelphia

Property: No changes.

Price: \$800

Source: Deedbook JTD 486, Page 357 &c.

July 14, 2005, City of Philadelphia to Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia

Property: No changes.

Price: \$1

Source: Deed 51233079, Page 1 &c.

Note: Easement for sewer line. Must rehabilitate premise for low income, senior housing, or other uses approved by the Vacant Property Review Committee within 1 year unless otherwise approved; use the premise for a period of 6 years; and cannot sell property during 6 year period for a price greater than 15% above the sum of premise cost and initial rehab costs.

July 14, 2005, Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia to Belmont Affordable Housing, LP

Property: No changes.

Price: \$52,700

Source: Deed 51233080, Page 1 &c.

Note: Same requirements and easements as above.

October 4, 2005, Belmont Affordable Housing, LP to TJ Properties Inc.

Property: No changes.

Price: \$1

Source: Deed 51295521, Page 1 &c.