

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: 1822 Chestnut Street

Postal code: 19103

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Elon Dunbar House

Current/Common Name: 1822 Chestnut Street

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☐ excellent ☒ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: Mixed-use commercial and residential

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

6. DESCRIPTION

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

7. SIGNIFICANCE

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

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1858 to ~~1858~~ 1933

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1858; c. 1923 storefront

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: _____

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Charles A. Rubicam, builder

Original owner: Elon Dunbar

Other significant persons: Charles F. Haseltine

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

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

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

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization Philadelphia Historical Commission Date February 6, 2020

Name with Title Philadelphia Historical Commission staff Email Laura.DiPasquale@phila.gov

Street Address 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor Telephone 215-686-7660

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19102

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: February 6, 2020

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: February 7, 2020

Date of Notice Issuance: February 7, 2020

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: 19th & Sansom Corp

Address: Leroy E Kean Inc.

1821 Sansom St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19103

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 5/20/2020

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 6/12/2020

Date of Final Action: 6/12/2020, Criteria C, D, and J. See amended boundary

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

5. Boundary Description

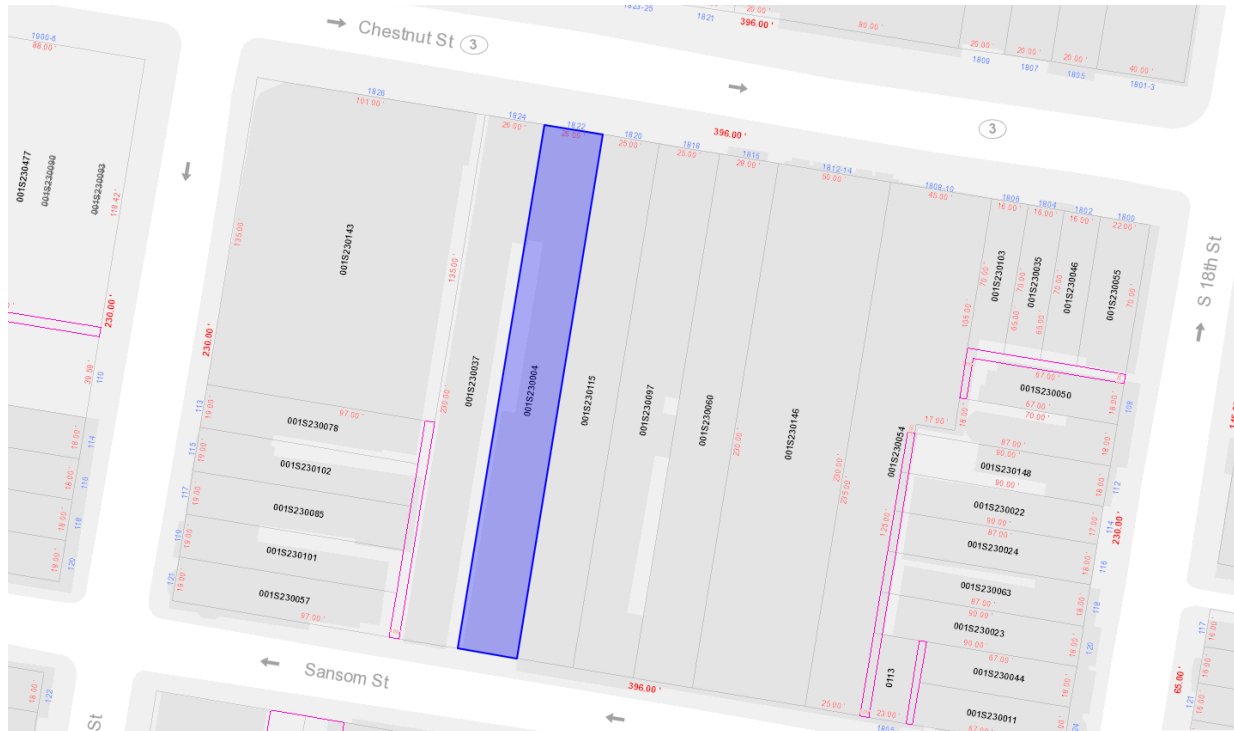


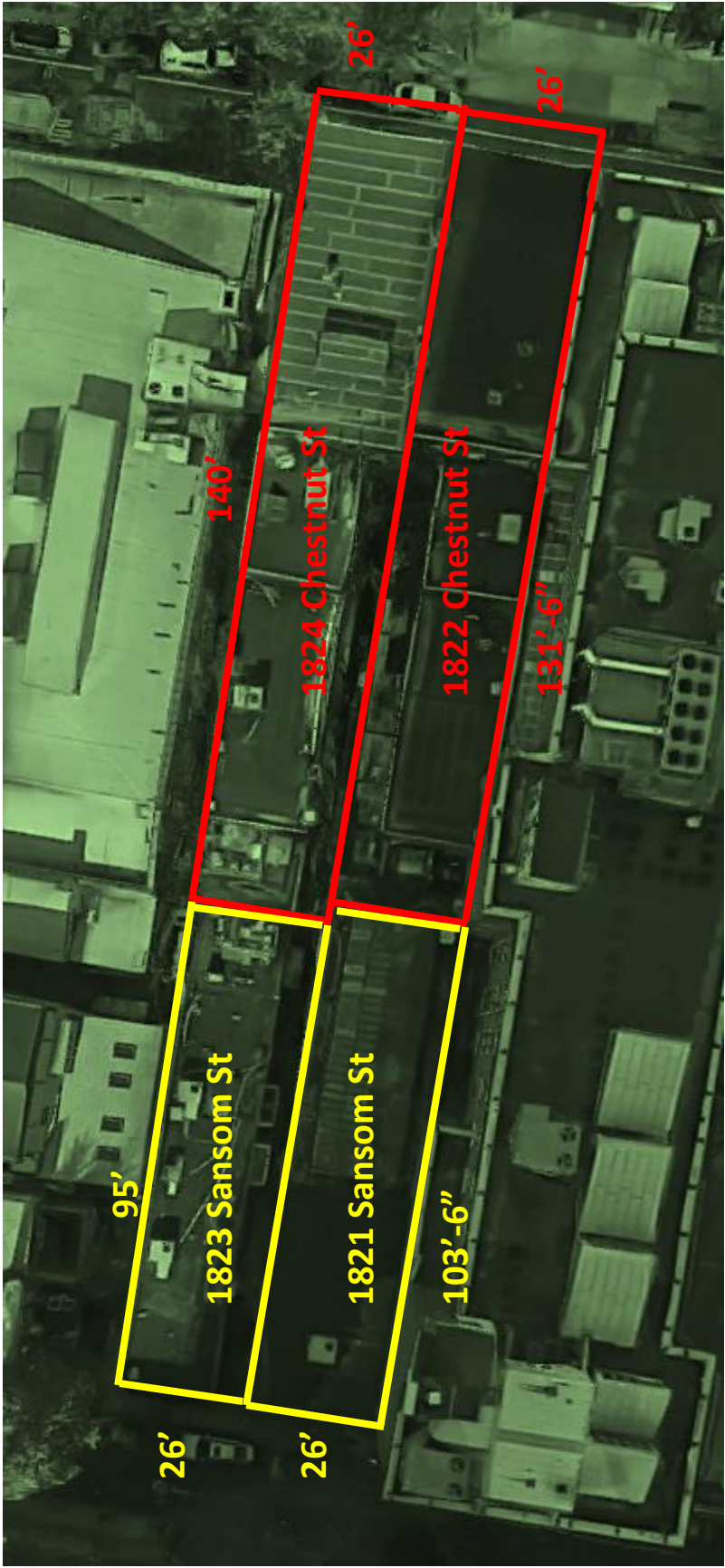
Figure 1. The boundary identifying the parcel at 1822 Chestnut Street. Source: CityAtlas.

Situate on the South side of Chestnut Street at the distance of 127 feet Eastward from the East side of 19th Street. Containing in front or breadth on the said Chestnut Street 26 feet and extending of that width in length or depth Southward between parallel lines at right angles to said Chestnut Street ~~235 feet to Sansom Street.~~

****AMENDED BOUNDARY, adopted by PHC at its meeting on 6/12/2020:**

26 feet in width along Chestnut Street x 131 feet 6 inches in depth from Chestnut Street (see attached)

DESIGNATED BOUNDARIES, SHOWN IN RED, FOR 1822 AND 1824 CHESTNUT ST, AS ADOPTED BY THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION 6/12/2020. YELLOW BOUNDARIES (AKA 1823 AND 1821 SANSOM ST) EXCLUDED FROM DESIGNATION



6. Architectural Description



