

COMMENT ON NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

ADDRESS: 4100 Haverford Ave, West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse

OVERVIEW: The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 4100 Haverford Avenue located in the Haverford North neighborhood of West Philadelphia and historically known as the West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission's meetings.

According to the nomination, the West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse is significant under Criterion A in the Area of Transportation. Following the annexation of 130 square miles into the City of Philadelphia in 1854, growth of areas outside of the city's original boundaries was largely due to the streetcar industry. The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company (WPPRC) was established in 1858 following the completion of a rail line along Market Street that ran from 3rd Street in Center City to 41st Street in West Philadelphia. The WPPRC Carhouse was constructed in 1876 as its operations expanded to provide access to the Centennial International Exhibition in Fairmount Park and served as a trolley car assembly and repair building at the western reaches of the line. Today, the building stands as the sole remaining vestige of the company, as well as one of the few reminders of the impact of the streetcar industry on the development of West Philadelphia. The Period of Significance for the building is 1876, when construction completed and ends in 1922 when it ended operation as a streetcar carhouse. The property was listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 2019.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse

Other names/site number: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 4100 Haverford Avenue

City or town: Philadelphia State: PA County: Philadelphia

Not For Publication: NA Vicinity: NA

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national **statewide** **local** Applicable National Register Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

_____ Signature of certifying official	_____ Date
_____ Title/State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ Signature of commenting official:	_____ Date
_____ Title/State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

INDUSTRIAL: manufacturing facility

Current Functions

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification: LATE VICTORIAN

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Limestone

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company (WPPRC) Carhouse, located at 4100 Haverford Avenue, was constructed in 1876; it is located in West Philadelphia, a section of the city located west of the Schuylkill River, approximately one mile from Center City. The Carhouse is sited at the southwest corner of the intersection of Haverford Avenue and N. 41st Street, surrounded by low-rise single and multi-family residences constructed in the late-19th and early-20th centuries and more recent residential development. The two-story Late Victorian-style Carhouse is rectilinear in form with a prominent street-facing gable fronting Haverford Avenue. The building extends south along N. 41st Street to Brandywine Street. The red brick exterior features polychromatic brickwork, limestone banding, and Eastlake-inspired carved piers at the three large vehicular entrances which served the passenger streetcars that were housed in the building. The building retains its historic form, design and materials and retains a high degree of integrity.

Setting: The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse is located within the Haverford North neighborhood in West Philadelphia, at the southwest corner of Haverford Avenue and N. 41st Street. The subject property is located approximately five blocks west of the intersection of Haverford and Lancaster Avenues in a largely residential and commercial area. The Carhouse is located roughly a half mile north of the northernmost boundary of the West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb Historic District (NR 1998).

The subject building is located roughly one mile west of Interstate 76, which runs along the western bank of the Schuylkill River and is situated approximately 0.5 mile northwest of the University City area where the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University are located. The architecture of the neighborhood is primarily residential, and is mainly comprised of brick buildings, predominantly rowhomes, constructed in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. Modern residential buildings constructed in the late-20th and early-21st centuries can also be found in the surrounding area. The building's primary north elevation fronts Haverford Avenue, one of the principal thoroughfares through West Philadelphia. The east elevation fronts N. 41st Street, which features remnants of the historic street car rails; the west elevation abuts a small undeveloped lot where an unrelated commercial building once stood, and the south elevation fronts Brandywine Street.

Site: The subject building is located on a 0.27-acre site at the southwest corner of Haverford Avenue and N. 41st Street. The building occupies the full extent of the L-shaped parcel (see Figure 1). Site features are limited, with the building constructed to the lot line on all elevations (see Figures 2 and 3). The north, east and south elevations are street-facing and are bound by concrete sidewalks. The west elevation abuts a historically unrelated vacant parcel.

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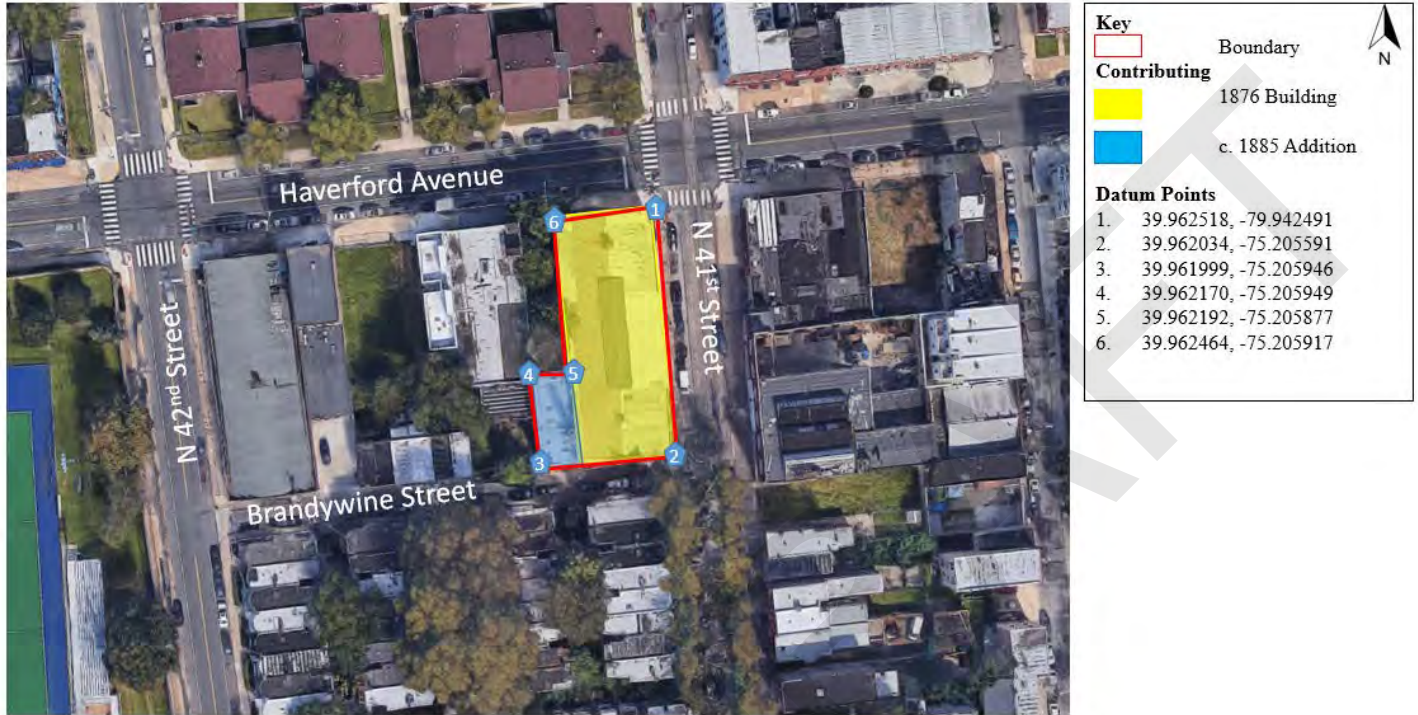
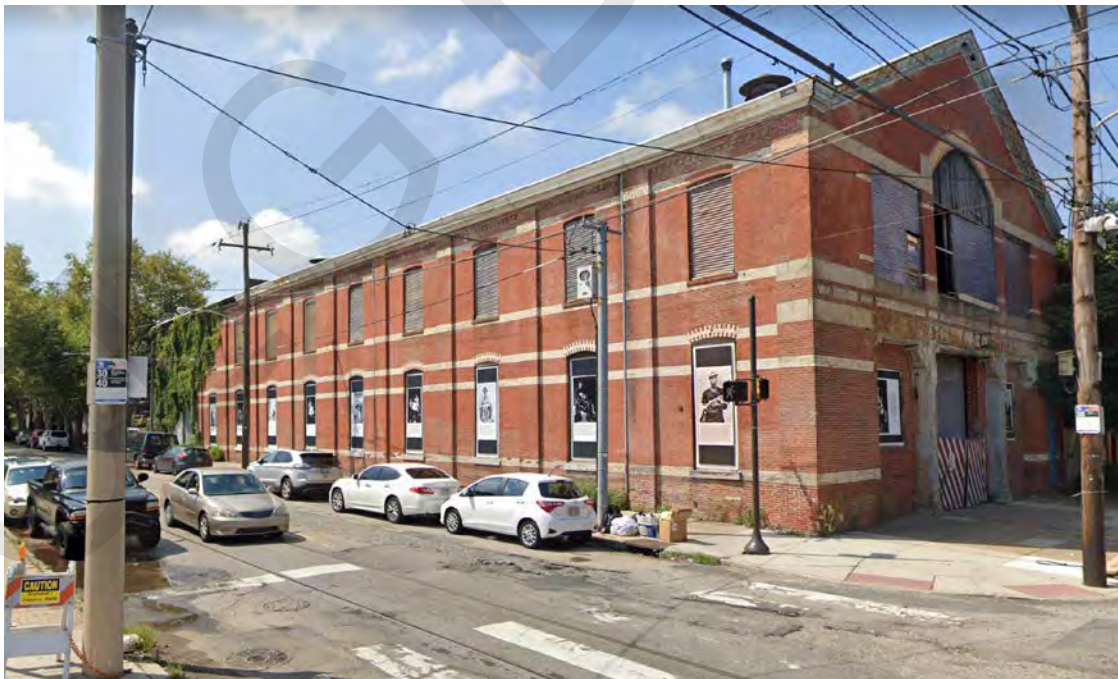


