

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**15 JANUARY 2020, 9:30 A.M.
1515 ARCH STREET, ROOM 18-029
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR**

CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN AUDIO RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

| Committee Member | Present | Absent | Comment |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair | X | | |
| Suzanna Barucco | X | | |
| Jeff Cohen, Ph.D. | | X | |
| Bruce Lavery | X | | |
| Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D. | | X | |
| Douglas Mooney | X | | |

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner I
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons were present:

Safiyya Shabazz, MD
Katherine Missimer, Esq., Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP
Nadine Yackle, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP
R. Smith, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP
Jeff Nugent
Nancy Dickson
Don Ratchford
Walter Sommers
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
Sean McCauley, 807-11 Bainbridge Street
Leah Silverstein, Chestnut Hill Conservancy
Steven Peitzman
Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia
Ian Hegarty, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Matt Wysong, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
David Traub, Save Our Sites
Lori Salganicoff, Chestnut Hill Conservancy
James Maransky
Nancy Pontone

| ITEM: 5627-33 Germantown Ave MOTION: Designate, Criterion C; Add Criterion H; no to Criterion A MOVED BY: Lavery SECONDED BY: Mooney | | | | | |
|---|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE | | | | | |
| Committee Member | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair | X | | | | |
| Suzanna Barucco | X | | | | |
| Jeff Cohen | | | | | X |
| Bruce Lavery | X | | | | |
| Elizabeth Milroy | | | | | X |
| Douglas Mooney | X | | | | |
| Total | 4 | | | | 2 |

ADDRESS: 1801-03 N HOWARD ST

Name of Resource: The Star Carpet Mills

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Joseph Laragione

Nominator: Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller @phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1801-03 N. Howard Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Star Carpet Mills complex satisfies Criteria for Designation G and J. Under Criterion G, the nomination argues that the complex was “part of and related to a distinctive industrial area and block which should be preserved for its ties to Philadelphia’s manufacturing history, exemplifying the economic heritage of Kensington and Philadelphia.” Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that Star Carpet Mills represents an important and intact surviving example of a nineteenth-century industrial complex with an integrated dye house where ingrain carpets were manufactured, and contributes to the industrial history that defines the Kensington neighborhood.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1801-03 N. Howard Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J, but not G. Criterion G is intended to facilitate the designation of groups of discrete buildings that together form an ensemble, like rowhouses around a city square; it is not intended to facilitate the designation of sites related to broader neighborhood themes like textiles in Kensington or banking in Center City.

START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN AUDIO RECORDING: 01:02:35

PRESENTERS:

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nominator.
- No one represented the owner.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Beisert requested clarification on the staff recommendation related to Criterion G. He noted that the Wayne Junction Historic District was designed under Criterion G. He added that the criterion reads that a property is “part of” or “related to” and argued that a group of buildings could be “part of” and “related to” without needing to include the entire related area.
 - Ms. Cooperman responded that the question centers on contiguity or adjacency. She added that if the example is a square or a park, then adjacency to that square or park would be necessary. She contended that the criterion does not apply to scattered sites.
 - Mr. Beisert argued that if Wayne Junction is considered a distinctive area, then he would categorize Kensington and its textile mills as a distinctive area. He then commented that the criterion could use some further explanation.
 - Ms. Barucco noted that Wayne Junction is a historic district and contended that in the case of a district, Mr. Beisert would need to record all mills.
 - Mr. Beisert argued that the criterion reads is “part of or related to” and does not infer that the entirety of a Kensington mill district would need to be nominated.
 - Ms. Barucco countered that the nomination fails to present the larger area. The nomination, she continued, only states that Kensington was a mill area. She argued that the nomination needs to identify the related mills, which is why the criterion works better for a district nomination.
 - Ms. Cooperman agreed that the area needs to be defined, though it does not need to be included as an inventory. She reiterated that the mills would still be scattered sites and not contiguous.
 - Mr. Beisert requested that further clarity on the Criteria for Designation be provided in the future.
 - Ms. Cooperman noted that there is a difference between adjacent and thematic districts or areas. She suggested that identifying extant mill buildings in Kensington would lead to a thematic area but not a distinctive area with adjacency. She argued that properties require adjacency to create a distinctive area and to qualify for designation under Criterion G.
 - Mr. Farnham offered to review the notes from the time the ordinance was adopted, which could provide further insight into the intent behind the criteria.
- Mr. Lavery stated that the buildings create a nice, tight complex, noting that so many of the buildings survive.
 - Ms. Barucco agreed, adding that the complex retains a high degree of integrity.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Steven Peitzman stated that he has recently completed research in the Kensington area. He offered his support for the nomination. He later asked the staff to clarify the definition of certain Criteria for Designation and Period of Significance. He also requested clarification on designating a structure within a parcel as opposed to designating the entire parcel. He also raised issues with the inclusion of contributing and non-contributing structures within an individual designation.
- David Traub of Save Our Sites commented that a group of buildings could have architectural distinction. These buildings, he opined, embrace the courtyard at the center and form a very handsome complex.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- A property satisfies Criterion G when it is part of or related to group of contiguous properties that create a distinctive area and that should be preserved according an historic, cultural, or architectural motif.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- The complex of buildings represents the textile industry in Kensington, satisfying Criterion J.
- The nomination does not define a distinctive area of adjacent buildings of which the nominated property would be part of or related to; therefore, the nomination does not satisfy Criterion G.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION: The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1801-03 N. Howard Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J, and that the property should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

| ITEM: 1801-03 N Howard St MOTION: Designate, Criterion J MOVED BY: Barucco SECONDED BY: Lavery | | | | | |
|---|-----|----|---------|--------|--------|
| VOTE | | | | | |
| Committee Member | Yes | No | Abstain | Recuse | Absent |
| Emily Cooperman, chair | X | | | | |
| Suzanna Barucco | X | | | | |
| Jeff Cohen | | | | | X |
| Bruce Lavery | X | | | | |
| Elizabeth Milroy | | | | | X |
| Douglas Mooney | X | | | | |
| Total | 4 | | | | 2 |

ADDRESS: 1809-11 N HOWARD ST

Name of Resource: Clifton Mills Building Four

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Evergreen Brothers LP

Nominator: Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, megan.schmitt@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1809-11 N. Howard Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Clifton Mills Building Four satisfies Criteria for Designation G and J. Under Criterion G, the nomination argues that the subject property is “part of and related to a distinctive industrial area and block which should be preserved for its ties to Philadelphia’s manufacturing history, exemplifying the economic heritage of Kensington and Philadelphia.” Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the Clifton Mills Building Four is part of “an exemplary surviving textile mill complex that rose in Kensington’s textile district during an important period of economic and