Figure 2. View of 1822 Chestnut Street. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Located on the south side of Chestnut Street on a block that transitioned from residential to commercial during the early twentieth century, the Elon Dunbar House is an Italianate rowhouse at 1822 Chestnut Street. It is surrounded by high-style and architecturally significant buildings, such as the Bair Funeral Home (now Boyds), the Belgravia, the Aldine Theatre, and the Samuel T. Freeman Auction Company building. Constructed in 1858 for Elon Dunbar, the yellow sandstone-clad building at 1822 Chestnut Street rises four stories in height and spans three bays in width (Figure 2). The parcel extends a full block from Chestnut Street at the north to Sansom Street at the south. In plan, the building consists of a main block and rear ell. A carriage house historically fronted Sansom Street at the rear of the building. The structure remains but has been extensively altered.

The Elon Dunbar House historically mirrored its western neighbor, though it was the first of the pair to be built. In the mid-nineteenth century, the 1800 block of Chestnut Street housed some of

Philadelphia's most fashionable citizens and was anchored by the palatial, marble-clad Jayne Mansion to west of the pair at 1822 and 1824 Chestnut Street (Figure 3). While the buildings' front facades still allude to the upscale residential district in which they were constructed, the area's transformation to a commercial center resulted in several ground-story alterations to accommodate the buildings' changes in use.



Figure 3. Jayne Mansion at southeast corner of 19th and Chestnut Streets, with 1824 Chestnut Street at far left showing original residential ground floor, c.1900. Source: PhillyHistory.org.

North (Chestnut Street) elevation

The north or Chestnut Street elevation of the Elon Dunbar House is the front façade. The three upper stories largely reflect the original residential design, with the yellow sandstone exposed and distinctive Italianate features intact (Figure 4). Each of the three stories includes three two-over-two segmentally-arched double-hung windows with carved hoods and projecting sills. While all the same width, the windows become progressively shorter at the third and fourth stories. A decorative wood cornice caps the façade and features arched panels with rosettes between brackets, though a number of rosettes are now missing. Large, carved end brackets contain floral motifs and acanthus leaves.

As it stands now, the Elon Dunbar House presents the history of Chestnut Street through the dichotomy of its façade: with its residential Italianate upper stories distinctly separate from its Art Deco storefront. As the block transformed from residential to commercial, alterations to the building at 1822 Chestnut Street largely involved the installation and adaptation of the storefront. By 1921, the pair of large four-over-four first-story residential windows was replaced with a single storefront window; in this early commercial iteration, the building retained its entry door and elaborately carved hood (Figure 5). In the following years, however, the storefront was expanded to the entirety of the ground floor (Figure 6).