Figure 1: National Register Boundary Map & Site Plan (Boundary Datum Points in Red)
Image Source: Google Maps



(Photo 1): View of Site and East Elevation, Looking Southwest on N. 41st Street

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Figure 3 (Photo 2): View of Site and East Elevation, Looking Northwest on N. 41st Street

Structure: The main building is a two-story structure with red brick load-bearing walls and a clear span exposed wood truss roof (see Figures 2 and 3). The smaller, two-story addition features red brick load-bearing walls with steel beams and arched brick deck with areas of heavy timber floor structure (see Figure 4).

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Figure 4 (Photo 3): View of c. 1885 Addition, Looking North

Exterior: The subject building is Late Victorian in style and is largely free-standing with three street-facing elevations. In massing, the building is two-stories in height and assumes a rectilinear form extending south along N. 41st Street from Haverford Avenue to Brandywine Street. A small two-story addition was added c. 1885 to the southwest corner of the building and fronts Brandywine Street. The subject building is fully exposed on the primary north and secondary east and south elevations, and the c. 1885 addition abuts an adjacent building to the west. A majority of the west elevation is exposed within a private courtyard that is located on the adjacent non-historic parcel and is enclosed by a modern fence at the Haverford Avenue (north) end of the lot. The building's exterior is distinctive with red brick walls ornamented with polychrome brick and limestone banding. The building's primary pedestrian and vehicular entrances are located on the primary Haverford Avenue elevation. Secondary entrances are located at the east and south elevations. Fenestration is provided by a limited number of surviving 9/9 wood windows in fair-to-poor condition, with some window openings consisting of missing and replacement sash, and most openings covered over with modern boards or corrugated material. The building features a front-gabled roof, with a long central skylight.

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North Elevation: The north elevation, fronting on Haverford Avenue, is the building's primary elevation, composed of red brick with patterned and polychrome brick and limestone ornamentation. The first and second floors are delineated by polychromatic, patterned black-and-white brick bands and limestone strings. Beneath these decorative masonry bands is a central vehicular bay flanked by smaller bays that were historically utilized to allow passage for the entering and exiting streetcars. The vehicular bays are delineated by Eastlake-inspired carved stone columns with applied metal trim. The central vehicular bay contains a modern metal roll-down door; the flanking vehicular bays have been infilled with brick setback within the openings. A single pedestrian door opening is located at the west end of the main elevation and contains a steel fire door with 4-light wood transom. At the second floor level, fenestration is provided by a massive central, pointed-arched window opening with tripartite windows, flanked by banks of three windows. These window openings are infilled with modern corrugated plastic panels with wood boards within the arch (see Figure 5).