ADDRESS: 1801-03 N HOWARD ST

Name of Resource: The Star Carpet Mills

Proposed Action: Designation

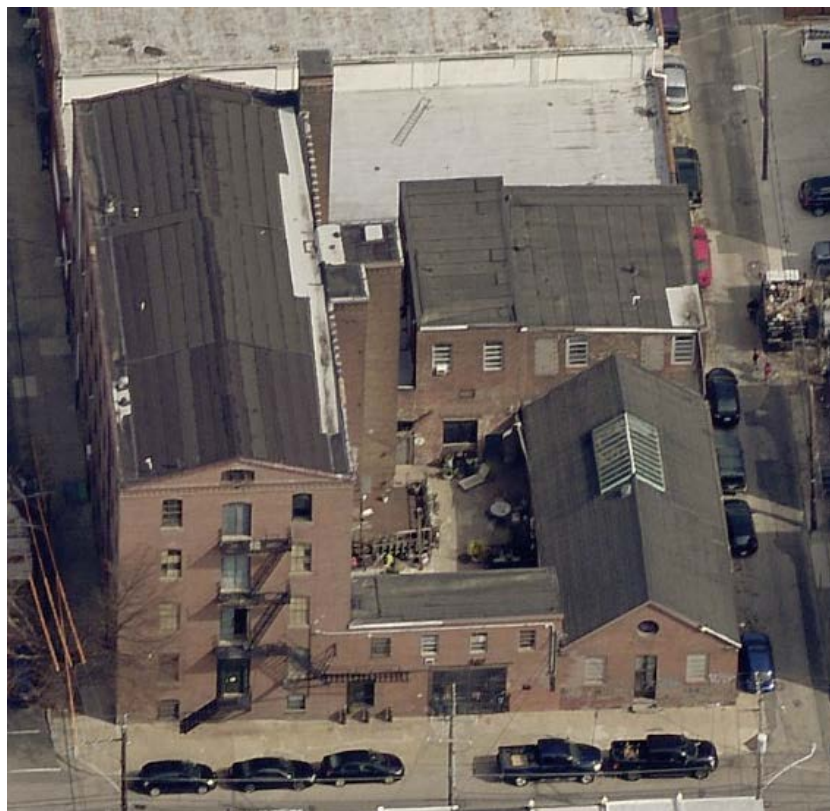
Property Owner: Joseph Laragione

Nominator: Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller @phila.gov, 215-686-7660

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1801-03 N. Howard Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Star Carpet Mills complex satisfies Criteria for Designation G and J. Under Criterion G, the nomination argues that the complex was “part of and related to a distinctive industrial area and block which should be preserved for its ties to Philadelphia’s manufacturing history, exemplifying the economic heritage of Kensington and Philadelphia.” Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that Star Carpet Mills represents an important and intact surviving example of a nineteenth-century industrial complex with an integrated dye house where ingrain carpets were manufactured, and contributes to the industrial history that defines the Kensington neighborhood.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1801-03 N. Howard Street satisfies Criterion for Designation J, but not G. Criterion G is intended to facilitate the designation of groups of discrete buildings that together form an ensemble, like rowhouses around a city square; it is not intended to facilitate the designation of sites related to broader neighborhood themes like textiles in Kensington or banking in Center City.



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: **1801-03 N. Howard Street**

Postal code: **19122**

Councilmanic District: **7**

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **The Star Carpet Mills**

Current/Common Name: **Unknown**

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: **Artist's Live/Work Space**

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

Period of Significance (from year to year): **c1880-82 to 1900**

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: **c1880-82**

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: **Unknown**

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: **Unknown**

Original owner: **Joseph Taylor**

Other significant persons: **Unknown**

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

9. NOMINATOR: KEEPING SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA

Author: **Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian**

Date: **17 September 2019**

Email: **keeper@keepingphiladelphia.org**

Street Address: **1315 Walnut Street, Suite 320**

Telephone: **717.602.5002**

City, State, and Postal Code: **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107**

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: September 17, 2019

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: December 12, 2019

Date of Notice Issuance: December 12, 2019

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: Joseph Laragione

Address: 531 N. 19th Street

City: Philadelphia

State: PA

Postal Code: 19130

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated

☐ Rejected

3/12/18

NOMINATION

FOR THE

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Figure 1. Top: Looking north at the subject property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.

THE STAR CARPET MILLS

ERECTED 1882

—

BY

JOSEPH TAYLOR & SON

—

**1801-03 N. HOWARD STREET
KENSINGTON
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**

*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Fall 2019
Star Carpet Mills, 1801-03 N. Howard Street, Kensington, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

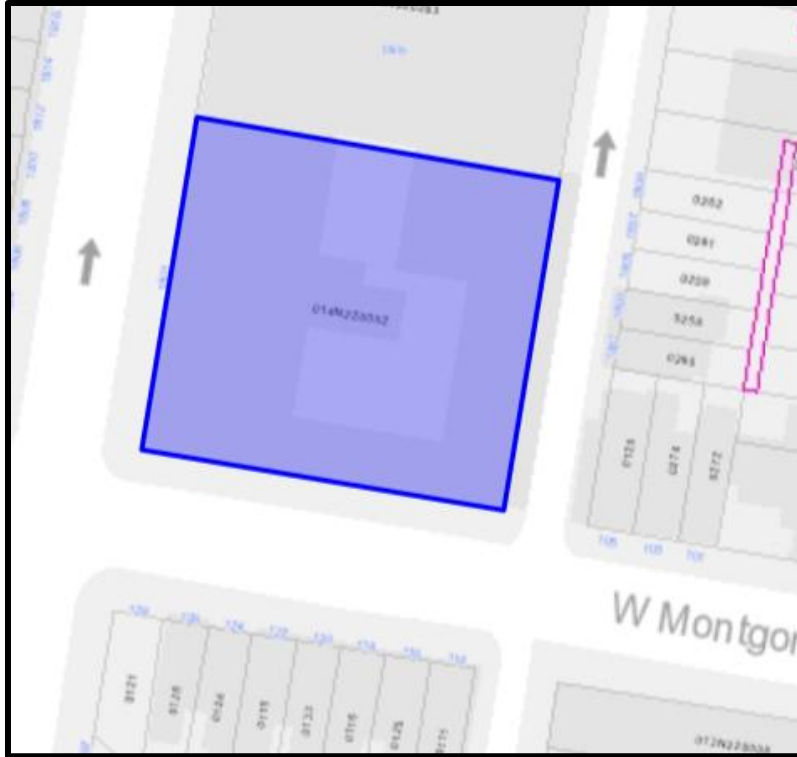


Figure 2. The boundary for the proposed designation is delineated in blue. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the designation of the subject property is as follows:

SITUATE in the City of Philadelphia, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, on the north side of Montgomery Avenue, east side of Howard Street and the west side of Hope Street. Containing in front or breadth on the said Montgomery Avenue one hundred ten feet and of that width extending in length or depth northward along said Howard Street and Hope Street one hundred feet.

BEING known as No. 1801-03 N. Howard Street.

Map Registry No. 014N220052

OPA Account No. 881076100



Figure 3. Left: Looking north at the subject property. Figure 4. Right: Looking west at the subject property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Known historically as the Star Carpet Mills, the subject property is a remarkably intact example of a small, but densely-built industrial complex in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia. In keeping with the ubiquitous built environment of Philadelphia, the five buildings are all of red brick construction: 1. Weaving Mill, 2. Stairway House, 3. Engine Room, 4. Boiler/Dryroom, 5. Dye Stuffs & Yarn Storage, 6. Dyehouse, and 7. Office.¹



Figure 5. Looking northwest at the south and east elevations of the buildings and structures that comprise the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert.

¹ The names used are based on the 1891 Hexamer General Survey of the Star Carpet Mills.



Figure 6. Top: The south elevations of Buildings 1, 7, and 6. Figure 7. Bottom: The south and east elevations of Building 1 and the south elevation of Building 7. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

BUILDING 1: WEAVING MILL

Standing at the northeast corner of Montgomery Avenue and Howard Street, Building 1: Weaving Mill (Building 1) is a large rectangular red brick factory that stands four stories tall with a raised basement and a low pitched gable roof. The south elevation faces onto Montgomery Avenue with a symmetrical fenestration of three apertures per floor consisting of a loading doorway flanked by single windows. The double doors of the loading bays on the second, third and fourth floor are historic and possibly original and feature iron fire escapes. Set within arched apertures, the windows are original, or period appropriate wooden sash fixtures with a three-over-three light configuration. The pediment is formed by a corbeled cornice that frames a small louvered opening at its center. The corbeled cornice continues from the south elevation to the east and west elevations. The east elevation is somewhat obscured from public right-of-way at its lower level but features a two-part fenestration. The south portion of the east elevation has a symmetrical fenestration of five windows on the second, third, and fourth floors. The windows are largely the same type as those on the south elevation. Separating the south and north portions

*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Fall 2019
Star Carpet Mills, 1801-03 N. Howard Street, Kensington, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

of the east front is the building known as Building 2: Stairway House, which is described below. The northern portion of the east facade contains a single bay of like-window openings. A brick stack appends the northeast corner of Building 1. The west elevation spans eleven bays wide and features a symmetrical arrangement of windows, including both the window type featured on the east and south elevations and less sensitive modern replacement windows in several openings. The north elevation is obscured at the first floor by the adjacent building and features just four small windows within the red brick expanse.