Within a few years, the richly detailed brownstone door was traded for a streamlined entry that matched the storefront.¹ The Art Deco storefront window is framed with glazed terra cotta moldings formed in fruit, pinecone, and bird motifs, while the doorway features egg and dart moldings with Greek keys in the upper corners of the door surround (Figure 7). The first-story masonry was stuccoed, and the word “Valiant,” advertising the J. G. Valiant Company that occupied the building in the 1920s, was applied above the storefront. A related patera featuring a woman with a paint palette and brushes, a nod to the Valiant Company’s trade, hangs above the entrance. An egg and dart terra cotta cornice separates the ground-story commercial space from the largely unaltered façade above.



Figure 4. The upper stories of 1822 Chestnut Street. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission.

¹ Photographs from 1900, 1921, and 1933, as well as descriptions of storefront alterations available in the Philadelphia Real Estate and Builders’ Guide, provide the progression of changes. Though the storefront of 1822 Chestnut Street is not entirely visible in the 1933 photograph, it likely changed at about the same time and in the same manner as the storefront of 1824 Chestnut Street.



Figure 5. April 1921 photograph showing the now-demolished Jayne Mansion at the corner of 19th and Chestnut Streets with 1822 and 1824 Chestnut Street at left. Note that the storefronts have been created, though the original entrances were retained. Source: Department of Records, City of Philadelphia.



Figure 6. June 1933 photograph with the Aldine Theatre constructed on the Jayne Mansion site; the storefronts of 1822 and 1824 Chestnut Street (far left) have already been altered to their current configurations, eliminating the residential use at the ground stories. Source: PhillyHistory.org.



Figure 7. Current storefront of 1822 Chestnut Street. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission.

West Elevation

The west elevation of the main block functions as a party wall and is not visible. The portion of the rear ell immediately adjacent to the main block extends three stories in height; the ell then lowers to two stories. The ell, clad in brick, features regular punched openings and is six bays deep (Figure 8). The entirety of the historic structure, including the main block and rear ell, occupies approximately half of the parcel.



Figure 8. View from the southwest of the rear of 1822 Chestnut Street, 2018. Source: Pictometry.

East Elevation

The east wall of the main block and rear ell of 1822 Chestnut Street functions solely as a party wall and is not visible.

South (Sansom Street) Elevation

At the rear of 1822 Chestnut Street is a two-story red brick commercial building with modern storefront system, currently occupied by a dry cleaner on the first floor and offices on the second floor. It is known as 1821 Sansom Street (Figure 9). A building at the rear first appears on an 1858 Hexamer & Locher map and likely served as a carriage house for the residence fronting Chestnut Street. By 1910, the rear building was connected with the rear of the building at 1822 Chestnut Street. A 1958 zoning document indicates that the front wall was replaced at that time. For the purposes of this nomination, the rear building is considered to be non-contributing.



Figure 9. Rear building at 1822 Chestnut Street, known as 1821 Sansom Street. February 2020.

Looking past the building fronting Sansom Street, the rear of the subject building at 1822 Chestnut is only partially visible from the public right-of-way. Through the alley, one can see a red brick rear wall with corbelled cornice (Figure 11).



Figure 10. Sansom Street façade of the carriage house at 1822 Chestnut Street, 26 February 1931. Source: Dallin Aerial Survey Company, Hagley Library.



Figure 11. West wall of rear building and partial view of rear wall at 1822 Chestnut Street. February 2020.

7. Statement of Significance

The property at 1822 Chestnut Street, known as the Elon Dunbar House, is historically significant and should be listed individually on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property satisfies Criteria for Designation C, D, and J as delineated in Section 14-1004(1) of the Philadelphia Code. Constructed in 1858, the building reflects the environment in an era characterized by the popular Italianate style, the most popular style of the Civil War Era, satisfying Criterion C. Additionally, the building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Italianate style, including its low-pitched roof with wide eaves supported by decorative brackets, and tall two-over-two segmentally-arched double-hung windows with dramatic carved hoods and projecting sills, satisfying Criterion D. With its brownstone upper floors and commercial ground floor, the property represents both the residential development of the upper-class Rittenhouse neighborhood in the mid-nineteenth century, and the commercial development of Chestnut Street in the early decades of the twentieth century, satisfying Criterion J.

Elon Dunbar

Elon Dunbar was born in Plymouth, Connecticut in 1801 and settled in Philadelphia about 1830. Dunbar was a wealthy dry goods merchant with various Philadelphia firms including O'Brien & Dunbar, Dunbar & Welling, and Dunbar, Brooke & Dunning. He retired in 1847. He was a founding member of and active in the Church of the Holy Trinity on Rittenhouse Square. Dunbar died at his residence at 1822 Chestnut Street in 1877.²

Criterion J: Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Center City west of Broad Street remained virtually undeveloped, comprised mostly of open fields, pastures, clay pits, and scattered clusters of housing and industry with wharves along the Schuylkill River. The first significant phase of residential construction west of Broad Street occurred in the 1830s, owing to development pressure from the city's growing business district on residential properties east of Broad Street (Figure 12). Mirroring the development of Washington Square to the east one generation earlier, the blocks of Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Delancey Streets around Rittenhouse Square quickly became a fashionable locale for the homes, churches, and cultural institutions of the city's established upper and upper-middle class families. These families employed prestigious architects, including John Haviland, who designed the 1830's Colonnade Row at 15th and Chestnut Streets, and Thomas U. Walter, who designed the porticoed Epiphany Episcopal Church opposite Colonnade Row.³

Development moved west, beginning in earnest on the 1800 blocks of Chestnut and Walnut Streets in the 1850s. Rowhouses lined the west side of 18th Street (then called Schuylkill 5th) between Chestnut and Sansom Streets by 1849, joined by a smattering of other buildings along the north side of Chestnut Street (Figure 13). In 1853, the impressive brownstone Tabernacle Baptist Church, designed by New England architect William Boyington, was constructed on the north side of Chestnut Street, west of 18th Street (Figure 14). A detailed profile of the church in *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion* at the time of its construction noted that, "within a few years several splendid structures for devotional

² Obituary for Elon Dunbar, *Inquirer*, 2 August 1877, p. 2; Frederic A. Holden and E. Dunbar Lockwood, *Descendants of Robert Lockwood* (Philadelphia, 1889), p. 309-311.