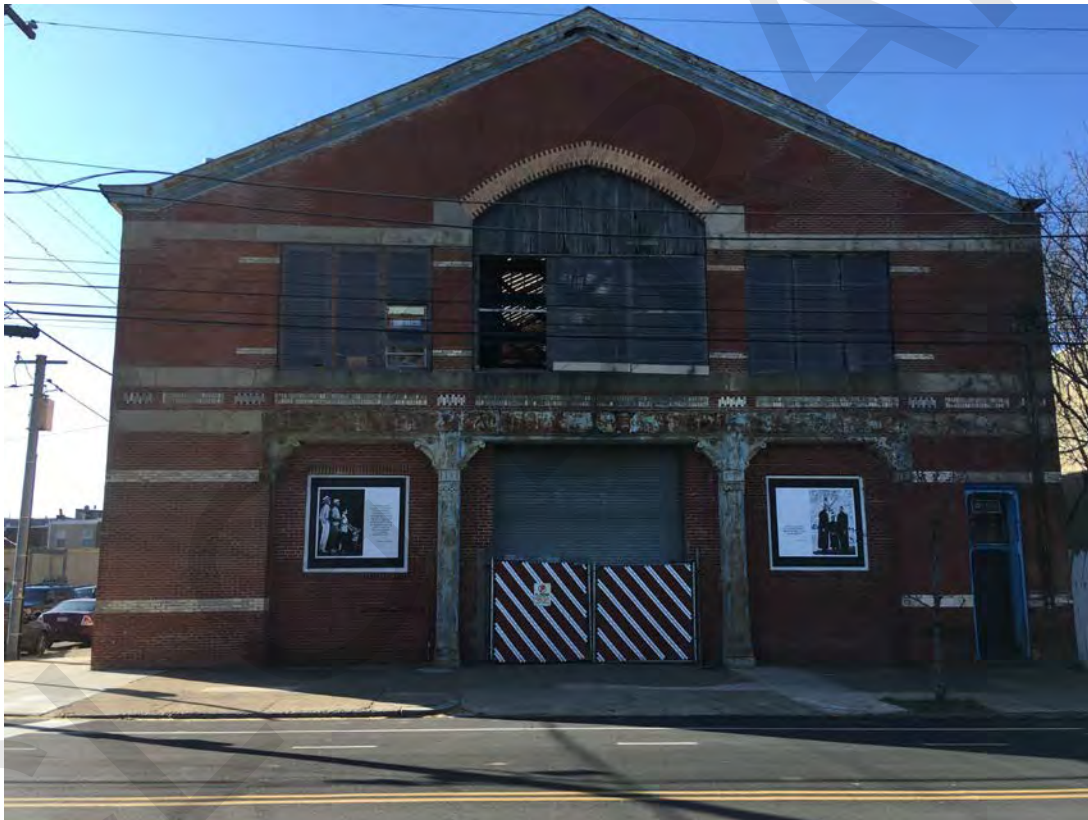


Figure 5 (Photo 4): View of North Elevation, Looking South

The c. 1885 addition is set back behind the vacant unrelated property at the west of the building. The utilitarian addition was historically located behind an unrelated two-story rowbuilding, which occupied the adjacent, unrelated parcel that has since been demolished. As a result, the elevation contains minimal features. Included on the elevation is a centrally located, modern residential sliding door at the first floor level and a set of paired four over four wood windows at the second floor (see Figure 7 below).

East Elevation: The secondary east elevation fronts N. 41st Street. The elevation is 11 bays wide, and continues the polychromatic banding of the north elevation. With the exception of the first floor of the southernmost two bays, the east elevation features a regular rhythm of segmental arched window openings at the first and second floors, separated by brick pilasters that extend from the ground to the roof. Each bay is

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accented by a course of brick corbelling that extends between each set of pilasters, just below the cornice line. The northernmost nine bays feature segmental arched window openings at both the first and second floor levels, which are accented by decorative white brickwork and bi-chrome arched lintels. Historically, wood 9/9 windows with squared heads were set within the segmental arched openings. At the first floor, the windows, which are taller than those of the second floor, are infilled with wood panels. At the second floor, all but one window opening is covered with corrugated plastic panels; the one exposed window is wood 9/9. A portion of the metal cornice, which should extend along the entire elevation, is missing along the southernmost section of the elevation. A non-historic garage door in a modified opening spans the first floor of the southernmost two bays of the elevation. The second floor windows of those same bays have been infilled with brick (see Figures 2 and 3 above).

South Elevation: The secondary south elevation along Brandywine Street contains the main portion of the building to the east and the two-story addition to the west. This elevation features red brick with a street-facing gable broken by a rectangular parapet that gives the appearance of a chimney penetrating the roofline. This elevation does not feature ornate decorations. Both the incline of the roof and the parapet are trimmed with simple cornices. A large, lunette opening with wooden infill is situated below the broken gable end. The second floor of the main block contains seven bays of arched window openings which are infilled with modern corrugated plastic panels. The first floor features a central vehicular entrance with a paneled wood door. This aperture is flanked by paired windows to the west (half of which are infilled with brick). The westernmost bay of the main block contains a single pedestrian door that is infilled with brick (see Figure 6).



Figure 6 (Photo 5): View of South Elevation, Looking Northwest

The c. 1885 addition extends the main block's south elevation west, abutting an adjacent, unrelated building. The south elevation of the c. 1885 addition historically served as an engine and boiler room and is utilitarian in character. The addition is two stories in height, and contains three infilled openings at the ground floor level, and two centrally located rectangular wood windows. The easternmost opening is a large arched entry that is

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inlaid with CMU block, while the two western entrances are rectangular, recessed, and inlaid with a similar red brick. The westernmost opening contains an arched louvered vent at top-center. The windows are modern. The c. 1885 addition contains a simple corbeled brick cornice (see Figure 4 above).

West Elevation: The west elevation includes the main block to the north; to the south is the two-story addition that was added c. 1885, which directly abuts an adjacent unrelated building. The utilitarian elevation contains one opening, centrally located at the first floor level. The rectangular opening is cut into the brick, disrupting an otherwise undisturbed wall. This elevation abuts an open lot which is historically unrelated to the subject building and was occupied by a two-story rowbuilding during the period of significance (see Figure 7).



Figure 7 (Photo 6): View of West Elevation, Looking Southeast

Interior: The interior of the main block of the building features an open floor plan, and has been used in recent years as a warehouse. The building was formerly two stories at the interior, however, at some point after the period of significance the second floor structure was removed and the interior is now a single open space. The building features an open floor plan, and formerly serviced trolley cars of the West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company. Finishes within the main block of the building include concrete floor, exposed brick walls and an exposed wood truss ceiling (see Figures 8, 9, and 10). Modern CMU columns are located at the

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southern end and provide additional support to the associated wood trusses which were previously weakened in a fire (see Figure 11). Along the centerline of the roof is a glazed utilitarian clerestory (see Figure 12).



Figure 8 (Photo 7): View of Interior, Looking South



Figure 9 (Photo 10): View of Interior, Looking North

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Figure 10 (Photo 11): View of Interior, Looking North

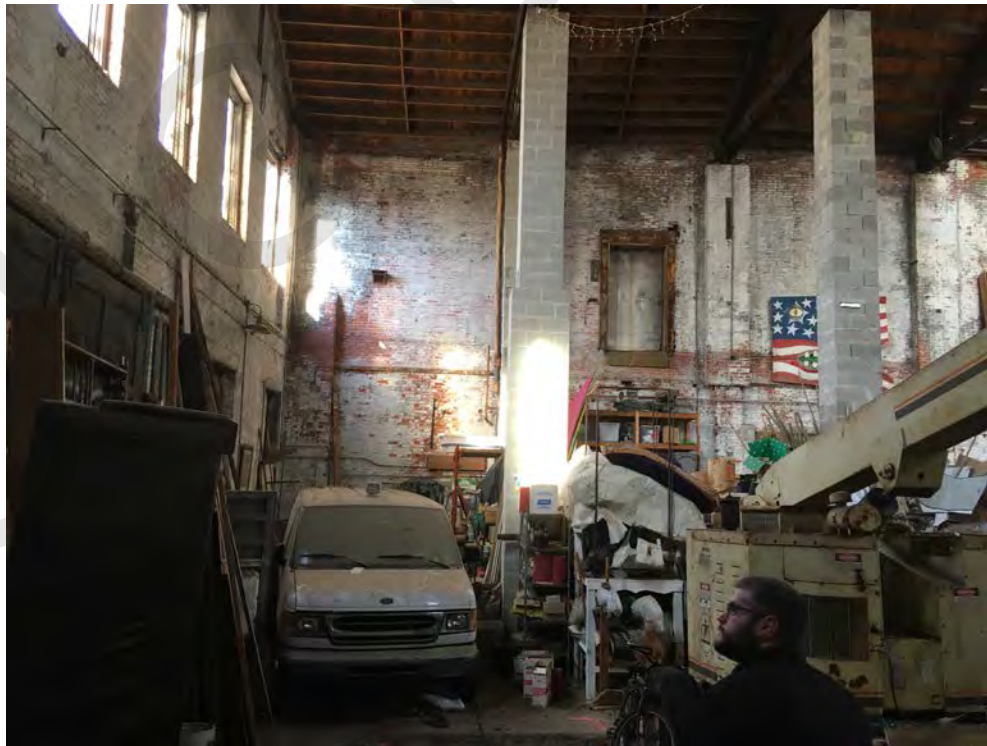


Figure 11 (Photo 8): View of Interior, Looking West

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Figure 12 (Photo 9): View of Interior Skylight, Looking North