Figure 8. Top left: The southwest corner of Building 1. Figure 9. The south elevation of Building 1. Figure 10. Bottom left: The north and west elevations of Building 1. Figure 11. Bottom right: The west elevation of Building 1. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 12. Left: Looking west at Buildings 3, 4, and 5. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018. Figure 13. Right: Looking into the court at the base of Building 2. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

BUILDING 2: STAIRWAY HOUSE

Located within the court formed by all of the buildings of the subject property, Building 2: Stairway House (Building 2) is a stairway tower located off-center to the north along the east elevation of Building 1. The tower is entirely in keeping with the style of Building 1 and features at least one window opening on the upper floors.



Figure 14. Left: Looking north at Buildings 3, 4, and 5. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018. Figure 15. Right: Looking into the court at Building 3 and 4. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

BUILDING 3: ENGINE ROOM

Located at the north center of the court, Building 3: Engine Room (Building 3) is part of a larger, three-part structure that was historically separated into three rooms. The building stands two stories tall with a modest utilitarian façade, an irregular fenestration and a flat roof.



Figure 16. Left: Looking north at Buildings 3, 4, and 5. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.
 Figure 17. Right: Looking west at Buildings 3, 4, and 5. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

BUILDING 4: BOILER/DRYROOM

BUILDING 5: DYE STUFFS & YARN STORAGE

Adjacent at the north of Building 6, Buildings 4: Boiler/Dryroom (Building 4) and 5: Dye Stuffs & Yarn Storage (Building 5) are two parts of a three-part red brick building that stands two stories tall with flat roofs. The south elevation of Building 4 is largely obscured by Building 6 with just two window openings visible on the second floor. The primary (east) elevation spans four bays wide with four apertures at the first floor and six on the second. The first floor features a pedestrian door at the south end and three windows to the east of the door, one of which is partly bricked in and the other two featuring replacement window fixtures. The six windows on the second floor have been encased with cinder blocks. All these openings feature arched lintels.



Figure 18. Top: The east elevation of Building 5. Figure 19. Bottom: The east elevation of Buildings 6 and 5, as well as the south elevation of Building 5. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 20. The south elevation of Building 6. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

BUILDING 6: DYEHOUSE

Located at the southeast corner of the subject property, Building 6:Dyehouse (Building 6) is of red brick, masonry construction, standing one-and-one-half-stories with a gable-front facing onto Montgomery Avenue. Three bays in width, the south elevation features a central entrance with double wooden doors and a reconfigured transom. The central doorway is flanked by single large apertures with replacement window fixtures. At the center of the half story above the doorway is an oculus window. The gable front features a simple corbeled cornice.



Figure 21. Left: Looking east Building 2. Figure 22. Right: Looking west at Building 2. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.

BUILDING 7: OFFICE

Located at the center of the subject property facing onto Montgomery Avenue, Building 7:Office (Building 7) is a simple two-story structure of red brick, masonry construction. The building is largely characterized by an off-centered vehicle entrance that provides a vista into the industrial court that is characterized by red brick walls. The south elevation of the building includes a pedestrian door to the west of the vehicle passageway. The second floor of the south elevation features four symmetrically placed windows, featuring replacement windows.

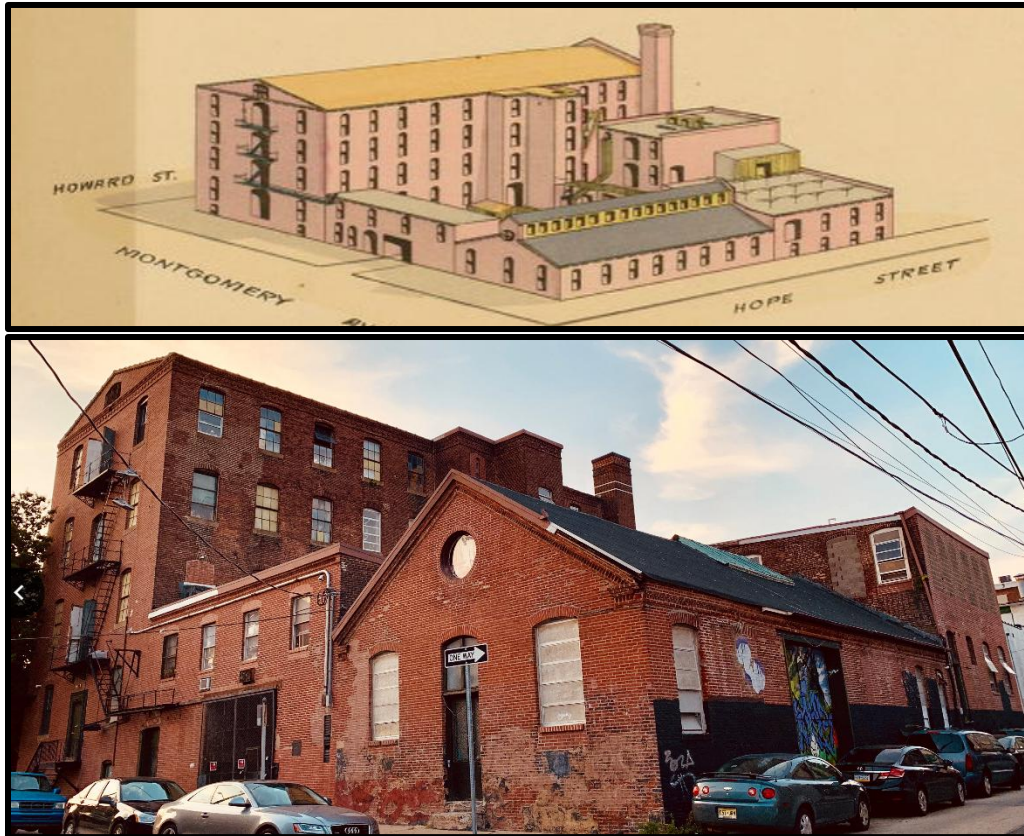


Figure 23. Top: Looking northwest, the 1891 Hexamer General Survey of the Star Carpet Mills. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Figure 24. Bottom: Looking west, the remarkably intact Star Carpet Mills. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Known historically as the Star Carpet Mills, the subject property at 1801-03 N. Howard Street is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The subject property satisfies the following Criteria for Designation, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

- (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; and
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.²

The period of significance dates from the time the Star Carpet Mills was first constructed as an ingrain carpet mill in 1882 through the time it closed as a manufacturer of ingrain carpets in 1900. While the firm would later reopen in 1901, changing its name and primary product in 1908, the primary period of significance dates to its use as a manufactory of ingrain carpets from c1880-82-1900.

² Criterion J is presented in two parts.

