

**ADDRESS: 5708 GERMANTOWN AVE**

Name of Resource: Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc.

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: MMS Acquisitions LLC

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, [megan.schmitt@phila.gov](mailto:megan.schmitt@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5708 Germantown Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that the “former store building of Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc. reflects the historic built environment of Philadelphia in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries when the Flemish Revival and other Renaissance-inspired styles were used to disguise older housing stock and make new distinctive buildings in a row to appear as fashionable new buildings.” The nomination contends that despite alterations, the building is a “distinctive vernacular example of a commercial building in the Flemish Revival style, satisfying Criterion D.” The nomination also argues that the celebrated architect Addison Hutton was “well-versed in remodeling older buildings—usually residences, and the subject property is an important example of his commercial work, satisfying Criterion E.” Finally, the nomination suggests that the subject property is “representative of both the commercial and economic heritage of Germantown Avenue...as it evolved from an old German village...to a lush residential suburb and on to a dense residential neighborhood in the consolidated City of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion J.”

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5708 Germantown Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, E and J.



**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: **5708 Germantown Avenue**

Postal code: **19144**

Councilmanic District: **8**

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: **Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc.**

Current/Common Name: **The Channon House**

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Occupancy: ☐ occupied ☒ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: **Commercial**

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Please attach

**6. DESCRIPTION**

Please attach

**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

Period of Significance (from year to year): **1857 to 1919**

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: **c1818 to 1911**

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: **Addison Hutton**

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

Original owner: **Joseph Channon**

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 DATE: 22 JANUARY 2020**

Author: **Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian**

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: January 24, 2020

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 14 May 2020

Date of Notice Issuance: 15 May 2020

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: MMS Acquisitions LLC

Address: 1221 E. Johnson Street

City: Philadelphia

State: PA

Postal Code: 19138

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 southwest at the subject property and the environs of Vernon Park. Source: Google: 2012. Figure 2. Bottom left: Looking southwest at the primary (northeast) and northwest elevations of the subject property. Source: Google, 2012. Figure 3. Bottom right: Looking southwest at the primary (northeast) and northwest elevations of the subject property. Source: Google, 2018.

## MITCHELL, FLETCHER & Co., INC.

ALSO KNOWN AS  
**THE CHANNON HOUSE**

—  
**ERECTED C1818–57, REMODELED/ENLARGED 1898, & ENLARGED C1910–11**  
—

**5708 GERMANTOWN AVENUE  
GERMANTOWN, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19144-2137**

*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, January 2020  
Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc., 5708 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



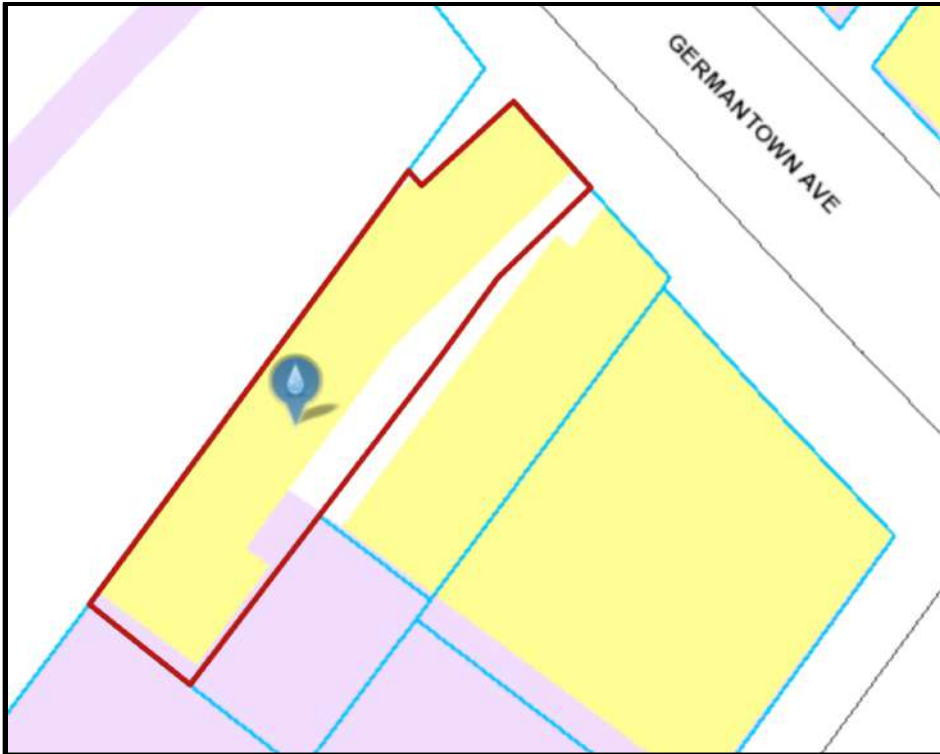


Figure 4. The boundary of the subject property is articulated in red. Source: Philadelphia Water.

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the subject property is as follows:

**BEGINNING** at a point on the Southwest side of Germantown Avenue which said point is at the following courses and distances measured from the point of intersection of the Northwest side of Cheltenham Avenue (80 feet wide) with the Southwest house line of Germantown Avenue (60 feet 9 inches wide) North 39 degrees, 17 minutes 40 seconds West along the Southwest house line of Germantown Avenue 50 feet, 8 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches to a point; thence North 36 degrees 43 minutes. 40 seconds West 29 feet 3 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches to a point; thence North 41 degrees 47 minutes, 26 seconds East 2 feet 9 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches to a point on the Southwest house line of Germantown Avenue (63 feet wide) and thence along the same North 36 degrees, 43 minutes, 40 seconds West 27 feet, 6 inches to a point being the first mentioned point and place of beginning thence South 51 degrees 18 minutes 20 seconds West 31 feet 1/2 inches to a point; thence South 43 degrees, 3 minutes, 20 seconds West 120 feet to a point; thence North 48 degrees no minutes, 10 seconds West 30 feet 10 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches to a point thence North 41 degrees 59 minutes, 50 seconds East 127 feet, 2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches to a point; thence South 36 degrees, 43 minutes, 40 seconds East 4 feet 6 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches to a point; thence North 53 degrees, 2 minutes 20 seconds East 30 feet 4 1/2 inches to a point on the Southwest house line of Germantown Avenue (63 feet wide); thence along the said line, South 36 degrees, 43 minutes, 40 seconds East 28 feet, 4 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches to a point and place of beginning.

Map Registry No. 049N19-0050      OPA Account No. 882927660



Figure 5. Left: Looking south at the subject property's primary (northeast), and northwest elevations. Figure 6. Right: Looking southeast at the subject property's northwest elevation. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

## 6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Located at 5708 Germantown Avenue, the former Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., Germantown, is a relatively large building that is divided into several parts for the purpose of this description: the Main Block (Main Block); the Rear El, built in 1857 (1857 Rear El); an Addition, built in 1898 (1898 Addition); and an Addition, built between 1910–11 (1910–11 Addition). While partly sheathed in vinyl siding, poorly applied to portions of the primary (northeast) elevation, the subject building is a two-and-one half story stone house that was dramatically enlarged with brick additions and given a Flemish style commercial treatment.

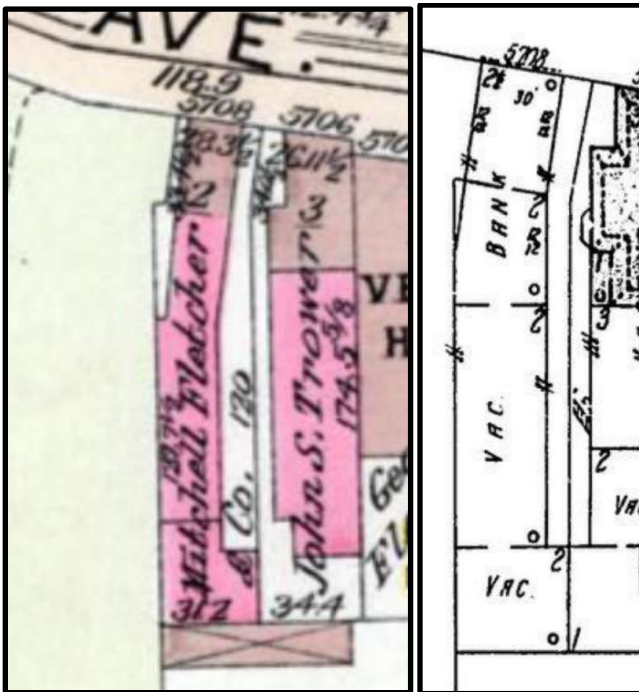


Figure 7. Left: the subject building in 1911 showing refaced façade. Source: 1911 Bromley atlas of 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward. Figure 8. Right: the subject building in 1935. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia.



Figure 9. Bottom left: Looking southwest at the primary (northeast) and northwest elevations of the Main Block of the subject property. Source: Google, 2012. Figure 10. Bottom right: Looking southwest at the primary (northeast) and northwest elevations of the Main Block of the subject property. Source: Google, 2018.