The two-story addition at the southwest corner is accessed in the interior by a door at the southern end of the western wall of the main block and has been converted for use as a residence. The first floor of the addition is subdivided into a modern office/kitchen space and a storage space, which have both been updated with modern finishes. These two spaces are separated by a modern wood stair which provides vertical access to the second floor of the addition. At the office/kitchen space, finishes include GWB walls and ceilings, and wood floors. At the storage space, finishes include wood floors, brick and GWB walls, and a masonry ceiling with exposed steel beams (see Figure 11).

At the second floor of the addition, the stair leads directly to a laundry room featuring brick and GWB walls and a wood floor. South of the laundry room is a living room/kitchen space, which accesses a bathroom at the northwest, office at the northeast, and bedroom at the south. A closet is located at the east of the living room/kitchen. Finishes within the living room/kitchen include GWB walls and ceilings, and a wood floor. At the bedroom, finishes include tile floors and GWB walls and ceilings. The office space features GWB walls and ceilings, and wood flooring. A modern light fixture is located at the ceiling. The bathroom includes GWB walls and ceilings, and a section of the floor is comprised of ceramic tile.

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Figure 13 (Photo 12): View of c. 1885 addition Interior, Looking North

Integrity

The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse retains integrity to convey its historic use as a trolley carhouse. The building remained in use as a carhouse from its construction in 1876 until c. 1922 when it became utilized as a storehouse for a mechanical supply company unrelated to the trolley company. The carhouse retains aspects of feeling and association as a streetcar carhouse. Character-defining features, including the exterior brick walls, arched window openings, and stone columns, remain in fair condition. The overall exterior appearance and interior floorplans remain relatively intact. Alterations over time have been relatively minimal. An addition was added in c. 1885 that is compatible in form and materials. Some updates to the interior finishes in the addition have occurred over time. The main block was formerly two stories in the interior, but is now a single open space as a previous unrelated owner removed the second floor structure after the period of significance. The interior of the main block retains its character and materials and expresses the former use as a carhouse.

National Register Bulletin 15 describes integrity as the capability of a resource to convey its significance, and evaluates integrity based on a set of seven aspects detailing a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance.

The building is locally eligible for listing under Criterion A in the area of Transportation, and the period of significance ranges from 1876-1922, spanning from when construction of the carhouse was completed, to the cessation of operations as a carhouse building in 1922.

Specific to the seven aspects of integrity:

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Location: The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse remains in its original location and thus retains integrity of location.

Setting: The Haverford North area surrounding the carhouse has experienced disinvestment and population loss since the end of the period of significance. Despite this neighborhood socioeconomic change, the blocks surrounding the subject building have remained relatively intact, characterized by low-rise single- and multi-family residential structures.

Feeling and Association: The building remained in continuous use as a carhouse between 1876 and 1922. The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse has undergone few changes since the time of construction. The building retains direct association with the use for which it is significant and exudes the feeling of its original design, use, and significance as a late-19th century streetcar carhouse.

Design: The building retains integrity of design and embodies the form and features that express the Late Victorian style. The front-gable form with the three prominent streetcar openings topped by the massive center window remain on the exterior and convey the historic use as a carhouse. Alterations to the exterior are minimal and were conducted after the period of significance, and include the infill of some window and door openings. At the main block, the utilitarian industrial finishes and the original open floor plan remains. While the second floor structure was removed after the period of significance, this change did not significantly alter the design of the building as the second floor was also a utilitarian space.

Materials and Workmanship: Materials and workmanship both relate to the presence of historic fabric, and for the purposes of this evaluation are similar. The red brick exterior and the distinctive polychrome brickwork define the spirit of the Late Victorian style. The primary entrances have remained in the same location and the segmental arched window openings survive throughout. At the interior, the character of a carhouse remains including concrete floor, industrial-style exposed brick walls and exposed clear span truss and clerestory. The buildings retain a sufficient degree of the original materials and workmanship.

Overall, the West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse retains a high degree of integrity, and remains recognizable to a contemporary from its period of significance.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance: Transportation

Period of Significance: 1876-1922

Significant Dates: NA

Significant Person: NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary

The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse, located at 4100 Haverford Avenue in the Haverford North neighborhood of West Philadelphia, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Transportation. Following the annexation of roughly 130 square miles into the City of Philadelphia in 1854, residential and commercial development to the north, south, and west of the historic core of the city defined the second half of the 19th and early portions of the 20th centuries in Philadelphia. Perhaps the most important driving factor of expansion outside the original boundaries of the city was the rise of the streetcar industry. In West Philadelphia, one of the many districts and townships included within the Consolidation Act of 1854, the West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company (WPPRC) served as the catalyst for development. WPPRC was established in 1858 following the completion of a rail line along Market Street that stretched from 3rd Street, in Center City, to 41st Street, in West Philadelphia. The WPPRC Carhouse, constructed in 1876 following track and operational expansion to provide increased access to the Centennial International Exhibition in Fairmount Park, served as a trolley car assembly and repair building at the western reaches of the line and stands as the sole remaining vestige of the company, as well as one of the few reminders of the impact of the streetcar industry on the development of West Philadelphia. The building remained operational as a streetcar carhouse until c. 1922, becoming a storage warehouse unrelated to streetcar operations, following the consolidation of individual streetcar companies throughout the greater Philadelphia region. The Period of Significance for the Carhouse is 1876, the date of construction for the building, to c. 1922, when the building ceased operation as a streetcar carhouse.

Narrative Statement of Significance

History of WPPRC Carhouse:

Prior to construction of the subject building, the Haverford North neighborhood was sparsely developed. The 1862 Samuel Smedley Philadelphia Atlas shows that the subject property had yet to house any structures (see Figure 12). The Smedley Atlas does, however, show that streetcar lines had been developed and extended south along 41st Street. Also indicated on the map is the WPPRC Depot, located directly across the street from the subject property, on the north side of Haverford Avenue (no longer extant). The passenger depot building was the first structure in an enlarged complex of carhouses and stables operated by the WPPRC.