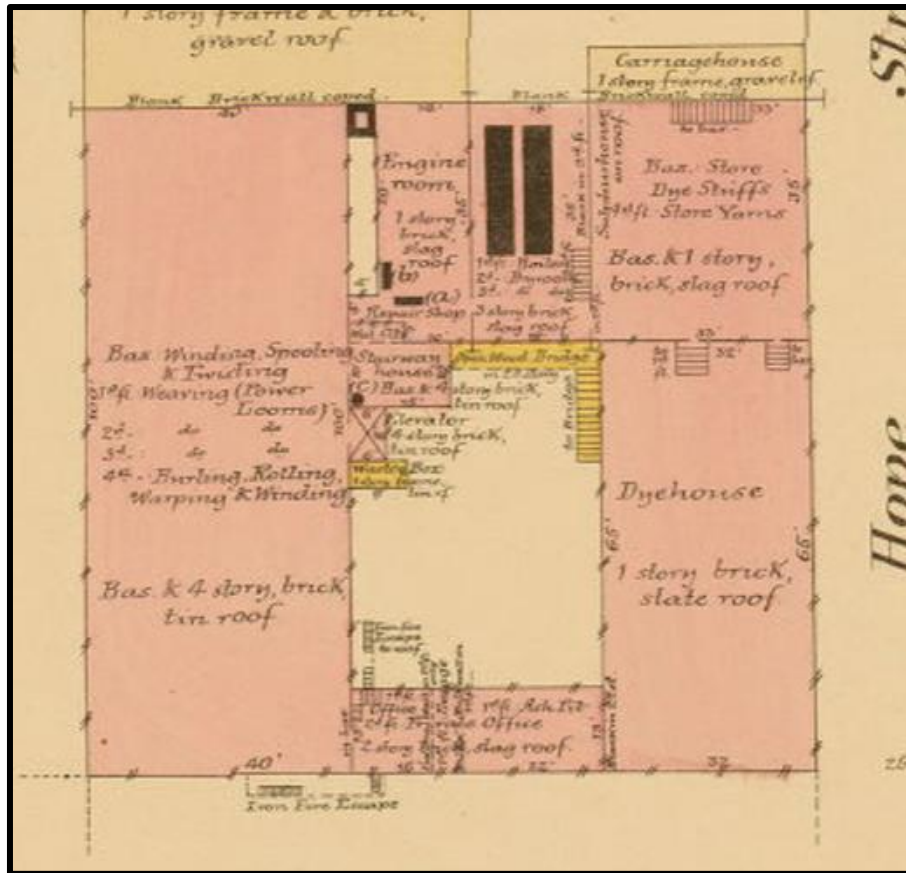


Figure 25. Bottom: The 1891 Hexamer General Survey of the Star Carpet Mills, the subject property, showing that all of the original buildings survive to-date. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

CRITERION J – PART 1

The Star Carpet Mills is a significant industrial complex representative of the history of the textile industry in Kensington from c1880-82 to 1900, exemplifying the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of this manufacturing community. Founded by Joseph Taylor in 1870, the Star Carpet Mills was eventually operated by William Taylor, which later became Joseph Taylor & Son when Joseph formed a partnership with his son William S. Taylor.³ The firm manufactured woven ingrain carpets at a time when the ingrain process accounted for 90% of the carpet industry and its products. On June 7, 1879, Joseph Taylor purchased the subject property, going on to improve the place with the “big Star Carpet Mill.”⁴ According to his 1900 obituary, the Star Carpet Mill was constructed in 1880; however, the Hexamer General Survey represents 1882 as the date that the buildings were completed. Nevertheless, Joseph Taylor built the subject property in between 1800 and 1882 specifically for weaving ingrain carpets.⁵ The mill was unusual at its time in Kensington and the larger realm of Philadelphia for having its

³ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 January 1882, 3.

⁴ “Joseph Taylor,” [Obituary], Unknown Publication, 1900. Source: Ancestry.com.

⁵ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 January 1882, 3.

own dyehouse, which represented about 15% of carpet manufacturers, as dyeing was usually outsourced during the late-nineteenth century.⁶

Like many mills of the period, the firm and 26 others were subject to a large strike in 1885.⁷ In this instance, as with most, it was about the reduction of wages. Both the Dornan Brothers mill at Howard and Oxford Streets, and Joseph Taylor's mill were regularly quoted in newspaper articles about these labor issues.⁸ The Star Carpet Mill was the site of several labor meetings, where representatives were provided financial information on the cost of producing carpets. These representatives were elected by a labor assembly of nearly 3,400 weavers.⁹ A few of the mills, including Taylor's, offered a compromise on wages, but this did not satisfy all of the weavers. In fact, when a "loom fixer and his wife" returned to work at the Star Carpet Mills in late February 1885, a mob of "about two hundred men, women, and children" congregated outside the mill, questioning the loyalties of the couple with loud slurs.¹⁰ While the 1885 strike would ultimately be resolved, this and other labor events are an important part of the subject property's representation of the economic, political, and social heritage of Kensington's working class community in the late nineteenth century, further justifying a designation under Criterion J.

By 1891, the firm was employing approximately 200 people at the subject property. The details of how each space was used is illustrated in Figure 25 in the 1891 Hexamer General Survey floorplan.¹¹ While the Star Carpet Mills was a prosperous business, the Taylors were not without their fair share of labor issues. After one strike in 1895, Joseph and William S. Taylor conceded to a more humane schedule and a restoration of previous wages for their workers in August of that year.¹² This is one of several labor issues that the Taylors dealt with that relate to the larger political and social history of the period. Historically, most of the carpet mills were centered in West Kensington; however, many of these facilities have been demolished and/or greatly reduced in size over the years. The subject property is a rare surviving carpet mill complex representing the buildings and structures required to manufacture ingrain carpets during the Victorian era when this product represented the primary carpet type produced in Philadelphia.

⁶ *Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia* (Wallingford, PA: Oliver Evans Press, 1990).

⁷ "Weavers Still on Strike," *The Times*, 7 January 1885, 1.

⁸ "Accepting Reductions," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 January 1885, 2.

⁹ "Weavers and Manufacturers Confer.," *The Times*, 14 February 1885, 2.

¹⁰ "Labor Troubles," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 24 February 1885, 3.

¹¹ "Joseph & William S. Taylor, Star Carpet Mills, Plate 2492," Hexamer General Surveys, Volume 1. (E. Hexamer, 1891). <http://www.philageohistory.org/rdic-images/view-image.cfm/HGSv26.2492> Accessed on 13 September 2019.

¹² *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 August 1895, 12.

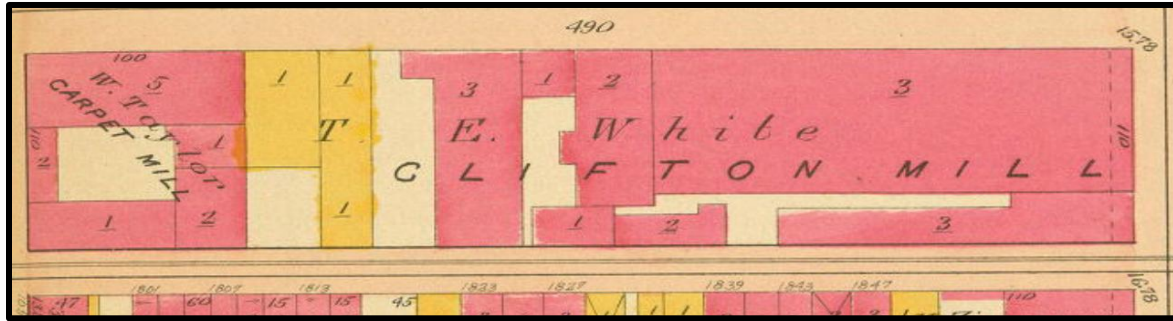


Figure 26. 1904 Atlas by Smith, showing the subject property on left. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

By 1850, Philadelphia was one of the world's leading manufacturers of textiles with a total product value of \$65 million, an impressive record, then generated by approximately 326 textile firms comprised of 12,369 employees collectively. Kensington was home to 126 of these firms, representing roughly thirty-nine percent of the local industry.¹³ As ascertained from the 1860 Federal Census, the value of Philadelphia's "textile manufacture had grown to \$135 million with 464 firms and 18,521 employees."¹⁴ It was the success of this decade followed by the 1860s that precipitated the establishment of the Star Carpet Mills by the Taylor brothers. In fact, the growth of the carpet industry in Philadelphia was remarkable with an escalation from 123 firms in 1860 to 231 in 1870, a shift in business made possible by technological advancements. This also meant an increased need for workers—2,382 in 1860 with an increase to 4,713 in 1870.¹⁵

By 1882, Lorin Blodget had completed his *Census of Manufacturers of Philadelphia*, which included a study of the textile industry. The neighborhood of Kensington was leading nearly every sector of Philadelphia's textile industry in terms of the number of firms and related employees in its boundaries. Kensington's carpet sector had the largest number of firms city-wide at 192, employing 7,044 people in the neighborhood. Northeast Philadelphia came in second place with 55 carpet manufacturers, mostly in and around Frankford.¹⁶ Also interesting to note, Irish-born carpet manufacturers made up the largest ethnic group of the sector city-wide with 20 of 79.¹⁷

¹³ Logan I. Ferguson. *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: Powers & Company, Inc., 2012).