### **Main Block**

Situated at the front of the lot at 5708 Germantown Avenue and facing onto Germantown Avenue, the Main Block is a two-and-one-half story building, appearing to be almost entirely constructed of rubble stone, likely native Wissahickon Schist. Constructed in phases the portion that comprises the Main Block shown above was brought to its present volume by 1857, but likely containing elements of an earlier store building that was historically known to be the same width as the subject building. Possibly used first as a shop, then as a dwelling, and later as a shop again, the ground floor has undergone significant alterations during its more than one hundred years of commercial use, so that the primary elevation of the first floor is almost entirely of modern or vintage infill. The first floor at the side elevations of the Main Block may contain some original elements, and most certainly beneath the roughcast are the loadbearing masonry stonewalls. The primary elevation of the second floor has three windows that mimic the original fenestration of the earlier dwelling, as well as later features including bracketed pilasters with decorative capitols, and heavily molded architraves delineating each opening—now containing replacement sash windows. Much of the second and third floor elevations are concealed by vinyl siding imitating lapped wood, poorly applied after 2014 and is already separating from the facade. A cornice, likely also of pressed tin metal, is also concealed by similar vinyl siding. Just above the roofline and concealing the historic pitch of the two-and-one-half story dwelling is a low balustrade that is set within two sets of paired plinths. Aside from the plinths at each end, the balustrade, likely also of pressed tin metal, is concealed by the same vinyl siding.





Figure 11. Top: The primary (northeast) and northwest elevations of the Main Block of the subject property around the time it was brought to its present architectural state in the early twentieth century. Figure 12. Middle left: The primary (northeast) elevation of the Main Block of the subject property prior to the application of the faux siding. Figure 13. Middle right: The primary (northeast) and northwest elevations of the Main Block of the subject property prior to the application of the faux siding. Source: Google, 2012. Figure 14. Bottom left: The primary (northeast) and northwest elevations of the Main Block of the subject property at present. Figure 15. Bottom right: The primary (northeast) and southeast elevation of the Main Block of the subject property at present. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.





Figure 16. Left: The primary (northeast) and southeast elevations of the Main Block of the subject property. Figure 17. Right: The primary (northeast) elevation of the Main Block subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

The southeast elevation of the Main Block consists of a roughcast finish with most of its apertures concealed. However, the both the second and third floor retain architectural details that are related to the early twentieth-century commercial makeover in the Flemish style, including a stepped Flemish gable that disguise the side-gable roof of the earlier building.



Figure 18. The primary (northeast) and northwest elevations of the Main Block, the 1857 Rear El, etc. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 8 repeated, Top: 1926 Sanborn Atlas with the northwest elevation of the Main Block delineated in red. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 19. Bottom: The northwest elevation of the Main Block, delineated in the figure above to orient the reader. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

The northwest elevation of the Main Block facing onto Vernon Park consists of a roughcast finish. Both the second and third floors retain architectural details that are related to the late-nineteenth-century commercial make-over in the Flemish style, including a stepped Flemish gable that disguises the side-gable roof of the earlier building. The first and second floors are delineated by a course of molding that is likely of pressed tin metal. The second floor features a single window at center that is long and narrow with a lintel above that is of a heavy molding likely also of pressed tin metal. Connecting this lower molding to the cornice are two pilasters set upon brackets and decorated with capitols. Near the corner of the building closest to Germantown Avenue and within the second floor is an early alarm box that set upon the building like an antique cabinet and is a feature of interest to be retained. The metal box also features a cornice and is set upon ornate metal brackets. Delineating the second and third floors is the continuous cornice that is concealed by vinyl siding. The third floor retains a high degree of the details from the late-nineteenth century renovation. These details include the continuous balustrade at each side of the gable, leading to five panels, rising in pairs to a central section at the height of the gable end. These panels appear to be treated with a roughcast finish that is framed by moldings and finished at the top of each step with cornices of what is likely pressed tin metal. The central section of the gable contains a window that features an original or early-molded architraves and a lintel with the blank, but framed panel rising above.





Figure 8 repeated, Top: 1926 Sanborn atlas with the northwest elevation of the 1857 Rear El and 1898 Addition delineated in red. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 20. Middle: The northwest elevation of the 1857 Rear El and the 1898 Addition, delineated in the figure above to orient the reader. Figure 21. Bottom: The northwest elevation of the 1898 Addition, delineated in the figure above to orient the reader. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



### **1857 Rear El**

Appended to the rear of the Main Block, the 1857 Rear El is a two-story building with a hipped roof, measuring roughly fifteen feet in width by thirty-five feet in depth. This portion of the building is also of stone construction, likely rubble schist, with a roughcast finish. The northwest elevation is relatively simple with few architectural details. The fenestration has been enclosed with roughcast, but the quality of the infill delineates the openings, appearing to have included three per floor. The interior elevation at the opposite side includes some infill and was not accessible.



Figure 8 repeated, Top: 1926 Sanborn Atlas with the northwest elevation of the 1857 Rear El and 1898 Addition delineated in red. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 22. Bottom: The northwest elevation of the 1898 Addition. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

### **1898 Addition**

Appended the 1857 Rear El, the 1898 Addition was constructed by Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., the grocery store chain that transformed the earlier building.<sup>1</sup> The 1898 Addition is a two-story building of loadbearing, brick masonry construction with a roughcast finish, measuring roughly twenty-four feet in width by sixty feet in depth. The northwest elevation also features a Flemish aesthetic treatment with a stepped gable. The first and second floors feature six windows per floor connected by courses of molding, which flows into a partial upper architrave and lintel that is in the form of a cornice. An additional course of molding delineates the first and second floors, as well as the second floor and the roofline. A stepped gable with four stages and a central chimney stack characterizes the building. Each step of the gable is defined by molded cornices that are likely of pressed tin metal.

<sup>1</sup> "Latest News in Real Estate," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 August 1898, p. 10.

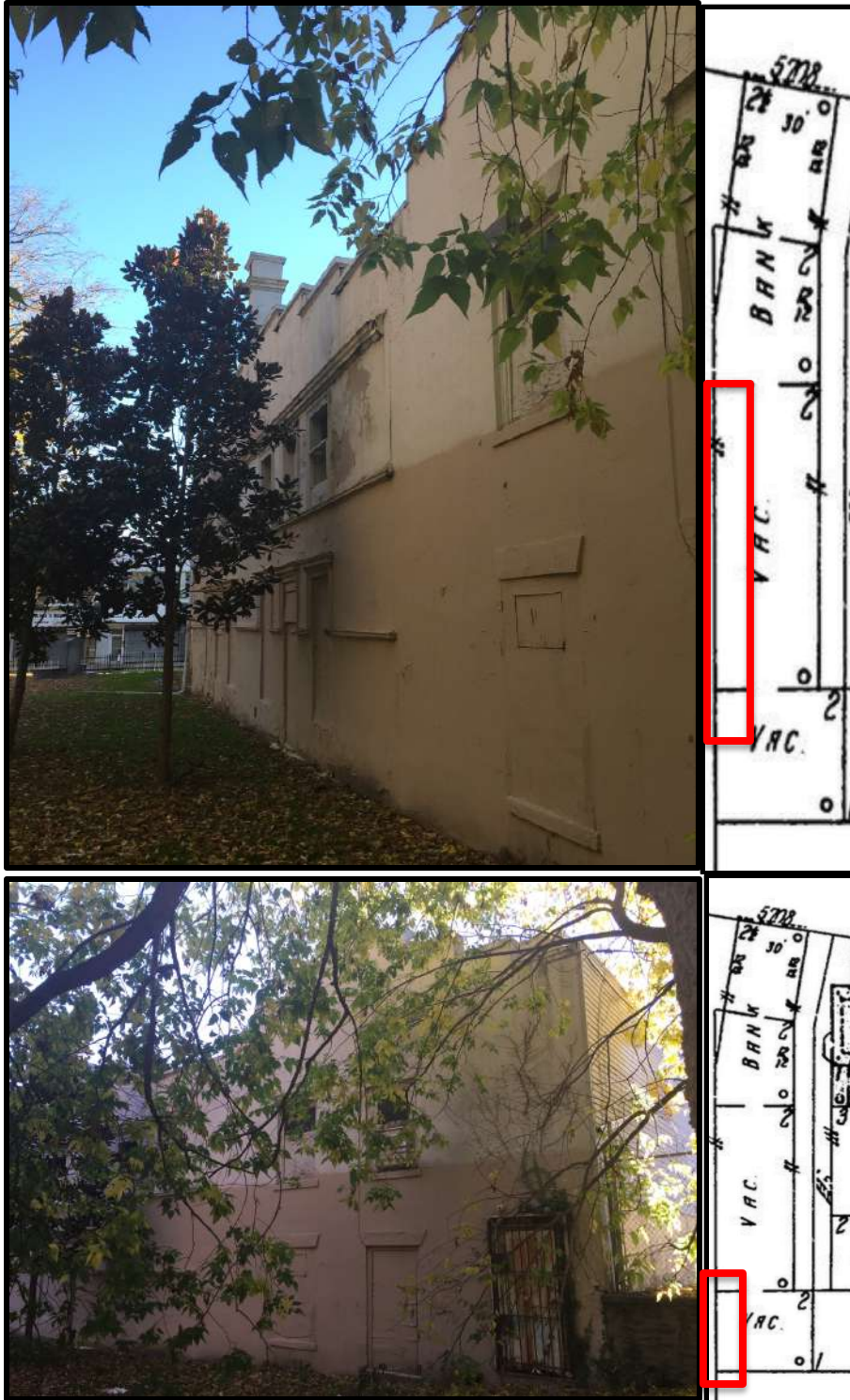


Figure 23. Top left: Looking northeast at the northwest elevation of the 1910–11 and 1898 Additions. Source: Oscar Beisert. Figure 8 repeated, Top right: 1926 Sanborn Atlas with the northwest elevation of the 1898 and 1910–11 Additions delineated in red. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 24. Bottom left: The northwest elevation of the 1910–11 Addition. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019. Figure 8 repeated, Bottom right: 1912 Real Estate Atlas with the northwest elevation of the 1910–11 Addition delineated in red. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia.