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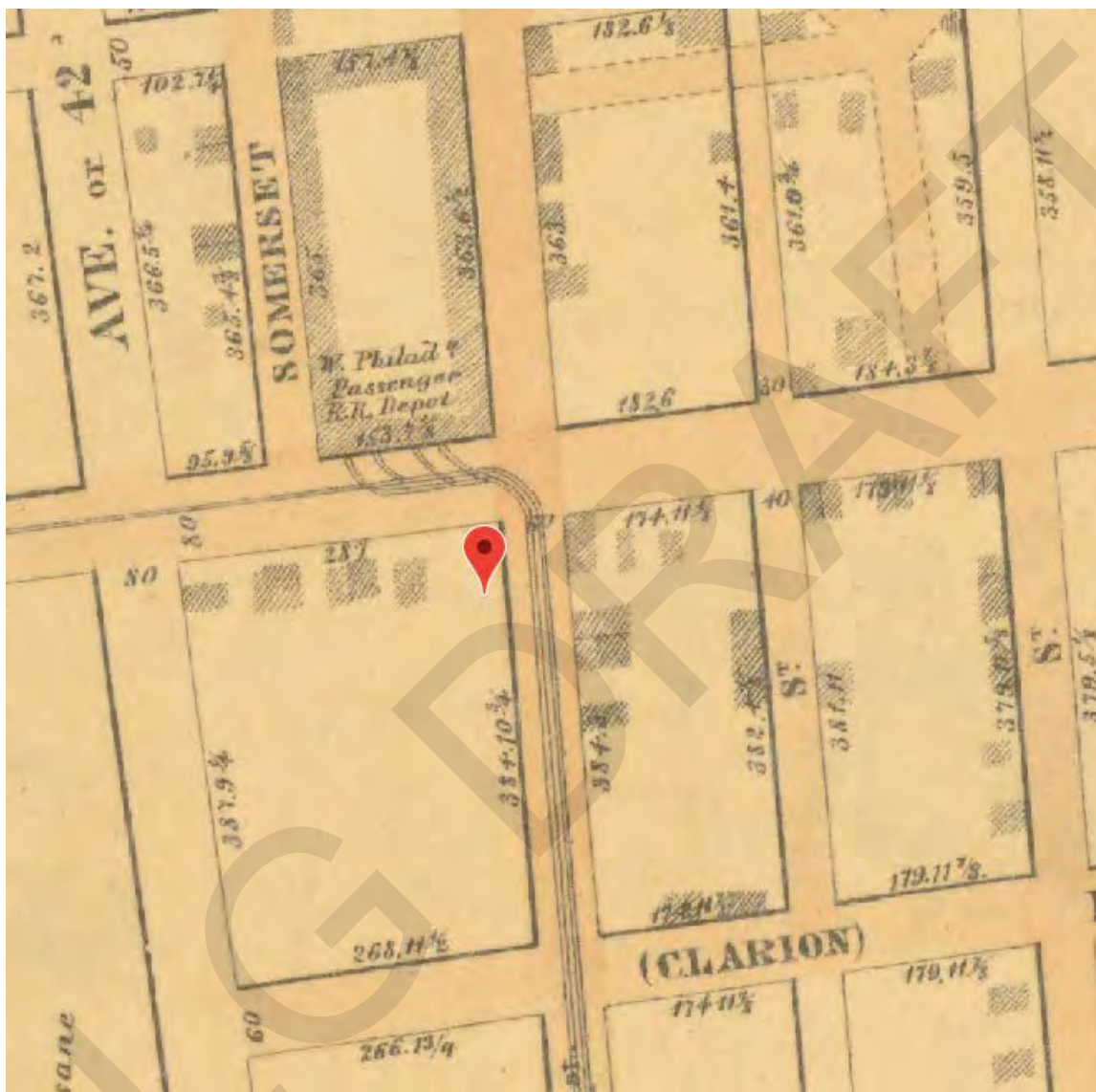


Figure 14: 1862 Samuel L. Smedley Philadelphia Atlas, Showing 4100 Haverford Ave.

Expansion at the WPPRC complex continued into the 1870s, when in 1876 a “new” carhouse was constructed on the southwest corner of the Haverford Avenue and 41st Street intersection.¹ Hexamer Surveys from 1882 and 1888 illustrate the WPPRC depot complex, which included thirteen separate building sections located as far north as present day Wallace Street and as far south as Spring Garden Street. The “new” building, the subject property, is noted on the maps as Building K. In 1882, the building functioned as a Car House at both the first and second floor levels.² A “dummy engine house,” which serviced horse-less steam powered engines, was also

¹ Oscar Beisert, “West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Co. Depot,” *Nomination of Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object, Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Philadelphia Historical Commission*, 15-16.

² “West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company’s Car Houses & Stables.” Hexamer General Surveys. (Philadelphia: Hexamer, 1882), v. 17, p. 1624-25.

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located on the first floor.³ A one-story wood frame machine shop was located at the southwest portion of the building and a wood newsstand abutted the building on its 41st Street elevation⁴ (see Figures 13 and 14).

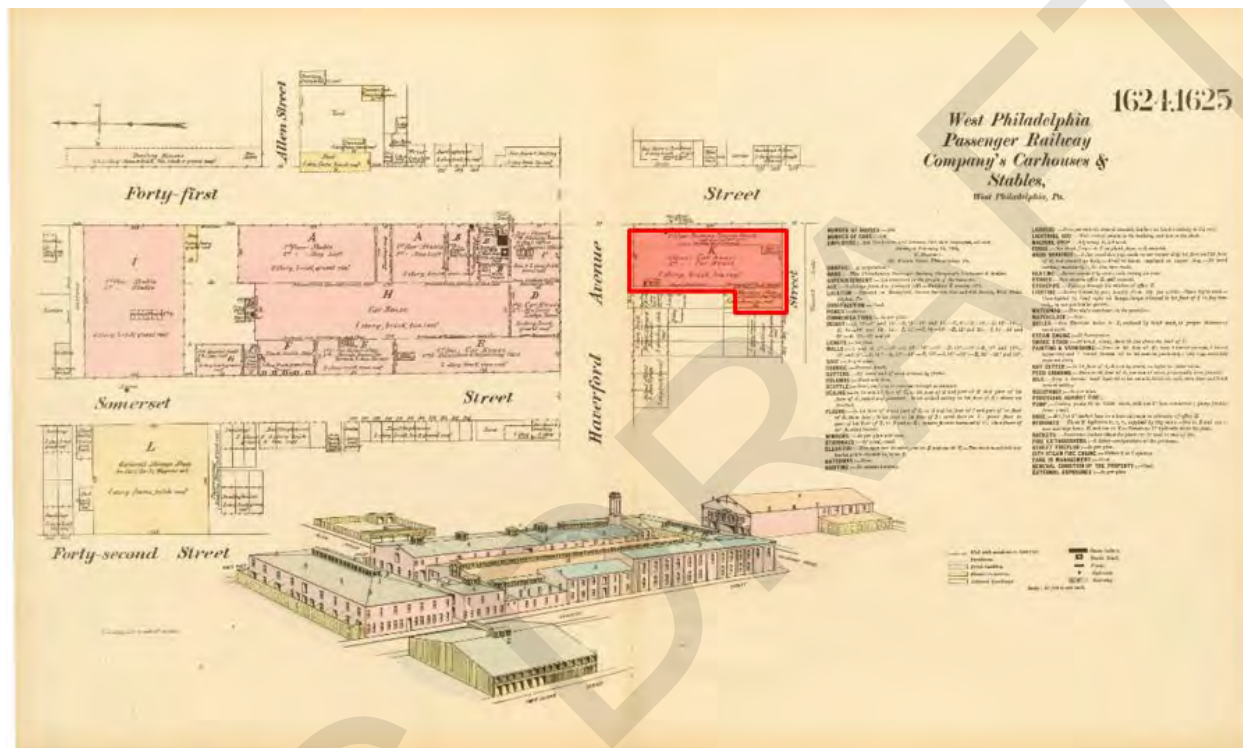


Figure 15: 1882 Hexamer General Survey, West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company's Carhouses & Stables, West Philadelphia, PA (subject building highlighted in red).