¹⁴ *Philadelphia Board of Trade*, 15–20.

¹⁵ Philip B. Scranton, *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884–1984* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia College of Textiles & Science, 1984), 304.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 339.



Figure 27. Joseph Taylor (1816-1900), Carpet Manufacturer, Kensington. Source: Ancestry.com.

Incidentally, the founder and primary owner of the subject property and its Star Carpet Mills was Joseph Taylor (1816-1900), a native of Donegal County, Ireland, who arrived at Philadelphia in 1848.¹⁸ Thomas Taylor (1818-1904) followed his brother from Ireland via Canada to Philadelphia, where he too established a carpet mill—the former Diamond Carpet Mills (demolished) at Howard Street and Lehigh Avenue.¹⁹ Irish-born carpet manufacturers tended to live and establish businesses in clusters, Joseph Taylor being one of several quartered in West Kensington.²⁰ This cultural and social phenomenon had significant economic impacts that helped make Kensington a textile district and an ecosystem.

The story of Joseph Taylor is the type that led so many to emigrate to the United States. Having first established a grocery business that was “successful in a small way,” he eventually entered the textile industry, as a manufacturer of ingrain carpets.²¹ In 1868, Joseph Taylor purchased ten

¹⁸ *Registers of Vessels Arriving at the Port of New York from Foreign Ports, 1789-1919*. Microfilm Publication M237, rolls 1-95. National Archives at Washington, D.C.

¹⁹ “Death of Thomas Taylor,” *The American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*. (Philadelphia and New York City: 10 October 1904), 59.

²⁰ Scranton, *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984*, 341.

²¹ “Deaths,” *Textile World*, 1900, 888. Additional biographical information on Joseph Taylor: Joseph Taylor and his wife Mary had four known children, including Robert Taylor, who was a “carpet weaver” for his father by the age of 19. At the time he built the subject property, the family resided at 2030 N. Howard Street in Kensington.

hand looms from Robert Horner, a carpet manufacturer, and commenced his business in the old Horner Mill on Holman Street. After two years, he found these quarters too small and built his own mill at 2022-24 Hope Street, installing ten Murkland power looms. Remaining at this location for nine years, the business expanded over time to include 45 looms. Joseph Taylor then “built the big Star Mills at the corner of Howard Street and Montgomery Avenue.” Construction was complete between 1880 and 1882. Joseph Taylor & Son was formed by 1891, the textile scion being his son William S. Taylor (1853-1913).²² The company operated as one of the prominent ingrain carpet weavers in Kensington through the end of the nineteenth century. On April 17, 1899, Joseph Taylor sold the Star Carpet Mill to his son William S. Taylor, a decision made due to his breakdown in health. William S. Taylor would continue in the family business until he sold the property to Andrew Cochran on September 22, 1900, only to buy it back roughly one year later April 12, 1901.²³ As the nineteenth century came to a close, progress and technology in the field of textile machinery eventually made ingrain weaving an unprofitable enterprise. Despite the temporary removal from the business and ownership of the subject property, William S. Taylor not only repurchased the Star Carpet Mills but reentered the business in April 1901.²⁴ The firm almost immediately “dispensed with the weaving department” and recalibrated to operating dyehouse for the purpose of dyeing carpet yarns used in manufacture. Space in the subject property was also leased to Isaac Lockhart. By 1908, the firm was renamed the Star Carpet Mills and Dye Works.²⁵

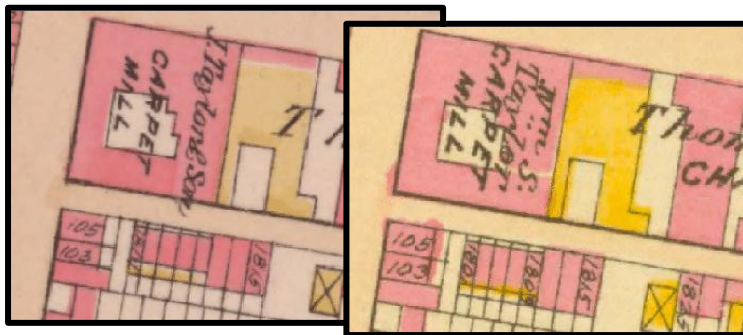


Figure 28. Left: The 1895 Philadelphia Atlas by G.W. Bromley, showing the subject property, labeled “J. Taylor & Son.” Figure 29. Right: The 1910 Philadelphia Atlas by G.W. Bromley, showing the subject property, labeled “William S. Taylor.” Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

The primary area of the subject property’s historical significance is embodied in fact that it was designed and served as an owner-occupied carpet mill, where a specific type of ingrain carpet manufacturing took place in the last decades of the nineteenth century. While pre-Civil War Kensington and Philadelphia as a whole was home to a great number of small textile producers, many of these businesses grew over time, and mechanization took over large aspects of the manufacturing process. Those family businesses that were able to adapt and modernize went on

²² “Joseph Taylor,” [Obituary], Unknown Publication, 1900. Source: Ancestry.com

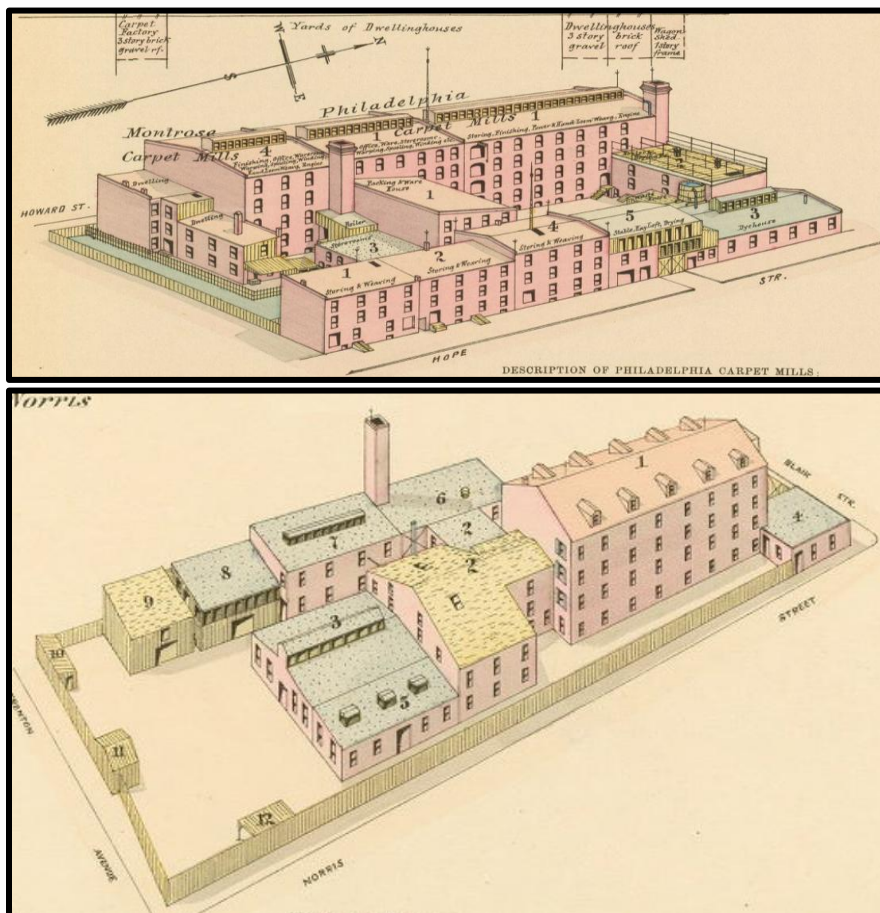
²³ <http://epay.phila-records.com/phillyepay/eagleweb/historicalIndex.jsp>

²⁴ *American Carpet and Upholstery Journal*, v. 20, 1902, 66.