### **1910–11 Addition**

Appended the 1898 Addition, the 1910–11 Addition was constructed by Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., The 1910–11 Addition is a two-story building of loadbearing, brick masonry construction with an exposed and roughcast finish, being of an “L-shaped” plan. The northwest elevation also features a Flemish aesthetic treatment with a stepped gable with stages of a low rise.

The southeast elevation of the 1910–11 Addition features a simple redbrick façade set beneath a stepped, Flemish gable. The stepped gable rises four stages with simple coping, characterizing the facade.



Figure 8 repeated, Top: 1926 Sanborn Atlas with the northwest elevation of the 1910–11 Addition delineated in red. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 25. Bottom: The southeast elevation of the 1910–11 Addition. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.





Figure 26. An advertisement for Mitchell, Fletcher & Co, Inc., from the early twentieth century. Source: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## 7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Germantown store of Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., at 5708 Germantown Avenue is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Located in the Germantown section of the city, the building satisfies the following Criteria for Designation as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

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

Period of Significance: 1857–1919.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former store building of Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., a prominent grocer in mid- to late-nineteenth and early twentieth century Philadelphia, is an architectural representative of both the commercial and economic heritage of Germantown Avenue and Germantown, as it evolved from an old German village in Philadelphia County to a lush residential suburb and on to a dense residential neighborhood in the consolidated City of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion J. While somewhat disguised by storefront alterations and faux siding, the subject property—including the Main Block, the 1857 Rear El, and the 1898 Addition, as it appears today, was created in 1898, when Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc., commission the eminent Philadelphia architect Addison Hutton, to remodel, enlarged, and entirely reface the ubiquitous early house with a commercial storefront to become a distinctive

Flemish style commercial building.<sup>2</sup> With the employment of stepped Flemish gable, and various Baroque-inspired details to create a unified façade, the subject building is a distinctive vernacular example of a commercial building in the Flemish Revival style, satisfying Criterion D. Hutton was an architect who was well-versed in remodeling older buildings—usually residences, and the subject property is an important example of his commercial work, satisfying Criterion E.



Figure 27. A photograph of the streetscape in the 1880s, showing the subject property, second from the right, when it was a dwelling house. Source: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

### **CRITERION J**

The former Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., a prominent grocer in mid- to late-nineteenth and early twentieth century Philadelphia, is representative of the cultural, economic, and social heritage of Germantown, as it evolved from an old German village in Philadelphia County to a lush residential suburb and on to a dense residential neighborhood in the consolidated City of Philadelphia. The evolution of Germantown from village to suburb resulted in a transformation of Germantown Avenue itself from the Main Street of a small town with private houses, shops, civic buildings, etc. to a largely commercial corridor with houses converted to stores that were represented through architecturally notable alterations and renovations that enlivened the corridor and attracted customers to specific business. Transitioning from a private house to a house with a ground floor storefront to an important high-end grocery store chain, the subject property is an unusual and significant specimen of the commercial heritage of Germantown Avenue, satisfying Criterion J.

Potentially containing the stone walls of an earlier commercial structure once occupied by the old Cock (later known as Cook, Cooke, Kook, Kooke, etc.) family, the Main Block of the subject building was brought to its present volume at some point between 1818 and 1857, then being considered the “new two story stone dwelling house” of the Channons—

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<sup>2</sup> Addison Hutton Ledger Book, 53-V-003, Hutton-Savery, Scheetz & Savery Collection, The Athenæum of Philadelphia.

a family that had resided upon the site as early as 1809.<sup>3</sup> The building was occupied as a residence by the Channon family through 1868, and the family of Jacob Rex Hortter (1806–1885), a gentleman, through 1894.<sup>4</sup> The Main Block of this building is perhaps one of the last traditional single family houses along this section of Germantown Avenue. By 1894, the area had become so commercial and “an unsuitable place for a widow and two young daughters” that Mrs. Jacob R. Hortter was able to break the trust she tied them to house.<sup>5</sup> The widow complained that the building “had on one side a building occupied as a Tin Shop and on the other side a Building occupied as a restaurant and Caterer’s establishment [referencing African American cater, the eminent John Trower], on the opposite side of the street, are two liquor Saloons.”<sup>6</sup>

The subject building was converted to commercial use in 1894. During the process of obtaining court approval for the sale of Hortter’s house, a buyer, Hiram C. Himes, was found who “agreed to purchase said premises for the purpose of altering and repairing the same to be used as a grocery store.”<sup>7</sup> Himes was forced out of his nearby location when the City of Philadelphia seized certain properties to create Vernon Park.<sup>8</sup> Sometime around 1894/95, the building was known as “Vernon Groceries,” the establishment of “H.C. Himes, Grocer,” in a prominent location across from the Reading Railroad station and next to Vernon Park. Himes replaced the traditional ground floor fenestration of the house with a storefront that featured a large plate glass windows (Figure 28). Its appearance was very much like other stores in Germantown, in that it was essentially a two-and-one-half story house with a storefront alteration that occupied the entire primary elevation of the ground floor. The formal ground floor configuration of most early side- and center-hall stone houses in Germantown, including the front door and two windows of the house, were

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<sup>3</sup> Deed: John Cooke [Cock] of Germantown, shopkeeper, to Joseph Channon of Germantown, cordwainer, 6 May 1816, Philadelphia Deed Book (hereafter PDBk) A.M., No. 6, p. 6, City Archives of Philadelphia (hereafter CAP); Will of Joseph Channon of Germantown, 14 March 1857, probated 4 June 1857, Will Book, No. 38, p. 124, Philadelphia Register of Wills. Channon bequeathed the house where he lived at the site of present-day 5706 Germantown Avenue to his daughters Martha and Catharine Channon. The sale of the daughters’ property in 1868 states that it is the same house and part of land which Joseph Channon purchased of John Cook (Deed: Martha Channon, of the Twenty-Second Ward of Philadelphia, single woman, to Thomas C. Garrett, of the same place, late jeweler, 29 October 1868, PDBk J.T.O., No. 188, p. 252, CAP). The core of the subject property was built sometime after 1818 when Channon was still taxed for only a one-story house on this property (Germantown Township, 1818, p. 33, State Tax Assessment Ledgers [1.8], Office of City Commissioners Records, Record Group 1, CAP).

<sup>4</sup> Deed: John C. Channon and Susan K., his wife, and Alpheus Channon, all of Germantown, to Jacob R. Hortter, of Germantown, gentleman, for \$8,000, 2 June 1868, PDBk J.T.O., No. 146, p. 335, CAP.

<sup>5</sup> Likely at the time of the marriage of the 71-year old Jacob R. Hortter to the 25-year old Martha Ellen Johnson a trust agreement was created in 1877 that restricted the subject property to the sole and exclusive use of Martha (Deed of Trust: Jacob R. Hortter, of Germantown, gentleman, and Martha Ellen J., his wife, to Hannah Ann Johnson, of Trenton, New Jersey, 12 April 1877, PDBk D.H.L., No. 76, p. 353, CAP).