³ Caroline A. Benenson and Jefferson M. Moak. "Center City West Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, September 28, 1987.

purposes have been reared, and the district west of Broad Street may claim the honor of having contributed its full share to the architectural adornment of the city...This elegant building is about being finished, and in point of beauty of design and finish, will rank with any similar structure in the city.”⁴

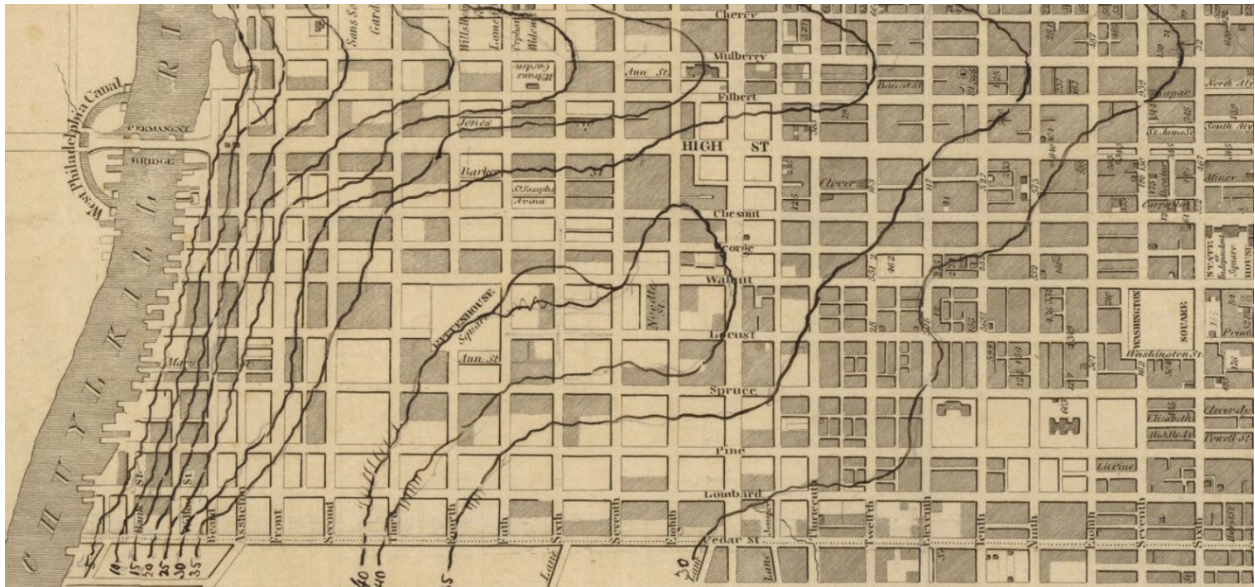


Figure 12: Detail of the Map of the City of Philadelphia, 1831, showing nearly complete development east of Broad Street and spotty development west of Broad. The 1800 block of Chestnut, located between what was then known as Schuylkill Fourth (19th) and Fifth (18th) Streets was as of yet undeveloped. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.



Figure 13: Detail of the 1849 J. C. Sidney Map of the City of Philadelphia, showing development slowly creeping westward. By this time, a few buildings had been constructed on the 1800 block of Chestnut Street. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

⁴ Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion (Boston), v. 7, n. 5, p. 72 (8/5/1854).

The division of the estate of Edward Shippen Burd by his executors in the late 1840s opened a large block of undeveloped land east of Schuylkill 4th (19th Street) between Chestnut and Sansom Streets to development. In 1858, dry goods merchant Elon Dunbar purchased a portion of that land from Joseph Harrison Jr.⁵ Dunbar, along with neighboring property owner Robert DeSilver, commissioned Charles A. Rubicam to build large brownstone mansions at 1822 and 1820 Chestnut Street, respectively.⁶ Dunbar sold the adjoining lot at 1824 Chestnut to Edward H. Trotter, who in turn hired Rubicam to construct a building of the “same character and dimensions” the following year.⁷ Rubicam was “an extensive builder,” who “enjoyed an excellent reputation, and some of the best and most substantial buildings in this city were erected under his supervision.”⁸ The brownstone residences, which were situated on lots 25 to 26 feet wide, extended the full 235-foot depth to Sansom Street, where their stables were located. Rubicam’s high-style designs were in keeping with the bracketed Italianate styles that would come to characterize the Rittenhouse neighborhood between 17th and 20th Streets, but were lauded as being “fitted up in the finest style” and “among the finest that have been made on Chestnut Street for dwellings.”⁹ With the completion of 1824 Chestnut Street, the 1800 block of Chestnut Street was nearly fully built out by 1860, with the notable exception of a large parcel at the southeast corner of 19th and Chestnut, which would become home to the impressive John McArthur, Jr.-designed Second Empire mansion for Dr. David Jayne following the Civil War (See Figure 3).