²⁵ *Textile World Record*, v. 35, 1908, April-September.

to capitalize on the use of these new means and methods, though their operations required additional space for modern equipment and machinery that was often too cumbersome for their small to medium size urban or even semi-urban dwellings. Firms like Joseph Taylor & Son were able to build small mills and, eventually, larger ones like the subject property, employing approximately 200 hands by 1891.²⁶

The subject property is an important surviving representative of this type of industrial complex that served an ingrain carpet manufacturer of the late nineteenth century, and later as a dyeworks for carpets. The localized distinction of Kensington as a great textile center and district was a boon to the economic, social, and historical heritage of the local community and the larger industrial prowess of the City of Philadelphia—then known as the “Workshop of the World.” In 2012, the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: *Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia* provided an inventory of forty-four of the most notable surviving properties of the textile industry, in which the subject property proves to among the most intact ingrain carpet mills within the larger context of Kensington.



²⁶ “Brighton Mills, Lewis S. Cox & Co., Plate 1832,” Hexamer General Surveys, Volume 19. (E. Hexamer, 1884). <https://www.philageohistory.org/rdic-images/view-image.cfm/HGSv19.1832> Accessed on 9 September 2019.

Figure 30. Top: The 1879 Hexamer General Survey of the Philadelphia Carpet Mills (demolished) located between Howard and Hope Streets above York in Kensington. Like the subject property, this complex is based on a large two-part mill with numerous ancillary buildings and structures. Figure 31. Bottom: The 1875 Hexamer General Survey of the Standard Carpet Mills on the north side of Norris Street between Trenton Avenue and Blair Street. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

CRITERION J – PART II & CRITERION G

The Star Carpet Mills is significant under Criterion J as a representative of an era in the Kensington neighborhood that was dominated by factory complexes, including workshops, mills, and plants that formed an indefatigable textile ecosystem. The subject property is also significant under Criterion G as part of and related to a distinctive industrial area and block which should be preserved for its ties to Philadelphia’s manufacturing history, exemplifying the economic heritage of Kensington and the City of Philadelphia.

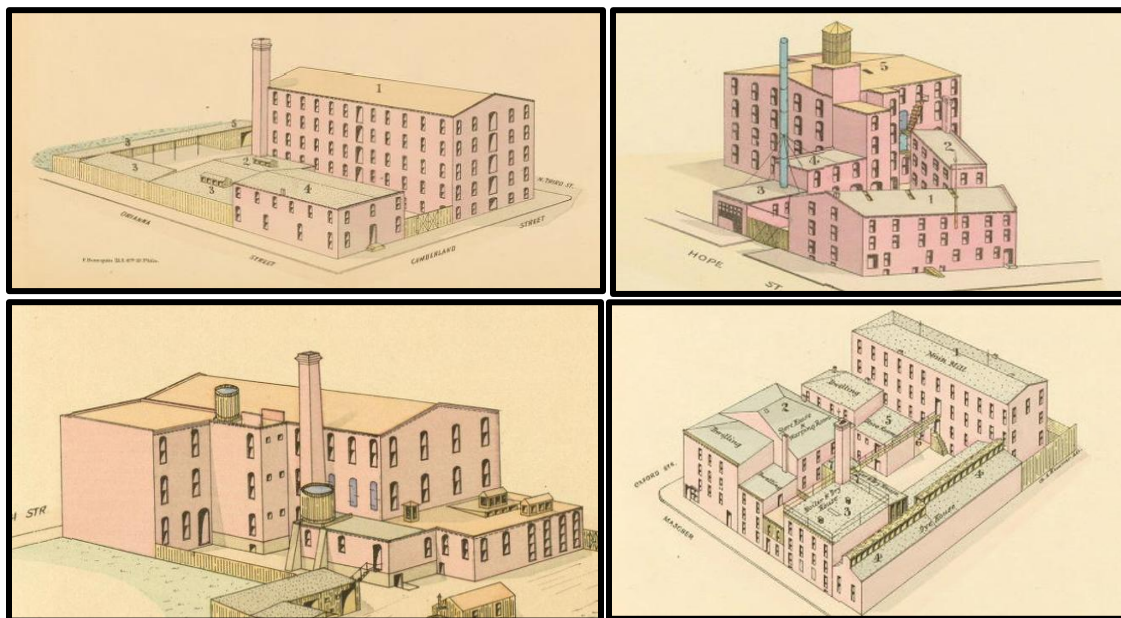


Figure 32. Top left: 1882 Hexamer General Survey of the Hugh French & Bro. Mill (demolished), manufacturers of Carpets and Upholstery Goods, between Orianna and N. Third Streets above Cumberland. Figure 33. Top right: The 1896 Hexamer General Survey of the Centennial Carpet Mills (demolished) located on Columbia Avenue and North Front Street. Figure 34. Bottom left: The 1883 Hexamer General Survey of the Brighton Mills (demolished), previously located on the north side of Dauphin Street between Eighth and Ninth. Figure 35. Bottom right: The 1875 Hexamer General Survey of the Oxford Carpet Co. (demolished) at Oxford and Mascher Streets. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

Criterion J. In the nomination for the Wayne Junction Historic District, Kim Broadbent Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner II for the Philadelphia Historical Commission, categorizes industrial buildings as follows:

Industrial manufacturers in Philadelphia can be divided into three types of factories: workshops, mills and plants.²⁷

²⁷ Chantry, Kim Broadbent. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Wayne Junction Historic District*. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Historical Commission, 2018), 36.

The industrial buildings, structures, and features of the subject property comprise what Chantry describes as a “mill,” being a familiar variety that features a principal mill building supported by several smaller buildings and structures set in a densely built block created by the rigid Philadelphia gridiron. This property type was not one that generally consisted of buildings or collections of buildings and structures with unique architectural distinction nor aesthetic achievement, but were rather utilitarian and representative of a form, style, and overall tone that represents Philadelphia’s industrial Victorianism and the urban landscape that this incredibly productive period created. These buildings are largely of load-bearing red brick masonry construction with gabled and shed roofs. The facades feature monotonous, symmetrical or semi-symmetrical fenestrations with varying window sizes. In some cases, these symmetrical fenestrations are interrupted by the enlarged or reduced openings and/or additions for the purpose of accommodating a change in use. Overall, these buildings have a utilitarian appearance with an occasional architectural detail articulated in cornices, lintels, and pilasters that are usually part of continuous brickwork. While these buildings are not formally stylized, they are set in and/or part of complexes of buildings that often developed over time, creating a built environment that emulates an old industrial village that has grown over time to conform to a larger, impressive urban landscape. These mills show the mark of their period of construction in their form, materials, massing, and overall simplicity that speaks to a significant period of the commercial and industrial heritage of the city.