³ Ibid; Samuel Castner Jr., 1843-1929 – Compiler, *Frankford Steam Dummy*, accessed June 22, 2020, retrieved from <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/45279>.

⁴ "West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company's Car Houses & Stables," *Hexamer General Surveys* (Philadelphia: Hexamer, 1882), v. 17, p. 1624-25.

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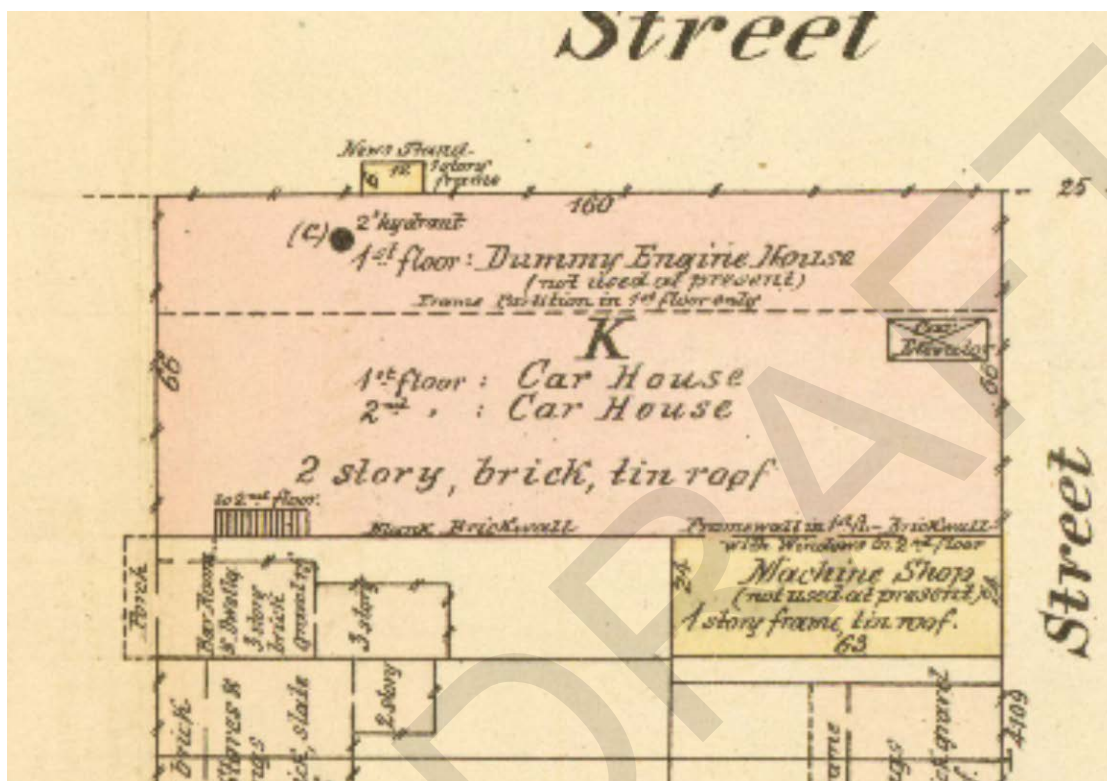


Figure 16: Zoomed in view of subject building from 1882 Hexamer General Survey, West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company's Carhouses & Stables, West Philadelphia, PA.

By 1888, the one-story wood frame addition was demolished and a two-story brick addition, constructed c. 1885, took its place. The c. 1885 addition served as an engine room. At this time, the WPPRC complex had grown to its largest extent, incorporating a wood frame car shed to the south of the subject building on present day Brandywine Street (not extant)⁵ (see Figures 15, 16, and 17).

⁵ "West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company's Car Houses & Stables." Hexamer General Surveys. (Philadelphia: Hexamer, 1888), v. 23, p. 2169-2170.

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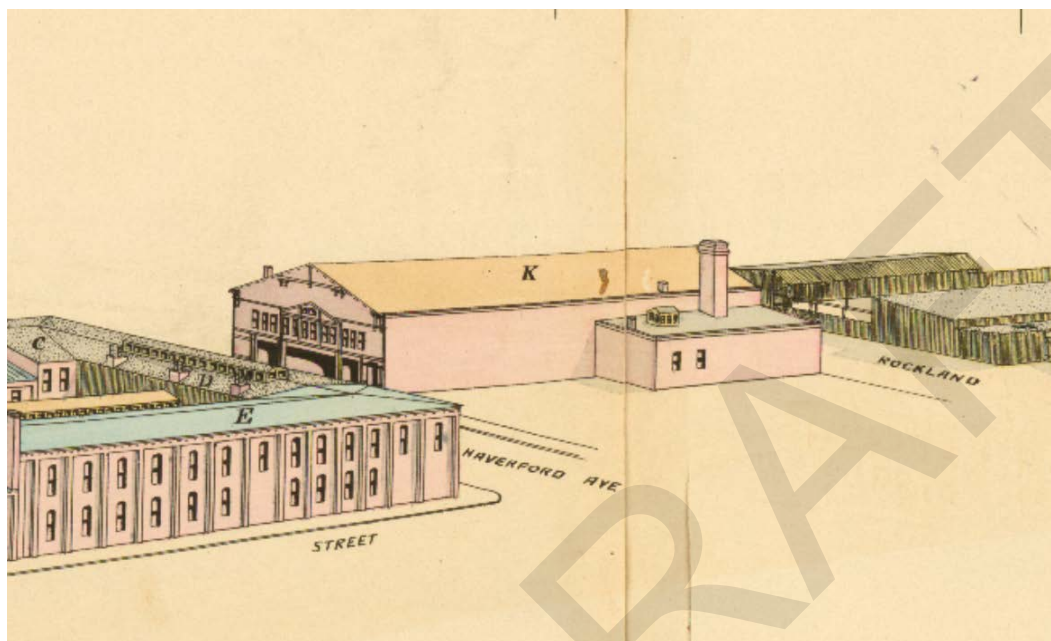


Figure 19: Zoomed in view of subject building from 1888 Hexamer General Survey, West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company's Carhouses & Stables, West Philadelphia, PA.