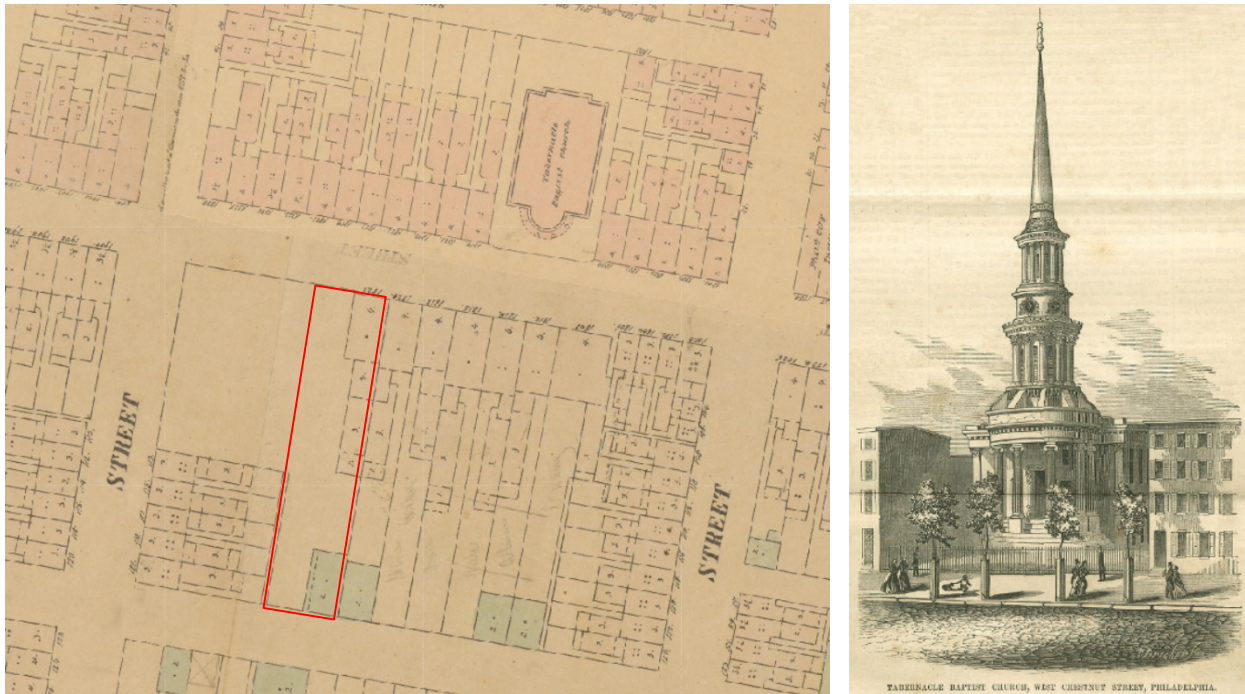


Figure 14: Left, detail of 1858 Hexamer & Locher atlas showing the 1800 block of Chestnut Street. Note that 1824 Chestnut, built in 1859, does not appear on the map. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. Right, Tabernacle Baptist Church and the neighboring brick residences, 1854. Source: Gleason’s Pictorial Drawing Room Companion (Boston), v.7, n.5, p. 72.

⁵ Philadelphia Deed Book ADB-16-67.

⁶ Robert DeSilver purchased an undeveloped lot in 1857 from Joseph Harrison Jr. (Philadelphia Deed Book ADB-18-294), who had purchased a large block of land from the Burd estate in 1852 (Philadelphia Deed Book TH-55-99).

⁷ “A Fine Improvement,” *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 8 March 1859, p. 1.

⁸ “Well-Known Citizen Deceased,” *Inquirer*, 15 September 1876, p. 3.

⁹ Ibid.



Figure 15: In the mid-nineteenth century, the character of the 1800 block of Chestnut Street appeared similar to that of its counterpart to the south along Walnut Street, shown here, with large four-story Italianate homes built for the city's upper class residents. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia, Castner Collection, item nos. pdcc01258 (left) and pdcc01268 (right).

Within a few short decades after this residential development, Chestnut and Walnut Streets west of Broad Street evolved into an area of retail, banking, and other professions; the streetscape transformed from its residential character to one of low and high-rise retail and office buildings. Hints of the changes to come were evident as early as 1888, when a doctors' office began operating out of 1822 Chestnut Street, but the earliest and most significant change to the 1800 block of Chestnut Street occurred in 1896, when two rowhouses on the north side of Chestnut Street were demolished to make way for an eleven-story Wilson Brothers-designed Professional Building (See Figure 17). Tabernacle Baptist Church was replaced by the eight-story Belgravia Hotel in 1902, and 1820 and 1818 Chestnut were demolished for the J.T. Windrim-designed Oliver Bair Company building in 1907. Dr. David Jayne's mansion, already in poor condition despite being only 55 years old, gave way for the Aldine Theatre in 1921. The remaining three-and-one-half to four-story residential buildings on the 1800 block of Chestnut Street were refaced or replaced with a heterogeneous collection of early twentieth-century commercial designs. Only 1822 and 1824 Chestnut Street survived relatively unscathed, their residential ground floors retained until the early 1920s, when storefronts were added to accommodate the changing uses and context of the buildings.