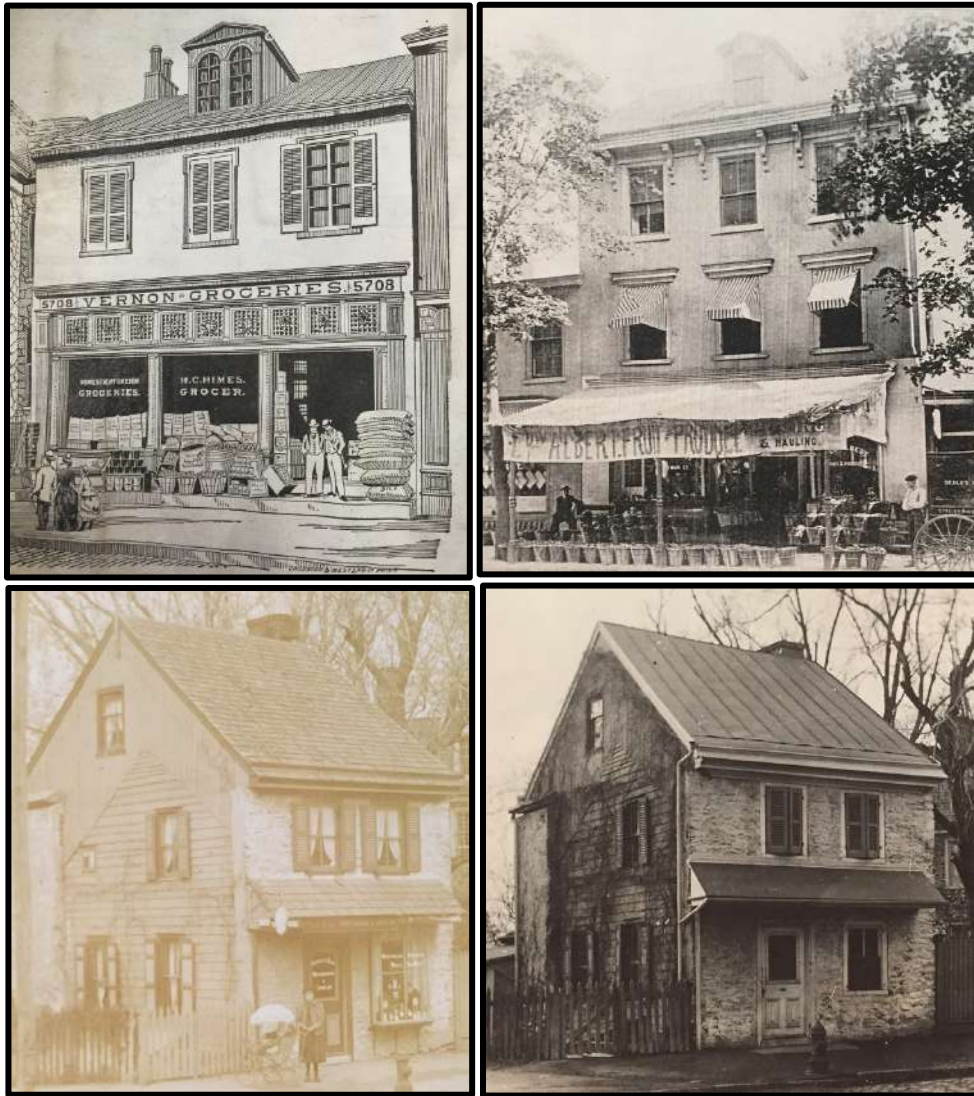
<sup>6</sup> Deed: Hannah Ann Johnson, trustee, to Hiram C. Himes, of Germantown, grocer, for \$17,000, 4 June 1894, PDBk T.G., No. 409, p. 445, CAP.

<sup>7</sup> Deed: Hannah Ann Johnson, trustee, to Hiram C. Himes, of Germantown, grocer, for \$17,000, 4 June 1894, PDBk T.G., No. 409, p. 445, CAP.

<sup>8</sup> Himes had a grocery store in other parts of the city until he came to Germantown in 1885 and occupied 4932 (old number) Germantown Avenue (*Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory for 1885*). Proceedings to take this section of Germantown Avenue for the Park started in 1893 (“Vernon Park: Dispossessed Tenants Who Complain of Being Unjustly Treated,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 August 1893, p. 7).



replaced by a “modern” storefront that was almost entirely of glass. This was a typical improvement that could be found in almost any period of Philadelphia’s history, and is decidedly a common commercial building type on Germantown Avenue albeit one that can be found along Main Streets throughout the nation and beyond. The reuse of a small house for this purpose was commonly associated with a “mom and pop” business and/or store, and sometimes included a residential component where the owner lived over the store. Himes’ tenure at the site was short lived. In 1896 he decided to leave the grocery business and concentrated on his work with the Ice Manufacturing Company of Germantown.<sup>9</sup>



The illustrations shown above show the transition of typical vernacular stone houses in Germantown as they evolved from residential to commercial. Figure 28. Top left: An illustration of the Main Block of the subject property after 1877, but before 1898, showing the typical transition from a purely residential to a commercial building in Germantown. Figure 29. Top right: A photograph showing the Albert Store, Germantown Avenue, Germantown in the early twentieth century after it had become a store, a transition made from its earlier life as the Ashmead-Freas House—most notably, the

<sup>9</sup> *Gopsill's Philadelphia City Directory for 1895*. Himes moved to Vineland, New Jersey in 1898 where he established another ice business before going into several other lines of work (“Hiram Hines, 90, Dies At His Home,” *The Daily Journal* [Vineland, N.J.], 6 September 1938, p. 1).

residence of Philip R. and Eliza (Ashmead) Freas, publishers of the *Germantown Telegraph*. Figure 30. Bottom left: The Sparrow Jack House, Germantown Avenue above Upsal Street, showing the house with a simple storefront alteration in the early twentieth century. Figure 31. Bottom right: The Sparrow Jack House with the storefront alteration removed in the early twentieth century. Source: The Germantown Historical Society.



Figure 32. Daguerreotype of a streetscape of the east side of Germantown Avenue below Brighthurst Street, showing the Jabez Gates & Bros. “Family Grocer and General Dealers,” on left and a typical residence on right. Taken in the 1850s, showing the center hall, stone dwelling with a storefront on left and a side-hall stone dwelling on right, this photograph illustrates the tradition of buildings designed as residences on Germantown Avenue adopting a commercial character early on in its history as an emerging suburb of Philadelphia. This building was the first Germantown location of Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc. Source: Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks.

In 1896, the subject property became the Germantown home of the high-end grocery store chain of Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc.<sup>10</sup> The chain started in Center City at Twelfth and Chestnut Streets in the 1860s and expanded to the growing suburb of Germantown in 1889 when they rented the old Jabez Gates & Brothers store at Germantown Avenue and Brighthurst Streets (Figure 32).<sup>11</sup> When Vernon Groceries first became Mitchell, Fletcher,

<sup>10</sup> Deed: Hiram C. Himes, of the city of Philadelphia, grocer, and Mary E., his wife, to Samuel S. Thompson, of the same, grocer, for \$11,000 (subject to \$13,000 mortgage), 7 December 1896, PDBk W.M.G., No. 104, p. 393, CAP. Thompson along with George A. Fletcher, John S. Engart, George L. Mitchell, Eugene T. Barnes, Justice M. Thompson and Walter J. Buzby was a partner in the firm of Mitchell, Fletcher and Company in 1896.

<sup>11</sup> *Gopsill's Philadelphia City Directory for 1889*. The directory lists their Germantown store at old number 4637 & 39 Germantown Avenue which would correspond to present-day 5233 & 35.

*Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, January 2020*  
*Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc., 5708 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*



& Co., Inc., the building likely changed very little in appearance. However, by 1898, when Fletcher acquired a half interest in the property, Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., commissioned Quaker architect Addison Hutton to both enlarge the original building and improve and unify its façade.<sup>12</sup> Unlike Himes' conservative commercial renovation, Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., was not a “mom and pop” store and their improvements reflected a commercial vision that transformed the property into a visual feature of their chain store.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the grocers disguised the store and dwelling with a distinctive architectural treatment, which was a total departure from the previous appearance of the building.



Figure 33. An illustration of the Main Block of the subject property after c1900–10, showing the Flemish style commercial treatment that Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc., gave the building. Source: The Germantown Historical Society.

Having a prominent location next to the Vernon Park and across from the Reading Railroad Station, the subject building adheres to Richard Longstreth's explanation of the significance of commercial facades:

Among the most distinguishing features of commercial architecture, and one that best lends itself to broad categorical divisions, is the street front or facade. From the early nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century, the

<sup>12</sup> Addison Hutton papers, Coll. no. 1122, Special Collections, Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library; Addison Hutton Ledger Book, 53-V-003, Hutton-Savery, Scheetz & Savery Collection, The Athenæum of Philadelphia; Deed: George S. Thompson, of the city of Philadelphia, merchant, and Emma L, his wife, to George A. Fletcher, of the same, merchant, for \$6,250 (subject to \$13,000 mortgage), for a half interest in the property, 2 April 1898, PDBk W.M.G., No. 242, p. 513, CAP..

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix B for Historic Context: Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc., which provides an early history of the establishment of the company.



large majority of commercial buildings were erected abutting one another on deep lots of roughly standard dimensions.<sup>14</sup>

In Germantown, like much of Philadelphia, the Avenue was not only a linear residential and commercial artery, but the lots were generally long and narrow. The primary elevations of Germantown's commercial buildings were certainly limited to the street-facing façade, and perhaps one additional elevation for corner properties. After the demolition of the Meng House immediately to the north around 1895, the subject building boasted not only its narrow Germantown Avenue frontage, but, more importantly a large expanse facing onto Vernon Park. Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., took full advantage of this elevation.