As both residential and commercial development in West Philadelphia increased throughout the late-19th and early-20th centuries, the expansive streetcar depot complex decreased in size and was sold off to various developers and companies. The primary portion of the complex, which incorporated Buildings A-I, and the subject carhouse, Building K, remained, while ancillary car sheds, storage yards and horse stables were demolished and replaced with residential dwellings by 1922. The subject carhouse, however, ceased to operate in its historic capacity and became utilized as a storage facility for the unrelated Fairbanks Company that year. The remaining sections of the WPPRC complex were demolished in 1967, leaving the subject carhouse as the sole remaining vestige of the WPPRC complex.

As the surrounding community developed into its present day configuration in the mid-20th century, the subject carhouse was not immune to the change. The building ceased operation as a streetcar carhouse c. 1922. The building was then used as a warehouse, garage, and car wash. Currently, the subject building is utilized for storage with a residence within the two-story addition (see Figure 18).

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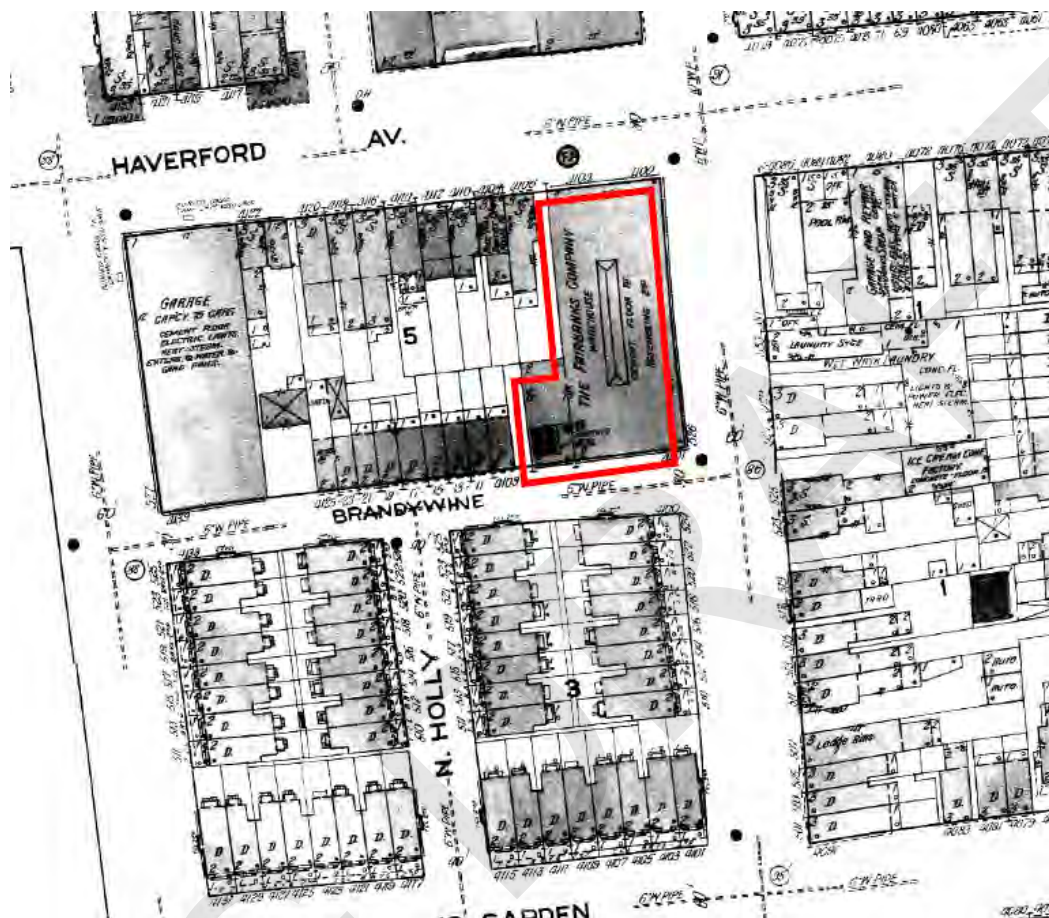


Figure 20: 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, showing building's use as a warehouse unrelated to trolley use.

Transportation Significance

The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Transportation for its association with the WPPRC and late 19th century streetcar industry in Philadelphia, which was essential to the development of West Philadelphia as a “streetcar suburb” as outlined in the West Philadelphia Streetcar Historic District National Register Nomination (NR 1998). The former streetcar carhouse was constructed in 1876 for the West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company on their Market Street Line, which provided access for West Philadelphia residents to Center City and Old City, Philadelphia.

The Advent of Streetcar Transportation in Philadelphia

William Penn’s grant for the City of Philadelphia provided the former American capitol with only two square miles of land. By 1850, the population within that space totaled roughly 120,000 residents. Concurrently, expansion in the mid-19th century into the areas surrounding the city proper foreshadowed the importance of suburbanism in American history. Population growth in

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Philadelphia in the 19th century, paired with civil unrest within the city and its surrounding districts, necessitated consolidation of the greater Philadelphia region.⁶ In early 1854, an act consolidating Philadelphia and its surrounding municipalities was signed into law by Pennsylvania Governor William Bigler that “extended the boundaries ‘so as to embrace the whole of the territory of the County of Philadelphia.’”⁷ As a result, the population of Philadelphia increased from fourth in the nation to second, behind only New York City.⁸ The Consolidation Act of 1854 extended the boundaries of the city to include: the City of Philadelphia; the District of Southwark; the District of the Northern Liberties; the District of Kensington; the District of Spring Garden; the District of Moyamensing; the District of Penn; the District of Richmond; the Districts of West Philadelphia and Belmont; the Boroughs of Manayunk, Germantown, Frankford, Whitehall, Bridesburg and Aramingo; and the Townships of Passyunk, Kingseesing, Blockley, Roxborough, Germantown, Bristol, Oxford, Lower Dublin, Moreland, Byberry, Northern Liberties, Delaware and Penn.⁹

Prior to the Consolidation of Philadelphia, “public” transportation throughout the city and its suburbs was primarily handled via the horse-drawn omnibus¹⁰. The omnibus, introduced in 1831, was a short-distance version of the stage coach. Omnibuses, which were simple enlarged horse-drawn carriages, operated on fixed routes with fixed fares. Unlike modern day public transportation, the omnibus system was expensive to use. As a result, typical customers included business owners and other salary workers. The majority of clientele lived in wealthier suburbs, such as Southwark, the Northern Liberties, and western Philadelphia.¹¹

The omnibus system was quickly eclipsed by horse-drawn streetcars (horsecars) in the late-1850s. Streetcars, unlike the omnibus, were influenced by the burgeoning railroad industry. Omnibuses traveled on unpaved roads, which resulted in a high level of drag and friction. The omnibus system, therefore, required more stops, or at the very least, more horses. Streetcars, serving as an evolutionary expansion of the omnibus, sought to decrease the limitations of the same. By utilizing a rail-based system, streetcars were able to cut back on both time traveled and the physical toll placed on horses. The end result was higher profits for transportation corporations.¹² In Philadelphia, the Frankford and Southwark Philadelphia City Passenger Railway Company, which extended south from the historic core of the city to Southwark and

⁶ Sam Robinson, “In Defense of Consolidation, 160 Years Later,” *HindenCityPhila.Org*, February 3, 2014, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://hiddencityphila.org/2014/02/in-defense-of-consolidation-160-years-later/>.