Around the turn of the century, following a catastrophic fire in his office and galleries at the Haseltine Building at 1416-18 Chestnut Street, famous art dealer Charles F. Haseltine moved his home and operations to 1822 and 1824 Chestnut Street. From 1901 until his death in 1915, 1822 and 1824 Chestnut Street are listed interchangeably as Haseltine's home and galleries.¹⁰ Haseltine purchased 1824 Chestnut Street in 1906, which he appears to have also run as an apartment building for a time. Following his death in 1915, Haseltine's collection were auctioned off, and the buildings at 1822 and 1824 Chestnut Street sold. In keeping with the commercial development of Chestnut Street, storefronts were added to the properties and leased to commercial tenants, including an opticians' office and

¹⁰ *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 13 Dec 1903, p. 29.

millinery shop. The upper floors continued their residential use, and appear much the same as they did for their first owner, Elon Dunbar, in 1858.



Figure 16: Detail of the 1910 G.W. Bromley atlas of Philadelphia showing the changing character of Chestnut Street. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.



Figure 17: Left, an 1899 view of the Wilson Brothers-designed Professional Building which replaced earlier residential rowhouses at 1831 and 1833 Chestnut Street, from *The Official Office Building Directory and Architectural Handbook of Philadelphia*, The Commercial Publishing and Directory Co., Philadelphia, 1899, p. 526. Right, the same view in 1963. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Criterion C: Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

Criterion D: Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen.

For the design of his new house, Elon Dunbar chose a high-style version of the popular Italianate style, which drew inspiration from fifteenth-century Italian palazzo design, the classical detail, elegance, and gravitas of which were “deemed eminently suitable for symbolizing prosperity and social position in a limited space.”¹¹ Dominant during the period from 1855 to 1870, the Italianate style lent itself well to numerous building forms, including urban and rural residences, commercial, and institutional buildings. Nationally, the Italianate style was the most popular style of the 1850s for urban row construction. The facades of Italian Renaissance palazzi offered a prototype for John Notman’s Athenaeum on Washington Square of 1845-47 (Figure 18) and for Thomas Ustick Walter’s Lewis’s Row of 1849 (Figure 19). Walter adopted the characteristics of a Renaissance façade using brownstone instead of brick on this row and many other commissions in Philadelphia. Notman and others were responsible for the designs of 1618, 1620, and 1622 Locust Street, all considered to be excellent examples in Philadelphia of the Italianate style (Figure 20) along with the later Italianate rowhouses on the 2000 block of Walnut Street, which showcase the high front stoop which was originally found on the subject building (Figure 21).¹²



Figure 18. Athenaeum of Philadelphia at 219 S. 6th Street. Source: Steve Minor, Flickr.

¹¹ Suzanne Spellman, “Italianate Architecture.” *Brownstoner*, April 6, 2016.

¹² Bobbye Burke et al, *Historic Rittenhouse: A Philadelphia Neighborhood* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 48-49.



Figure 19. 1500 block of Pine Street, Lewis's Row. Source: Google Street View, 2019.



Figure 20. 1600 block of Locust Street. Source: Google Street View, 2018.



Figure 21. 2000 block of Walnut Street. Source: Google Street View, 2017.

Distinguishing characteristics of the urban townhouse adaptation of the Italianate style found at 1822 Chestnut Street include its low-pitched roof with wide eaves supported by decorative brackets; tall two-over-two segmentally-arched double-hung windows with dramatic carved hoods and projecting sills, and window heights differentiated by floor level.¹³ With its yellow sandstone façade, the building at 1822 Chestnut Street further presented a more stylish version of the brick-fronted Italianate rowhouses found throughout Philadelphia.

While the architect of 1822 Chestnut Street is not known, its original appearance was very similar to that of the building that stood at 1804 Arch Street, a c. 1853 townhouse designed by Stephen Decatur Button and erected for B. A. Fahnestock (Figure 22; left). Button's façade for the Fahnestock house at 1804 Arch Street can be contrasted with Thomas Ustick Walter's design for an unidentified townhouse (Figure 22; right). Where Walter was restrained, drawing from his earlier Greek Revival work, Button, according to architectural historian Jeffery Cohen, "dressed his façade with an insistent richness and florid ornament. Arches, encrusted with stone tiaras, adopt a variety of curving profiles, with only a weak indication of their springing levels rather than more architectonic shapes or treatments. Beneath these arches round-headed wooden tracery tops the paired ranges of lights in each window, with an intervening circle at the first- and fourth-floor levels. These allude to early Renaissance palaces in Venice, an admixture that infused the Italianate style of the 1850s with additional richness compared to the more rectilinear Roman models that had reigned in the late 1840s. By its decorative celebration and its new imposing scale, this inflected Italianate style served especially to celebrate the wealth and announce the presence of those who were newly arrived, both economically and socially. A similar style and motive marked the

¹³ "Italianate Villa/Italianate Style 1840 - 1885." Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/italianate.html>.

new commercial palaces then rising in Philadelphia's old center."¹⁴ The same year that Button designed the Fahnestock house, 1853, he designed an Italianate commercial building at 920-22 Chestnut Street for Elon Dunbar, the original owner of 1822 Chestnut Street (Figure 24).¹⁵ Button is also known for erecting "many of the handsomest private residences around Rittenhouse Square."¹⁶ It is likely that Button designed the Elon Dunbar House.