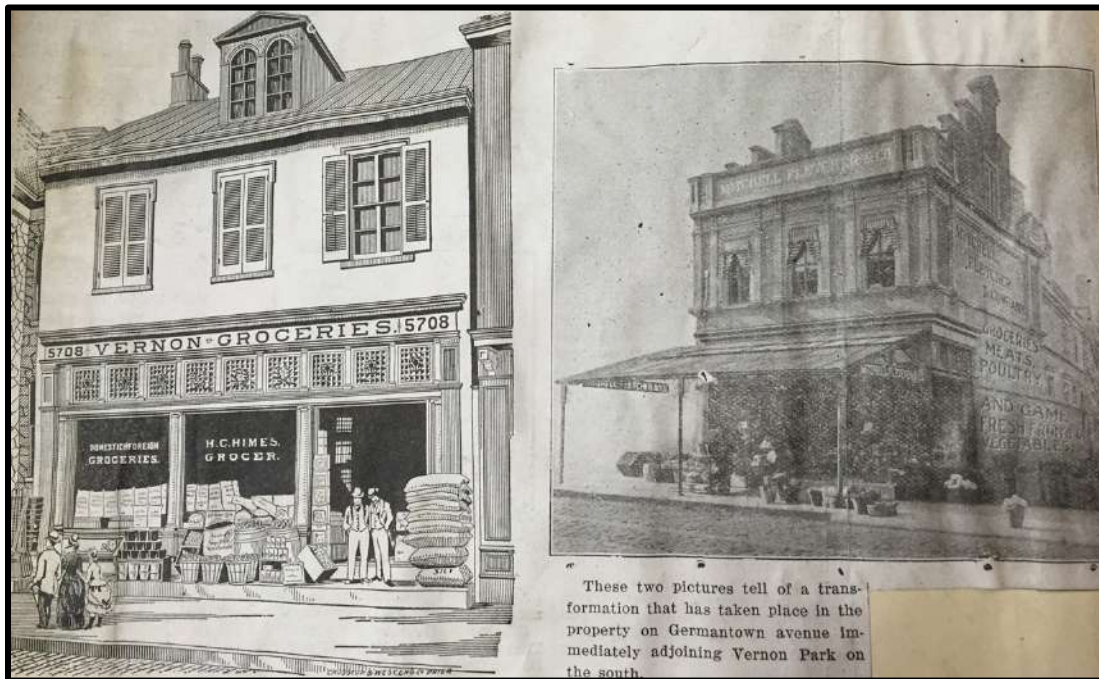


Figure 34. This early twentieth century clipping, preserved in the archives of the Germantown Historical Society, exhibits the distinctive transition that occurred at the subject property in 1898. Source: The Germantown Historical Society.

Longstreth goes on to discuss the importance of aesthetic treatment, façade design, and signage over any other aspect of commercial building's design when promoting a business:

...the facade gives the building most of its identity. The importance of this elevation as an emblem of material progress is well conveyed by its abundant pictorial representation in advertisements, directories, atlases, and on the borders of urban views. The facade does not just contain essential elements, it is composed. It boasts of ornament, signs, and other distinctive features. It exhibits the best materials and workmanship. Such edifices are not so much three-dimensional objects as they are decorated wall planes

<sup>14</sup> Richard W. Longstreth and Chester H. Liebs, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000).

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facing the street. The primary exceptions are buildings situated on corner lots and those erected with the expectation that they would remain considerably taller than their neighbors. In such instances, the exposed sides tend to echo the principal elevation and often play a subordinate role in the overall design...<sup>15</sup>

The 1898 Addition led to a completely new façade for the Main Block, as well as a substantial addition at the rear that also featured the same architectural treatment. The gable-ends of the Main Block were built up and concealed by a stepped Flemish gable, as well as other exterior paneling and architectural details. This same treatment spanned along the Vernon Park elevation unifying the Main Block, the 1857 Rear El, and the 1898 Addition into one distinctive commercial building. The Flemish style façade was quite distinctive in Germantown. However, as formal as it was at the time of its construction, the grocers added signage and a market shed over the sidewalk on Germantown Avenue, as was typical of the day. This gave an overall appearance of an older building that had been modernized over time to serve the needs of a growing retail establishment.

The 1910–11 Addition more than tripled the size of the building. With stepped gables added to disguise the earlier gable-ends of the Main Block, the “modernized” façade spanned the property line, facing onto Vernon Park with an additional stepped gable that characterizes the façade of the 1898 Addition. With three sections of stepped gables and other architectural details, the establishment boasted one of the few Flemish Revival style commercial buildings in Germantown, which was a distinctive architectural style applied to building of this use in the larger national context of American architecture (Criterion D). Eclipsing both the primary residential and the later mixed use of a small grocer, the new and unusual façade treatment represented the presence of a solid commercial establishment. And as a result, Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., would occupy the subject building for more than two decades. The fact that this well-known Philadelphia grocer could establish a branch location at 5708 Germantown Avenue and meet great success is the direct result of Germantown’s position in Philadelphia as an established and dense residential neighborhood (Criterion J).

Since much of the surviving historic commercial architecture of the United States dates to the post-Civil War period and later, it is perhaps most common for the commercial buildings we observe today to have been purpose-built. In Philadelphia, and, especially, in Germantown, eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century houses often started life as purely residential or with a commercial component that may or may not have had a true visual feature on the exterior aside from a sign. As decades progressed, these buildings were altered to accommodate and meet the demands “modern” commercial fashions. While the subject building may have started life as a small shop, it was, in time, improved to the appearance of a dwelling. As the area became more and more co, and later was altered to accommodate a store.

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<sup>15</sup> Longstreth and Liebs, *The Buildings of Main Street*.

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Figure 35. Houses with stepped gables in Belgium. Source: Wikipedia, 2012.

## CRITERION D

The former store building of Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc. is a significant vernacular example of the Flemish Renaissance Revival style, as applied to commercial architecture in an American Main Street setting—Germantown Avenue in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion D.

The most notable feature of the subject property is the five facades that feature stepped Flemish gables—two of which face southeast and three of which face northwest. Hiding the larger roof structure, the stepped gable (also known as the crow-stepped gable or corbel step) is a primary characteristic of Flemish architecture, the earliest examples of which date to the twelfth century in Flanders.<sup>16</sup> The city of Ghent retains early examples of the stepped gable, including Spijker on Graslei among other Romanesque buildings in the city.<sup>17</sup> Employment of the stepped gable eventually spread across Northern Europe and there are early, period, and/or revivalist examples in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, etc. In time the Flemish architecture was influenced, like most of European architecture, by the Italian Renaissance. Mannerist and/or Baroque architectural designs, details, and treatment associated with the Italian Renaissance included balustrades, columns, corbels, overdoor ornaments, pilasters, waterlines, and all manner of ornamentation.<sup>18</sup> Naturally the stepped gable yielded a parapet that too evolved over time under various influences, eventually including designs “alternating convex and concave curves capped with a small triangular pediment.”<sup>19</sup> All of these factors led to the Flemish Revival style, a subset of the Renaissance Revival.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001), 49.

<sup>17</sup> *The Archaeological Journal*. (Longman, Brown, Green and Longman, 1999), 282.

<sup>18</sup> Hans Vlieghe, *Flemish Art and Architecture, 1585–1700* (Yale University Press, 1998), 258; P. Biesboer, *Collections of Paintings in Haarlem, 1572–1745* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2001), 15.

<sup>19</sup> Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture*, 49.



Figure 36. Left: Stadt Huys (City Hall) in 1641–42, New Amsterdam (New York City), New York. Source: Gelernter, Mark. *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context*. (UPNE, 2001), 50. Figure 37. Middle: Sunnyside, the home of Washington Irving in the Hudson Valley, New York. Like the subject property, Irving expanded upon an earlier house to create his Dutch or Flemish Revival style house. Source: Splorers Weekly. Figure 38. Right: A detail of a stepped gable end at Sunnyside. Source: Beyond My Ken (website).

Located at the side (northwest and southeast) elevations, the placement of the stepped Flemish gable in the said five locations of the subject property is less common than its ubiquitous placement and dominance at the street facing elevation. Nevertheless, it is an established form. Referring to the historical architecture of the New Amsterdam, present-day New York City, the Stadt Huys (City Hall) dating to 1641–42 featured stepped gable ends at the side elevations among terraces of houses with stepped gables at the street facing elevations.<sup>20</sup> An early revivalist example of the nineteenth century was Sunnyside, the home of Washington Irving, the eminent American author and writer. Located in Tarrytown in the Hudson Valley of New York, Irving enlarged and remodeled a c1690 cottage to his understanding of a Dutch Colonial house in 1835.<sup>21</sup> While featuring a more subdued treatment, the use of the stepped Flemish gables is in the same style as the subject property. These are just two examples of the style as it evolved in America.

Architectural details and treatment associated with the Italian Renaissance includes balustrades at the primary (northeast), northwest, and southeast elevations of the Main Block; panels and pilasters of varying styles within upper floors, creating a decorative delineation of panels window openings in the primary (northeast), northwest, and southeast elevations of the Main Block, as well as the northwest elevation of the 1898 and 1910–11 Additions; decorative coursing and/or waterlines within the southeast and northwest elevations of the Main Block, and the northwest elevation of 1898 and 1910–11 Additions; elaborate lintels and overdoors in all of the aforementioned elevations of the Main Block, 1898 and 1910–11 Additions, as well as the 1857 Rear Ell; and characteristic pediments at the tops of both stepped gables within southeast and northwest elevations of the Main Block. These details and features appear to be made of pressed tin metal—alternatively wood, emulating the stonework of earlier and most sophisticated buildings. The pilasters or corbels of a classical order and coursing, likely also of pressed tin metal, speaks to the style as well as commercial architecture of the turn of the twentieth century in Philadelphia. While not a monumental example of the Flemish or the larger Renaissance Revival style in its material composition, the subject building is a rare surviving commercial building

<sup>20</sup> Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture*, 50.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Burstein, *The Original Knickerbocker: The Life of Washington Irving* (New York: Basic Books, 2007).



executed in the Flemish Revival style, exhibiting and retaining many of its original distinguishing characteristics and features that make it an unusual and distinctive surviving specimen.