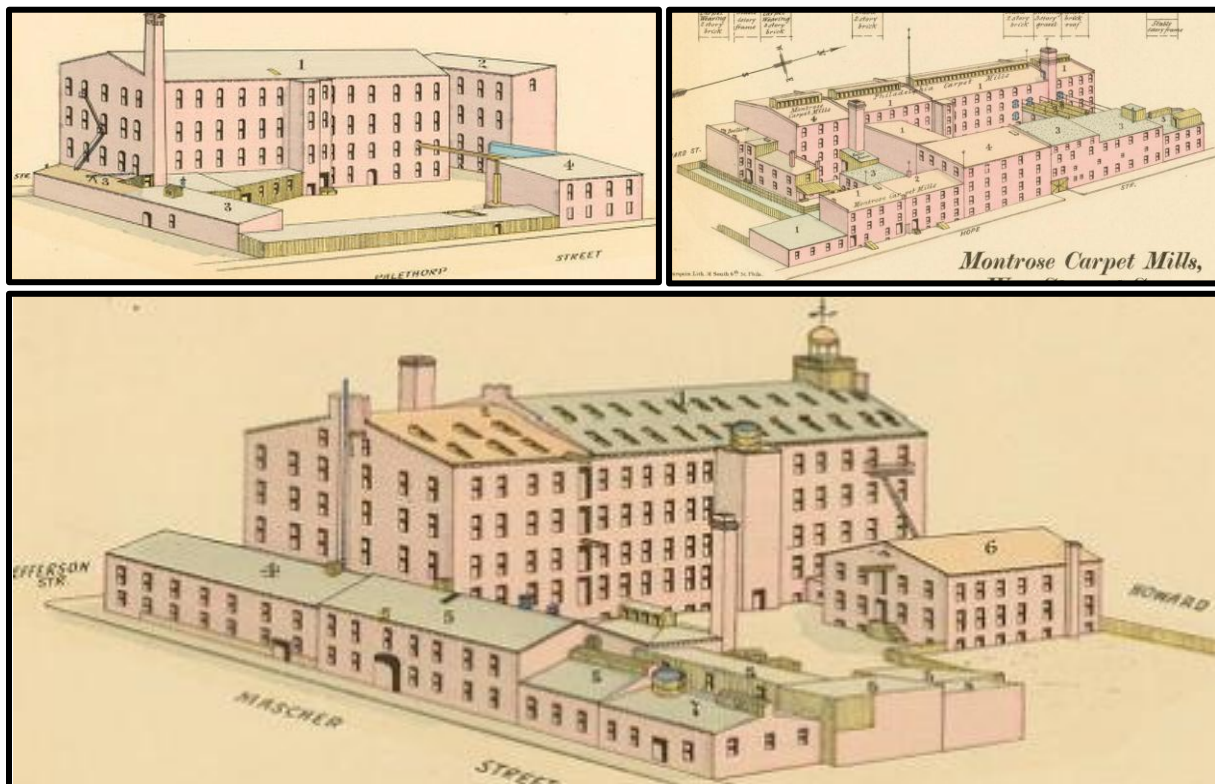


Figure 36. Top left: The 1887 Hexamer General Survey of the Somerset Carpet Mills (extant in part), located between Palanthorp and Hancock Streets north of Lehigh Avenue. Figure 37. Top right: The 1881 Hexamer General Survey of the Montrose Carpet Mills (demolished) and the Philadelphia Carpet Mills (demolished), located in the 2400 block of N. Howard Street at the west and N. Hope Street at the east. Figure 38. Bottom: The 1885 Hexamer

General Survey of the Arrott Steam Power Mills Co. (demolished), formerly located on the south side of Jefferson Street between Howard and Mascher Streets. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

Figures 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 38 serve as a collective illustration of the mill complexes that characterized the built environment of Kensington and Philadelphia in the nineteenth century, most of which are no longer extant.



Figure 39. Looking east at the 1800 Block of Howard Street, including both the Star Carpet Mills and the Clifton Mills, which comprises an unusually intact and distinctive industrial block in Kensington. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.

Criterion G. Beyond the Star Carpet Mills as a property type, the buildings and structures that comprise the resource are part of and related to a uniquely intact industrial block in the textile district of Kensington. The subject property stands as a large and distinctive presence at the south end of the block, and another uniquely intact mill is located at the center and north end, the former Clifton Mills. Both complexes mirror their nineteenth-century Hexamer General Surveys almost precisely—building and structure by building and structure, being among just a few blocks in the neighborhood that maintain their nineteenth-century industrial appearance and character with no major alterations in building form and/or losses of entire permanent buildings.

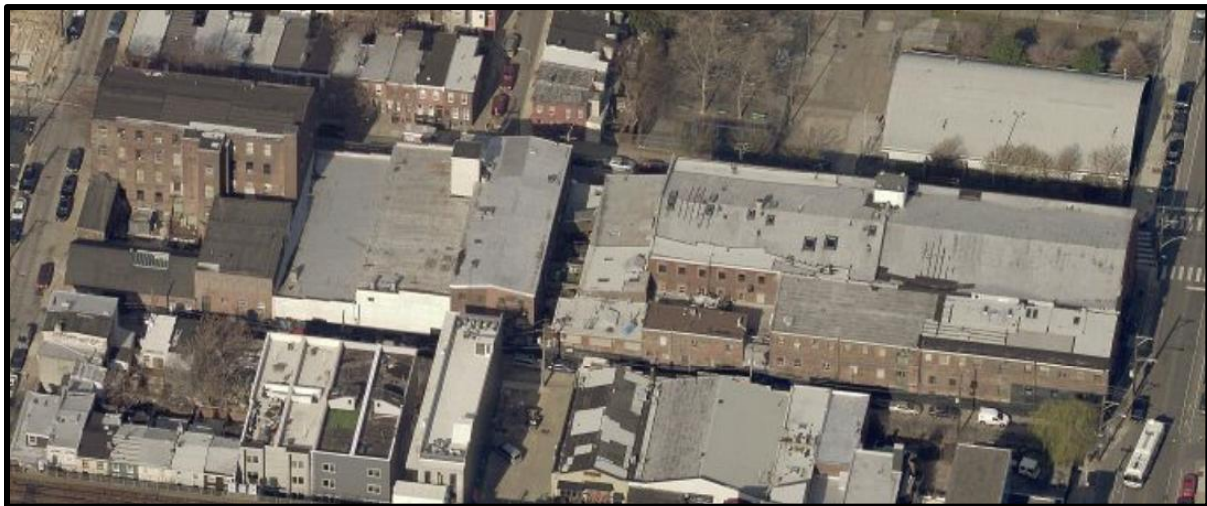


Figure 40. Looking west at the 1800 Block of Hope Street, including both the Star Carpet Mills and the Clifton Mills, which comprises an unusually intact and distinctive industrial block in Kensington. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2018.