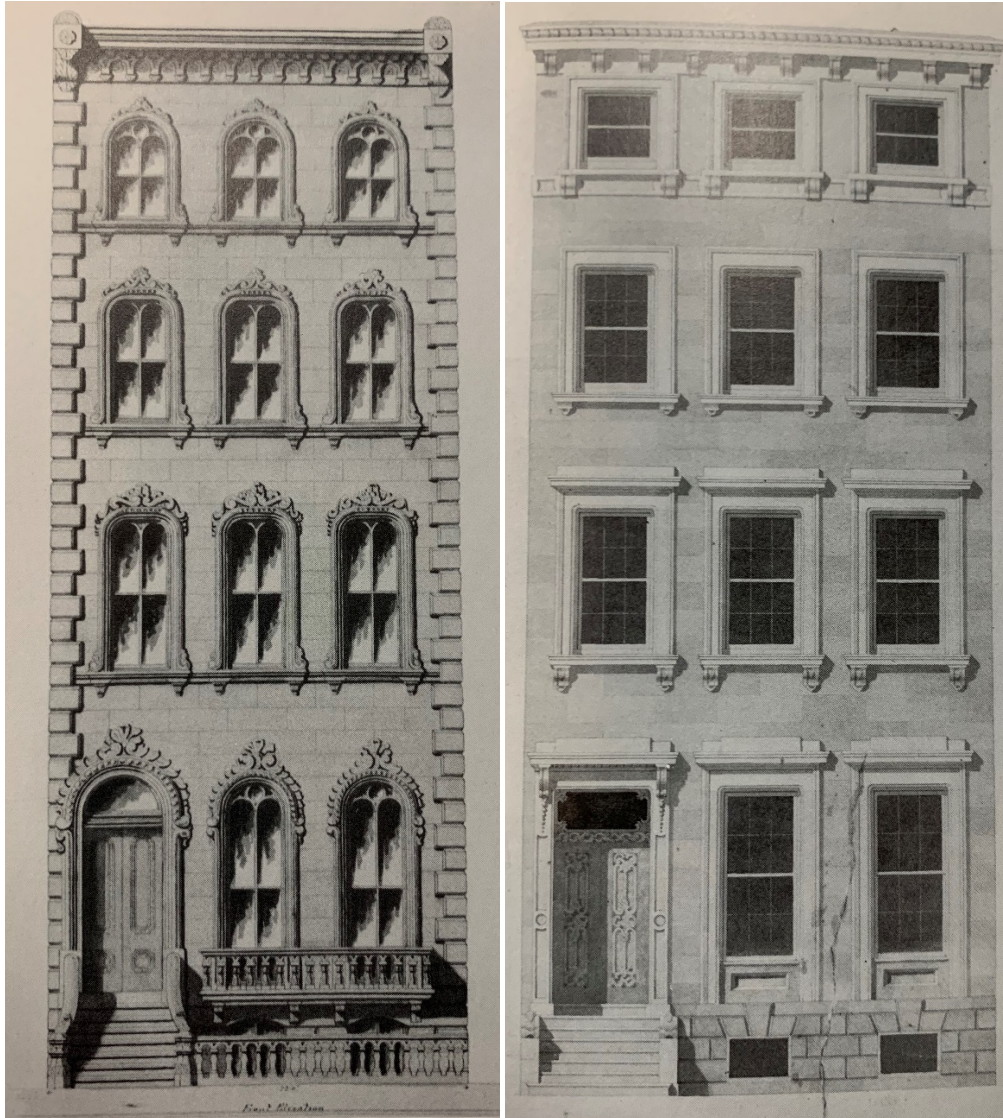


Figure 22. Left: B. A. Fahnestock Townhouse at 1804 Arch Street. Source: O’Gorman et al, p. 103. Right: “Unidentified Townhouse.” Source: O’Gorman et al, p. 93.

¹⁴ James F. O’Gorman, Jeffrey A. Cohen, et al, *Drawing Toward Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics 1732-1986* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 103-104.

¹⁵ On the Dunbar buildings at 920-22 Chestnut Street, see: “Large Contract,” *Public Ledger*, 9 February 1853, p. 2. On Philadelphia’s commercial architecture of the 1850s, see: Winston Weisman, “Philadelphia Functionalism and Sullivan,” in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 20, no. 1, March 1961, p. 3-19.

¹⁶ “The Oldest Architect: Stephen D. Button Celebrates his Eightieth Birthday,” *The Times* (Philadelphia), 16 June 1892, p. 7.



Figure 23. 1822 Chestnut Street. Source: CBRE.com.

As evidenced by its popularity, Italianate architecture knew no class boundaries, and was used on earlier, more simple buildings as well as higher-style facades such as those at 1822 and 1824 Chestnut Street. The often-incorporated high square towers of the Italianate Villa design made the style a natural choice for upscale homes of the newly rich; however, the brackets and other architecture details, made affordable by new methods for machine production, were easily applied to simple cottages and townhouses. New technologies also made it possible to affordably produce cast-iron decorations beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, making the Italianate a favored style of this period for practical yet elegant designs of urban townhouses. While the façade of 1822 Chestnut Street does not specifically feature cast-iron detailing, one can see the influence of its popularity at this time via the fluidity and detail of the dramatic carved hoods and sills at the windows, which stand in stark contrast to the earlier rectilinear designs which characterized early Italianate townhouse design. Italianate remained a preferred house style in the region through the 1870s, and is a visual hallmark of the Rittenhouse-area streetscape.¹⁷

¹⁷ Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 118-121; "Picturesque Italianate Architecture in the U.S." <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-italianate-house-style-178008>.