Figure 39. Left: The house at 238 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in 1961 with a once-fashionable revivalist façade, showing the use of a gable to disguise the earlier dwelling. Figure 40. Right: The same house at 238 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in 1964 after the revivalist façade was removed and the earlier appearance restored. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission.

## CRITERION C

The former store building of Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc. reflects the historic built environment of Philadelphia in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries when the Flemish Revival and other Renaissance-inspired styles were used to disguise older housing stock and make new distinctive buildings in a row to appear as fashionable new buildings. Early Philadelphia houses ranged from the vernacular to the high style, but most of these dwellings are characterized by a two- or three-and-one-half-story building form with a side gable roof and a single dormer at the primary elevation. These dwelling defined much of the city's-built environment in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. And even when full three- and four-story buildings were built, they were often simple compared to the revivalist styles.

In the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, architects and builders employed revivalist styles to disguise older buildings, creating the illusion of a new building through the application of a fashionable, architecturally distinctive façade. In many cases, the Flemish Revival and other Renaissance-inspired styles was employed at the primary façade of a terraced or attached house in the city. Largely characterized by the employment of stepped and other gable and parapet forms, these styles allowed architects and builders to conceal earlier Philadelphia houses with attractive new facades, often, rather ingeniously, connecting the new gable façade to the dormer at the half-story without significantly altering the structure of the building. In other cases, these new building facades simply stood out in an otherwise typical streetscape. The employment of these revivalist styles in this manner is hardly documented as an aesthetic movement of Philadelphia, but it does represent a documentable architectural solution used to conceal a common Philadelphia house type and/or refresh a streetscape. This practice grew over time to characterize certain corners and streetscapes of the local built environment. While the use of the new gable or parapet at the primary elevation was the most common employment

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of this style on existing houses, the subject building is a unique specimen of the Flemish Revival being used to fashionably disguise the side-gable roof of an old Germantown house, creating a new commercial appearance.



Figure 41. Top left: the Henry Minton House, S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, was refaced in the 1890s to conceal the earlier, outdated appearance of the building, employing a simple stepped gable to connect the old dormer opening and roofline to the new façade. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 42. Top right: A profile view of the Henry Minton House, showing how the stepped gable was used to create a new façade, but also retain the entire structure of the earlier house. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 43. Left: The design of 1721 Spruce Street employs a central gable to distinguish the building from its Italianate neighbors. Philadelphia Historical Commission, 1986. Bottom middle: The design of 1822 Spruce Street employs a stepped gable to distinguish the new façade or building from its earlier Italianate neighbors. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission, 1995. Figure 44. Bottom right: The design of 1922 Spruce Street uses a gable or parapet to make the building stand out from the earlier Victorian houses in the 1900 block of Spruce Street.



Figure 45. Torworth, the Residence of Justice Strawbridge, at School House Lane and Wissahickon Avenue, remodeled on designs by Addison Hutton. Source: East Falls Local.

## CRITERION E

The former store building of Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc. is a significant vernacular Flemish Revival style building design by the local master architect, Addison Hutton (1834–1916), a designer whose work significantly impacted and influenced the built environment of the Quaker City.<sup>22</sup> Naturally, Hutton’s greatest and most well-known projects were commissions that created entirely new buildings; however, he was also masterful in incorporating older structures into flamboyant architectural works of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. In Germantown alone, Hutton enlarged the numerous dwellings among other buildings, creating an entirely new appearance despite the fact that the project involved reuse. The most flamboyant example was his work on the Justice Strawbridge house at School House Lane and Wissahickon Avenue.<sup>23</sup> Hutton took an earlier, Colonial- or Federal-period house form—a building designed on simple lines—to an elaborate Victorian pile. Despite substantial additions and refacing, the original form was entirely evident to those in the know, but for most it was almost entirely a new house. Hutton also transformed Lloyd Mifflin’s earlier cottage into an unusual romantic villa in the unit block of East Penn Street for the Cope family.<sup>24</sup> When Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc. commissioned Hutton to transform the subject property, he created a revised commercial building that was only achievable from a Victorian perspective. With its Flemish and Renaissance Revival-inspired treatment, the subject property is an important example of Addison Hutton’s commercial work, satisfying Criterion E.

<sup>22</sup> Addison Hutton papers, Coll. no. 1122, Special Collections, Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library; Addison Hutton Ledger Book, 53-V-003, Hutton-Savery, Scheetz & Savery Collection, The Athenæum of Philadelphia.

<sup>23</sup> Nomination for 5710 Wissahickon Avenue, Francis R. Strawbridge House, Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Nomination for 48–62 East Penn Street, The Mifflin-Cope House, Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, 2016.



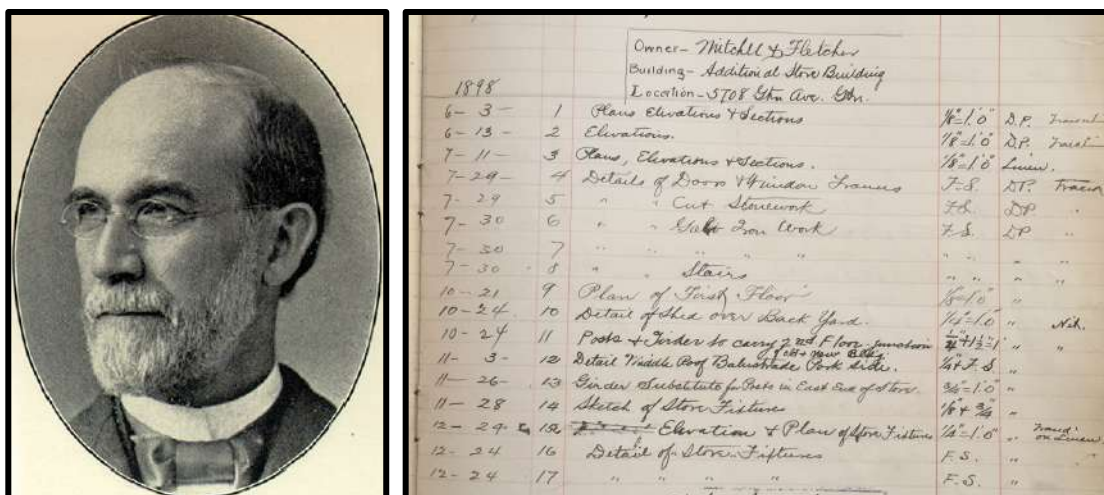


Figure 46. Addison Hutton. Source: Moses King *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians* (New York: Blanchard Press, 1901), p. 86; Figure 47. From the ledger of Addison Hutton in 1898, this section detailing his work for Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc. on the subject property. Source: Addison Hutton Ledger Book, 53-V-003, Hutton-Savery, Scheetz & Savery Collection, The Athenæum of Philadelphia.

### HISTORIC CONTEXT: ADDISON HUTTON, ARCHITECT

A concise biography on Addison Hutton was written by Sandra L. Tatman, formerly of the Athenæum of Philadelphia, for the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings database, which was previously tendered to the Philadelphia Historical Commission in the nomination for the Cope-Mifflin House at 48–60 E. Penn Street. The biography is as follows:

Addison Hutton was one of the principal Philadelphia architects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He was born in Sewickley Township, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, and was a birthright member of the Society of Friends. Before coming to Philadelphia in 1857 he alternated working as a carpenter and a schoolteacher, learning architectural drawing from one of his fellow workmen in French's Sash and Door Factory in Salem, Ohio. After resuming teaching in the Fairview School, Westmoreland County, he was recommended to architect Samuel Sloan, then a noted designer of hospitals, with whom he was associated as an office assistant and draftsman from 1857 until 1861. During that time he supervised the building of "Longwood" in Natchez, Mississippi, for Dr. Haller Nutt. In 1862 Hutton received his first known independent architectural commission, a cottage for Henry Morris to be built at Newport, Rhode Island; and by September, 1863, he was located in his own office at 400 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. Soon after, he became engaged to and eventually married Rebecca Savery, great-granddaughter of the Philadelphia cabinetmaker William Savery.

Hutton was so successful in his independent work that Samuel Sloan approached him in 1864 to join in a partnership, with an office located at 152 South 4th Street, Philadelphia. This association lasted until 1868 with Sloan & Hutton producing a number of designs for state hospitals, churches,

and residences. Following the dissolution of the partnership, Sloan moved temporarily to New York, leaving Hutton to finish whatever remained from their office. The first of these in Philadelphia was the new building to be erected for the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society at the northwest corner of Washington Square. Hutton's firm was awarded this commission over the designs of James H. Windrim, Steven D. Button and Furness & Hewitt. Hutton completed the building without Sloan's aid and was successfully launched as an independent architect. Immediately following this commission, he designed an addition to Joshua Lippincott's bookstore on Market Street, at nearly the same time working on designs for the Arch Street Methodist Church. Hutton working independently and with various younger architects, including a short-lived partnership with John Ord (Hutton & Ord) around 1877 to 1890. Others, such as Charles L. Hillman and James Shirk, worked various with Hutton until he was joined in partnership by his nephews Albert and Addison Savery in 1904. Later William Scheetz was added to this association, and with Savery, Scheetz & Savery he completed the design for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania at 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia. In 1907 Hutton retired from active practice but continued to be listed in the firm's drawings and letterhead as "Consulting Architect." By 1910 he had fully retired.