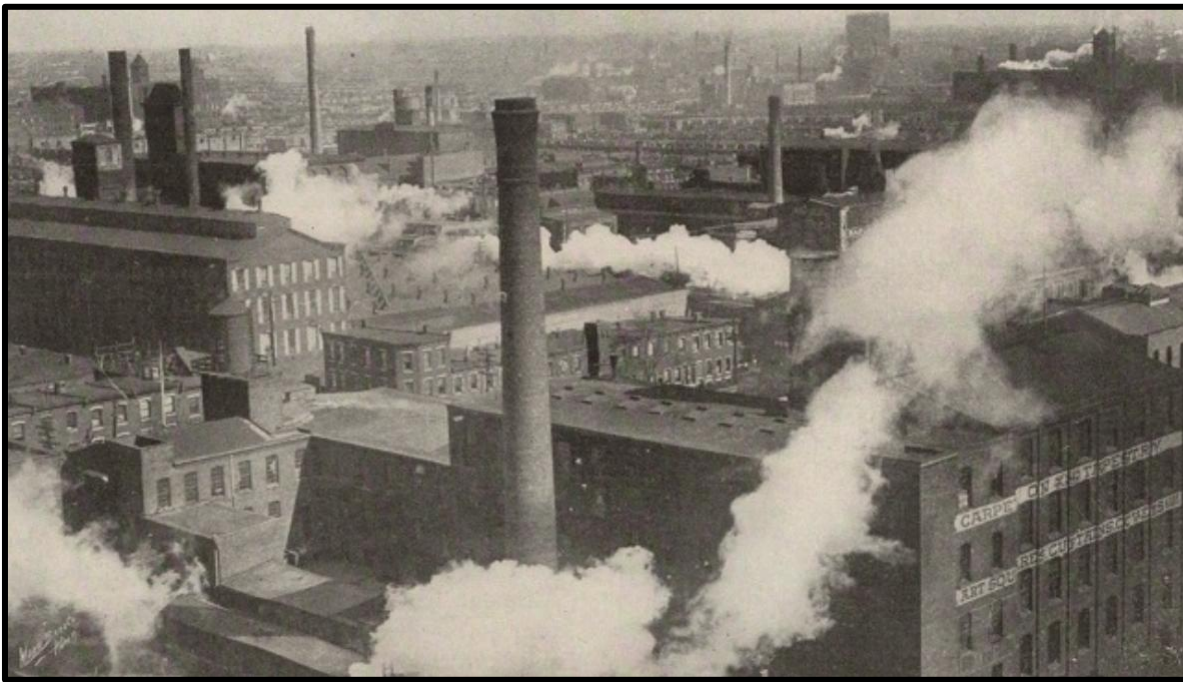


Figure 41. The Industrial District of Kensington, c. 1900. Source: Kensington.”
<http://www.workshopoftheworld.com/kensington/kensington.html>. Accessed on 17 December 2011.

HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE EARLY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF KENSINGTON

Within the larger context of Philadelphia as the former “Workshop of the World,” Kensington was one of the primary neighborhoods of working-class Philadelphia, home to both native and immigrant laborers and workers residing in close proximity to their work sites. The industrial history of Kensington no doubt has its roots in some eighteenth-century enterprises, but its primary period of development was in the nineteenth century. The first of Kensington’s industries were chemical works, glass factories, machine shops, potteries, and wagon manufactories. While much of the city’s nearby industrial development began closer to water, near the Delaware River, the Canal, and Pegg’s Run, Kensington hosted some of these early enterprises west of North Front Street in the area north of Girard Avenue and south of Lehigh. However, no industry would come to define the industrial history of Kensington like that of textiles.

HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF KENSINGTON’S TEXTILE INDUSTRY

While the manufacture of textiles was a known and viable industry dating back to the colonial period, Philadelphia’s greatest period of development and productivity as a textile powerhouse took place in the nineteenth century, when Kensington continued to evolve as one of the city’s most important industrial neighborhoods. Located on the cusp of Northern Liberties and Kensington, “the first mill of any considerable size to engage in textile manufacture” was the Globe Mill, which was established in 1804 by Seth Craige at Germantown and West Girard Avenues.²⁸ By the late 1820s, there were approximately 104 textile firms in Philadelphia,

²⁸ Oberholtzer, Ellis Paxson, *Philadelphia: A History of the City and Its People* (Philadelphia: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912) 1; 441.

employing about 9,500 people.²⁹ The population of Kensington at that time was approximately 7,259, a population statistic that would double to approximately 16,000 in 1830.³⁰ This population boom is invariably linked to the advent of Kensington's "specialized cottage industry" for the production of textiles, a system where each part or step of the manufacturing process was completed by "independent, partial-process" component entities and firms.³¹ This great period of industrial progress led to the establishment of Philadelphia's first hosiery factory by Martin Landenberg in 1843. The first patents for knitting machinery in the United States followed in 1850, issued in Philadelphia.³² Incidentally, it was Philadelphia's position as a manufacturer of textile machinery that led to the construction of the subject property c1880-82.

As part of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: *Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia*, completed in 2012, Logan I. Ferguson, of Powers & Company, Inc., summarized the city's position as a textile manufacturing center:

By the mid-19th century, the textile industry in greater Philadelphia achieved an unprecedented level of prominence and its title as the "world largest and most diversified textile center."³³

In 1850, Kensington was home to approximately 126 textile firms, which represented roughly thirty-nine percent of the larger \$65 million industry in Philadelphia, then employing a reported 12,369 people.³⁴ Five years later in 1855, "the value of the textile fabric in Philadelphia was more than all of the city and state of New York and more fabric was produced than in any other city in the United States." Textile production had also become one of the city's top five industries, valued at roughly \$23.5 million, with steel production trailing behind at approximately \$14.7 million. Another comparison was the manufacture of clothing and apparel, valued at \$21.4 million, while wood and publishing and bookbinding were valued at \$6.1 million and \$6.4 million respectively.³⁵

According to the 1860 Federal Census, the value of Philadelphia's "textile manufacture had grown to \$135 million with 464 firms and 18,521 employees."³⁶ This also reflects the largest increase in Philadelphia's population, growing from 121,376 in 1850 to 565,529 in 1860, representing a 365 percent boom. In the decades to follow between 1860 and 1920, the

²⁹ Russell F. Weigley, ed. *Philadelphia, A 300-Year History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 275, 488.

³⁰ *Kensington: A City within a City* (Philadelphia: Keighton Printing House, 1891), ix.

³¹ Scranton, *The Philadelphia System of Textile Manufacture, 1884-1984*, 28.

³² J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia: 1609-1884* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Co., 1884), 2306-07.

³³ Logan I. Ferguson. *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: Powers & Company, Inc., 2012).

³⁴ Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism*, 182.

³⁵ *Philadelphia Board of Trade*, 15-20.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-20.

population continued to grow with a rate that fluctuated between seventeen to twenty-five percent.

In the book *Workshop of the World*, the neighborhood and its industrial establishments are described in detail:

The textile trades came to dominate Kensington by the mid-nineteenth century. The genesis of the ingrain carpet industry was centered around Oxford and Howard Streets in West Kensington, where some mills still stand. Other early carpet mills in this area are now gone, but they included James Gay's Park Carpet Mill, the Dornan Brothers' Monitor Carpet Mill, William J. Hogg's Oxford Carpet Mill, the Stinson Brothers' Columbia Carpet Mill, and the carpet mills of Horner Brothers, and Ivins, Dietz, and Magee (later of Hardwick and Magee). The earliest carpet factories operated mainly through "outwork" the owners providing yarns to workers who hand loomed the goods in their homes. As these small textile concerns grew, their owners built small factories in East Kensington. Associated textile trades, such as dye works, yarn factories, woolen and worsted mills, cotton mills, and even textile machinery factories were often located in the same building or complex. After the 1860s, Kensington was filled with two story brick rowhouses and steam powered mills. In 1883, Lorin Blodget described the northward expansion of the area as having had rapid and successful development from vacant fields a few years ago, to a densely built up city, all of which is recent, and most of it within ten or twelve years.³⁷

The National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: *Industrial and Commercial Buildings Related to the Textile Industry in the Kensington Neighborhood of Philadelphia* lists only five are examples carpet mills: the Bromley Mills (circa 1870) at Jasper and E. York Streets; Thomas Develon's Sons (c1875) at W. Lehigh Avenue and N. Hancock Street; the Franklin Carpet Mills (c1879) at 2139-45 E. Huntingdon Street; and the Harrison Mills (c1890), Cecil B. Moore Avenue and Blair Street. While the Bromley Mills is perhaps the most significant of the surviving mills, its former carpet factory facility at Jasper and N. Front Streets only retains two of fifteen buildings unlike the subject property which remains entirely intact. Thomas Develon's Carpet Mill, the Franklin Carpet Mills and the Harrison Mills feature significant multi-story mill buildings, but only included facilities for weaving, while the subject property includes the Buildings 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, which includes both the large mill building and a dyehouse.

³⁷ *Workshop of the World: A Selective Guide to the Industrial Archeology of Philadelphia* (Wallingford, PA: Oliver Evans Press, 1990), 233.

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This nomination was completed by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia with the primary author as Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist, with assistance from J.M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian and Kelly E. Wiles, Architectural Historian.

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