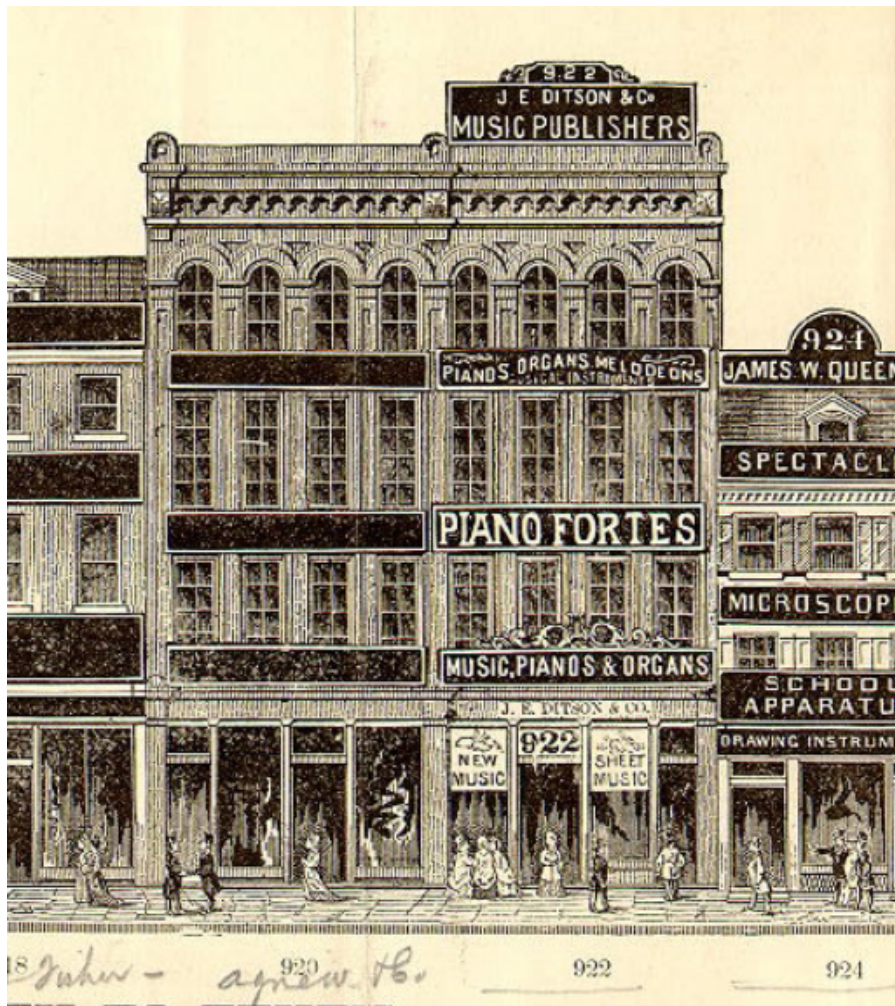


Figure 24. 920-22 Chestnut Street, designed by Button for Elon Dunbar, the original owner of 1822 Chestnut Street. Source: Baxter's Panoramic Business Directories, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

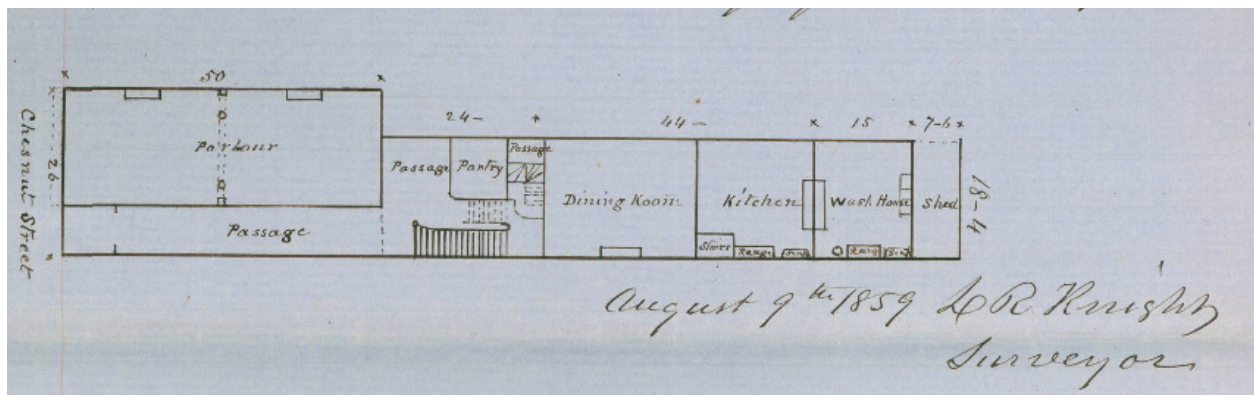


Figure 25. Floor plan for 1824 Chestnut Street from 1859. It is assumed that the original interior plan for 1822 Chestnut Street was the mirror image of that at 1824 Chestnut Street. Source: Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, Cancelled Fire Insurance Surveys, Philadelphia Contributionship (Archives), policy number 10141.

Conclusion

In summary, the building at 1822 Chestnut Street merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, satisfying Criteria for Designation C, D, and J. The building reflects the development of Chestnut Street from the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth-century, as well as the environment in an era characterized by the popular Italianate style, which was nationally the most popular style of the 1850s for urban row construction, satisfying Criteria for Designation C and J. Additionally, the building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Italianate style, including its low-pitched roof with wide eaves supported by decorative brackets, and tall two-over-two segmentally-arched double-hung windows with dramatic carved hoods and projecting sills, satisfying Criterion D.

8. Major Sources Cited

Benenson, Caroline A. and Jefferson M. Moak. "Center City West Historic District." National Register of Historic Places nomination form. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, September 28, 1987.

Burke, Bobbye, Otto Sperr, Hugh J. McCauley and Trina Vaux. *Historic Rittenhouse: A Philadelphia Neighborhood*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

O'Gorman, James F., Jeffrey A. Cohen, George E. Thomas and G. Holmes Perkins. *Drawing Toward Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics 1732-1986*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.

Roth, Leland M. *A Concise History of American Architecture*. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.

The Philadelphia Inquirer. Various advertisements and articles. Accessed February 4, 2020. Newspapers.com.