The career of Addison Hutton spanned some 53 years; for approximately 40 of those years he worked alone, accepting residential, school, business, hotel, religious, and hospital commissions. Although he was a member of the Philadelphia Chapter of the AIA, and in 1902 was employed as a Lecturer on Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, his participation in the Pennsylvania State Capitol competition of 1901 violated the ruling of the Chapter and resulted in his expulsion from the Chapter in February, 1902. However, Hutton successfully petitioned the Court and was reinstated by October, 1902.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "Addison Hutton, Architect (1834–1916)," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed December 2019.

## APPENDIX A

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT:      THE COCK-CHANNON HOUSE THE EARLY HISTORY OF 5708 GERMANTOWN AVENUE**

On May 21, 1752, John Kook of Germantown, a cordwainer, purchased a lot that included the subject property and 5706 Germantown Avenue from the estate of Godfryd Leibgeb, a mason, late of Germantown.<sup>26</sup> Over the years the name Cock changed and included spellings such as Cocke, Kook, Cooke, etc. Occupying the premises for three generations, the Cocks appear to have made some improvements to the property, working as cordwainers, and later as shopkeepers. The Cock's property was recorded in 1798 as part of the U.S. Direct Tax Lists, being located on "the Germantown Main Street" adjacent to Melchior Meng. The "John Kook" recorded at the subject property was likely the son or grandson of the aforementioned party who purchased the subject property in 1752. In 1798, the property contained the following improvements: a one-story stone house, measuring eighteen by eighteen feet; a one-story stone kitchen, measuring ten by ten feet; one stone shop, measuring twenty-four by fourteen feet—incidentally the same measurement as the subject building's primary elevation; and one frame barn, measuring twelve by twelve feet.<sup>27</sup> In many cases, when "shop" buildings are described, they are simply listed as such or there is a notation if located in the rear of the property. No such indication and/or notation is made regarding John Kook's shop.<sup>28</sup>

On May 6, 1816, John Kook, a shopkeeper of Germantown, as well as the grandson of the elder John Kook who was acquired the subject property in 1752, sold the property to Joseph Channon (1784–1857), also of Germantown, and, like the original John Kook, a cordwainer for \$2,800.<sup>29</sup> According to oral traditions captured in Shoemaker's history of Germantown, the Channons lived with the Kooks for several years prior to purchasing the property, a claim which is supported their presence with "John Cook" [Kook] in the "Inhabitants of Germantown and Chestnut Hill in 1809," and further substantiated by their listing at and/or near the subject property in the 1810 United States Federal Census. "Jos. Channon" was listed as the neighbor of "Jn Wistar" and "Melchor Meng," who lived immediately to the north of the subject property.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Deed: Jacob Frytz, late of Germantown, Husbandman, and Christiana, his wife (the widow of Godfryd Leibgeb), and Baltes Reser of Germantown, being the executor of the will of Godfryd Leibgeb, a mason late of Germantown, to John Kook, of Germantown, cordwainer, 21 May 1752, PDBk I., No. 1., p. 497, CAP.

<sup>27</sup> Pennsylvania, U.S. Direct Tax Lists, 1798 for John Kook, Germantown Township, Philadelphia Co. This record shows that all buildings referenced were "adj---Melchoir Meng," which confirms the precise location.

<sup>28</sup> Pennsylvania, U.S. Direct Tax Lists, 1798 for John Kook, Germantown Township, Philadelphia Co.

<sup>29</sup> Deed: John Cooke [Cock] of Germantown, Shopkeeper, to Joseph Channon of Germantown, cordwainer, 6 May 1816, PDBk A.M., No. 6, p. 6, CAP.

<sup>30</sup> Third Census of the United States, 1810. (NARA microfilm publication M252). Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.



Born on November 1, 1784, Joseph Channon was a native Philadelphian, “a relative of John Cook [Kook]...,” “...a shoemaker...,” and a manufacturer of “lamp-black, which he made from tar and rosin.” The following was stated about his product:

His brand stood very high, from the fact that it was all caught on linen sheets, while the ordinary kind was scraped from the walls of the building.<sup>31</sup>

Once he moved to the subject property, he became a permanent fixture in Germantown. Joseph Channon and his wife Sarah (1779–1861) had the following children: Mary Channon (1812–1829), John C. Channon, Martha Channon, Catharine Channon (1815–1867), Sarah Channon (1819–1843), Rebecca Channon (1821–1843), and Alpheus Channon.<sup>32</sup> The Channons were all members of the United Methodist Church of Germantown, Joseph Channon being one of the earliest members.

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<sup>31</sup> Thomas H. Shoemaker, “Inhabitants of Germantown and Chestnut Hill in 1809,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 15 (1891): 479–80. John Kock was taxed for a lampblack house during his ownership of the property so Channon likely continued the trade from him.

<sup>32</sup> Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; *Find A Grave*. Find A Grave. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>.

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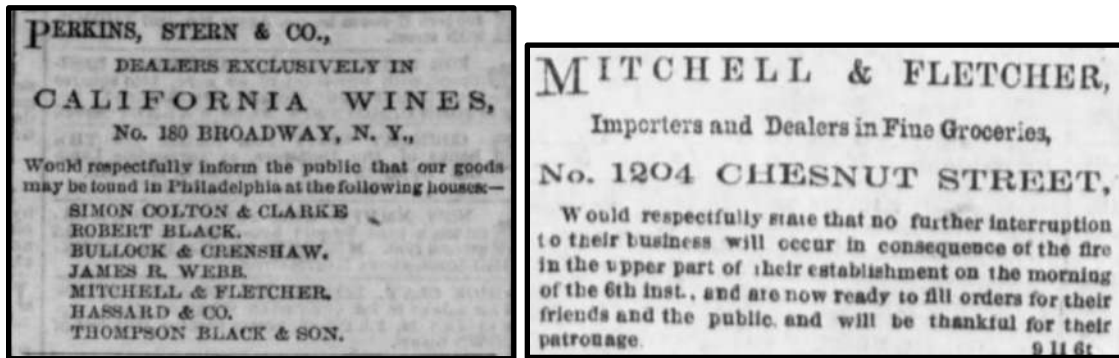


Figure 48. Left: Advertisement for “California Wines,” including Philadelphia vendors such as “Mitchell & Fletcher.” Published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on February 19, 1866 on page 8. Figure 49. Right: Advertisement in *The Evening Telegraph* regarding the “consequence of the fire” at “No. 1204 Chestnut Street” by Mitchell & Fletcher, “Importers and Dealers in Fine Groceries,” published on September 14, 1866 on page 4.

## APPENDIX B

### HISTORIC CONTEXT: MITCHELL, FLETCHER, & CO., INC., PHILADELPHIA

Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., Inc., was founded in c1865 as Mitchell & Fletcher by Charles W. Mitchell and George A. Fletcher, which appears to be probable considering the city directories and newspaper advertisements that appeared in 1866.<sup>33</sup> Prior to that time, Mitchell was a silk merchant with a personal estate of roughly \$15,000 in 1860; and Fletcher was a salesman. Both of Quaker families, Mitchell and Fletcher opened a store at 1204 Chestnut Street, where they were “Importers and Dealers in Fine Groceries.” It appears that the firm enjoyed immediate success and expanded to a location at the corner of Chestnut and Twelfth Streets. For the first ten years, they established their business as a Philadelphia staple in the importation and sale of fine groceries. During this time others joined the firm, including Florance W. Grugan, Samuel S. Thompson, Harry B. Hendrickson, and John S. Engart.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Gospill's Philadelphia City Directory* (Philadelphia: 1867), p. 924. Charles W. Mitchell: The son of Alderman Joshua Mitchell and Frances Buckman, Charles W. Mitchell was born about 1820, and would go on to become a successful silk merchant, as well as the co-founder of Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co. in Philadelphia. His first wife was Anna Catherine Jackson, who bore him at least five children. After her death, Mitchell married Lucretia Barnard with whom he had at least two children. In 1875 he died of “disease of the brain.” Mitchell is best known for his role in founding the eminent grocery establishment—Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., which became one of the premier dealers in fine groceries in Philadelphia.

<sup>34</sup> *Gospill's Philadelphia City Directory for 1890*; “Fatal Bicycle Ride,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 August 1890, p. 1.

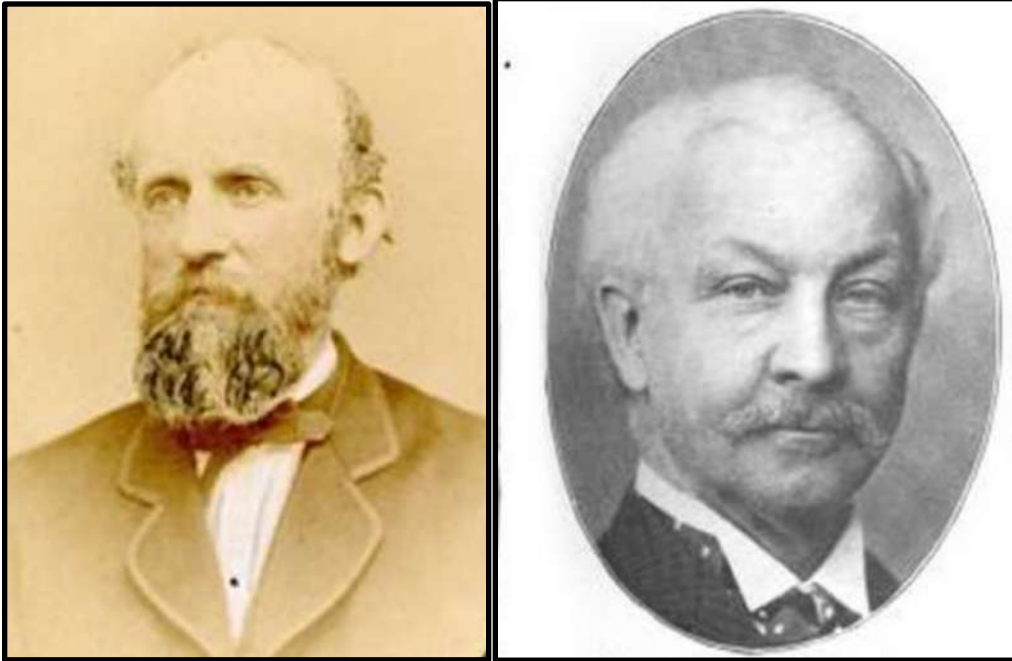


Figure 50. Left: Charles W. Mitchell (1820–1875). Source: Gourcher College. Figure 51. Right: George A. Fletcher. Source: Google Books.

In May 1875, Charles W. Mitchell died at age fifty-six of a “disease of the brain” and the company had to face reorganization.<sup>35</sup> The *Philadelphia Inquirer* made the following announcement on July 5, 1875:

The firm of Mitchell & Fletcher, importers and dealers in fine groceries, has been dissolved by the death of George W. Mitchell [Charles W. Mitchell]. George A. Fletcher, the surviving partner, has associated with him Samuel S. Thompson, and will continue the business of Mitchell & Fletcher, at the old stand, Twelfth and Chestnut streets, under the firm name of Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc.,<sup>36</sup>

Between 1875 and 1890, Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., “grew to the prominent position which it occupies today [1890] in the grocery trade.” and

<sup>35</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 May 1875, p. 7; “Personal,” *The Times* (Philadelphia), 28 May 1875), p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 July 1875, p. 2.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Fruits.</i></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ANNOUNCEMENT!</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">WE WILL OPEN AND DISPLAY OUR<br/> <b>WINTER STOCK</b><br/> OF<br/> <b>FINE CANNED FRUITS</b><br/> PRESERVES AND VEGETABLES<br/> DURING THE WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY,<br/> OCTOBER 22.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>We shall be pleased to have yourself and friends call and examine them. Every opportunity will be afforded to taste the Goods on Exhibition.</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MITCHELL, FLETCHER &amp; CO</b><br/> TWELFTH AND CHESTNUT.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FRUIT OPENING</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">EXTRAORDINARY.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FINE PRESERVES</b><br/> CANNED FRUITS, VEGETABLES, Etc.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Open for Inspection and Tasting During all<br/> This Week.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">A CORDIAL INVITATION IS EXTENDED TO ALL.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MITCHELL, FLETCHER &amp; CO.</b><br/> CHESTNUT AND TWELFTH.</p> |
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Figure 52. Left: *The Times*, 19 October 1877, 4. Figure 53. Right: *The Times*, 6 November 1879, 4.

**OUR ANNUAL OPENING**

OF

Fine Preserves, Canned Fruits, Vegetables, &c. &c.

**COMMENCES MONDAY, OCTOBER 13.**

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FRUITS, PRESERVES, &c. are displayed, OPEN FOR INSPECTION  
and TASTING During all the Week. COME and BRING YOUR  
FRIENDS, and Practically Test the High Excellence  
and FINE QUALITIES of These Goods.

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**MITCHELL, FLETCHER & CO**

**COR. CHESTNUT AND TWELFTH.**

Figure 54. *The Times*, 20 October 1880, 4.

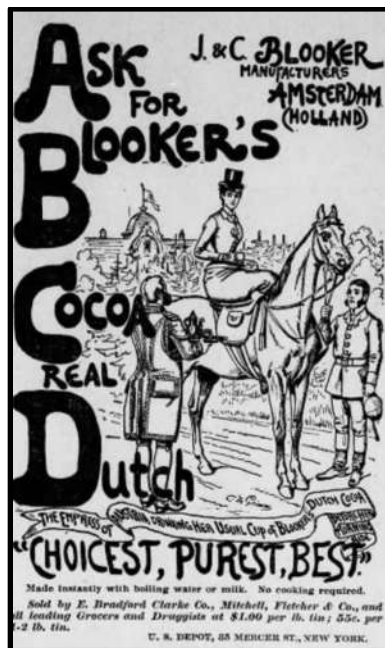
One of the special features of Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., was their “Annual Opening” of “Fine Preserves,” which became a yearly tradition.<sup>37</sup> The advertisements shown above provide insight to the nature of the sales event at their store at the corner of Chestnut and Twelfth Streets.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *The Times* (Philadelphia), 6 November 1879, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> *The Times* (Philadelphia), 20 October 1880, p. 4.



Left: *The Times*, 19 December 1883, 4. Right: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 10 December 1887, 7.



*The Times*, 23 February 1889, 3.

A sampling of advertisements shown above provide addition information on the type of products sold by the firm.

In time Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., became one of the finest if not the finest grocer in Philadelphia. The expansion into Germantown in 1889 marked the entry of the firm into the chain store business. Their catering to high-end customers no doubt informed their decision to move into Germantown. This also coincided with the beginning of the chain grocery store business in America when innovations in packaging (such as paper boxes, lids for tin cans) made it easier for food providers and purveyors to sell their wares widely and chain stores were a ready reseller. The success of their Germantown store at the subject property allowed them to expand farther in 1898 when they established a “West End” store

at the southwest corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Streets.<sup>39</sup> By 1899, the firm had adopted a modern grocery store model where all goods were accessible to customers in aisle rather than behind counters staffed by clerks.<sup>40</sup> In 1901 the firm expanded its West End store and engaged Addison Hutton to do the alterations.<sup>41</sup>



Left: *The Times*, 23 May 1885, 8. Right: *The Times*, 21 December 1887, 3. Source: Newspapers.com.

Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., continued to expand in the early twentieth century. They sold the subject property in 1919 and move to another Germantown location at 5600 Germantown Avenue.<sup>42</sup> By 1923 they opened a store in Atlantic City and continued to operate stores in Germantown and on Chestnut Street.<sup>43</sup> Their reputation as high-end store was demonstrated in advertisements for premium and specialty products that appeared in national publications, such as *Vogue* and the *Christian Science Monitor*.<sup>44</sup> The chain continued in Germantown into the 1930s and was finally bought out by the Thomas C. Fluke Company in 1936 at which time there was still a store at their original 12<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Streets location as well as one in Wayne and Atlantic City.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Advertisement, *The Times* (Philadelphia), 6 October 1898, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Advertisement, *The Times* (Philadelphia), 7 October 1899, p. 2. The advertisement proclaimed the “arrangement is novel – yes odd, but you’ll like it. You’re welcome everywhere – among the show cases, against shelves – even behind the counters if there were any.”

<sup>41</sup> *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide* v. 16, no. 27 (3 July 1901): 419.

<sup>42</sup> Deed: Mitchell Fletcher and Company, a corporation, to Nathan Berg, of the city of Philadelphia, for \$1, 21 November 1919, PDBK J.M.H., No. 646, p. 575, CAP.

<sup>43</sup> Advertisement, *The Christian Science Monitor* 29 May 1923, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Advertisement for Lady Betty’s Marmalades, *Vogue* 43 (15 April 1914), p. 103; Advertisement for Underwood Clam Bouillon, *Vogue* 78 (1 October 1931), p. 29; Advertisement for Brownsville Water Crackers, *Life* 49 (31 January 1907); Advertisement for Brownsville Water Crackers, *The Boston Cooking School Magazine of Culinary Science and Domestic Economics*, 1 June 1907; Advertisement for Ferris Fine Cured Hams and Bacon, *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* 48 (2 April 1898).

<sup>45</sup> Advertisement of Thomas C. Fluke Company, *Philadelphia Inquirer* 14 March 1936, p. 3.



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

The following sites were used to create the nomination:

Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network

Newspapers.com

Proquest Historical Newspapers

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Deed: Hannah Ann Johnson, trustee, to Hiram C. Himes, of Germantown, grocer, for \$17,000, 4 June 1894, PDBk T.G., No. 409, p. 445, CAP.

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