⁷ “Philadelphia Consolidation Act,” Act of February 2, 1854, P.L. 21, No. 16, Pennsylvania General Assembly, February 2, 1854.

⁸ Robinson, “In Defense of Consolidation, 160 Years Later.”

⁹ “Philadelphia Consolidation Act,” February 2, 1854.

¹⁰ Public transportation in this context refers to mass transportation utilized by the general “public.” The streetcar systems of this period were privately owned and operated and not owned by public agencies as the term “public transportation” implies today.

¹¹ John Hepp, “Omnibuses,” *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/omnibuses/>.

¹² “New Bedford’s Forgotten Public Transport Systems; The Omnibus, Streetcar & Trolley,” *Newbedfordguide.com*, <https://www.newbedfordguide.com/omnibus-streetcar-trolley/2013/04/30?print=print>.

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north to Frankford, was the first to utilize the streetcar in 1858. By the early-1860s, streetcars had replaced the omnibus system throughout the entirety of Philadelphia.¹³

Suburban expansion in the “new” Philadelphia was made possible by the growth of the public transportation system.¹⁴ In West Philadelphia, expansion was evident in the development of middle-class row houses built in the Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival styles, which increased the density of the district that predominantly featured single-family homes of upper class citizens. For reference, in 1860, at the advent of the streetcar system, West Philadelphia had a population under 24,000. By 1910, the population of the district increased to approximately 200,000.¹⁵ The expansion of Philadelphia’s streetcar network, which by the Centennial Exposition of 1876 was one of the largest such networks in the United States, therefore, aided in the development of the middle class and their ability to move to areas outside city centers, such as West Philadelphia.¹⁶

Streetcars and the Development of West Philadelphia

Prior to the Consolidation of Philadelphia and the advent of the streetcar system, West Philadelphia was a sparsely developed area that was populated by upper class business owners of Center City with much of the land still utilized for agrarian purposes or undeveloped. Transportation at that time was limited to horse-drawn wagons that connected the commercial core of the city with agricultural settlements to the west.¹⁷ Both the consolidation and invention of the trolley car system played a significant role in persuading real estate developers to invest in the development of the district.

Four years after the passing of the Consolidation Act, the WPPRC opened the first streetcar line servicing the residents of West Philadelphia. In July of 1858, the WPPRC’s Market Street Line was completed and stretched from 3rd Street in the Old City neighborhood to 41st Street in West Philadelphia. As well as operating the first streetcar line from the historic core of Philadelphia to West Philadelphia, the WPPRC also operated the first lateral line, north-south running, in the district, which extended from 40th Street, at Market Street, south to Baltimore Pike.

The WPPRC did not maintain their monopoly on commuters in West Philadelphia for very long. Within months of opening, the WPPRC faced competition from other streetcar railway

¹³ John Hepp, “Streetcars,” *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/streetcars/#:~:text=Expansion%20of%20Philadelphia's%20streetcar%20network,region's%20first%20streetcar%20%E2%80%9Csuburbs.%E2%80%9D>.

¹⁴ “Public Transportation” under its current definition, which is a service provided by a public entity, was not established in Philadelphia until the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) commenced operation in 1964. Prior to SEPTA, “public transportation” is best described as mass transportation systems operated by private, for-profit companies.

¹⁵ Dylan Gotlieb, “Streetcar Suburbs,” *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, accessed June 21, 2020, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/streetcar-suburbs-2/>.

¹⁶ Hepp, “Streetcars.”

¹⁷ West Philadelphia Community History Center, *West Philadelphia: The History*, West Philadelphia Community History Center: Philadelphia, PA, 2008, 19-20.

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companies, including the Philadelphia and Darby Railroad Company, the Hestonville, Mantua, and Fairmont Passenger Railway, the Philadelphia City Passenger Railway, and the Market Street Horse Car Passenger Railway, among others.¹⁸ The increased volume of streetcar companies in the mid-to-late 1800s in West Philadelphia is indicative of the high levels of attention paid to the neighborhood as the population of the city dispersed and grew more amenable to the idea of commuting to work.

Despite the numerous streetcar companies, the development of West Philadelphia required real estate developers to see the economic advantages of building homes within the previously isolated residential community. In the late-19th century, investors and developers typically focused on constructing pockets of homes. In West Philadelphia, however, developers, like Charles M.S. Leslie and Annesley R. Govett, saw the advantages of large scale development and both designed blocks of row houses and individual homes, which remain an integral component of West Philadelphia's built environment. As a result of savvy businessmen and developers, like Leslie and Govett, West Philadelphia grew to become "a dense residential community" in the late-19th century.¹⁹

Neither the streetcar companies nor the real estate developers would have completed their respective projects in West Philadelphia if there was not a demand for people to reside in the market. As previously noted, in the mid-1800s, West Philadelphia was sparsely developed and the existing homes were occupied by the city's upper class. By the 1870s-1880s, however, a growing middle class population of business managers and mid-level employees who sought affordable housing with yards, a rarity in downtown Philadelphia, entered the equation. As a result, development in West Philadelphia continued into the latter years of the century.²⁰ In the fifty years following the completion of the WPPRC's Market Street Line, the population of West Philadelphia increased by more than 700%.²¹ This development transformed West Philadelphia into what is now known as a "streetcar suburb."

The overall development of West Philadelphia, inclusive of the completion and expansion of streetcar lines, the construction of a dense residential area, and the increased population of the community, compounded the need for transportation to and from Center City Philadelphia. Transportation hubs and depots, therefore, were necessary components within the planning and operation of the streetcar industry and played a pivotal role in the history of the transportation industry.

The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company

With the advent of the streetcar system in the 1850s, and as a result, the demise of the omnibus, faster, cheaper, and more efficient options for transportation became available to the residents of

¹⁸ *West Philadelphia: The History*, 20-28.

¹⁹ *West Philadelphia: The History*, 20-21.

²⁰ Cynthia Rose Hamilton, "West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1997, 6-7.

²¹ Gotlieb, "Streetcar Suburbs."

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the expanded Philadelphia. Streetcar companies began to develop across the city to take advantage of commuters from northern, western, and southern communities that worked or were traveling to the historic city center. The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company commenced operations as the first rail-based streetcar network servicing West Philadelphia on July 2, 1858. The original line ran along Market Street extending from 3rd Street in Old City to 41st Street in West Philadelphia.²²

The WPPRC maintained their Market Street Line throughout the 1870s and into the early-1880s. In order to properly operate, the company required a large depot complex which included facilities to store and repair the streetcars, stable and feed the horses, and serve as passenger depot and office space.²³ The 1862 Smedley Atlas shows that the company constructed a passenger depot on the northwest corner of the Haverford Avenue and 41st Street intersection. The map also shows the extension of rail lines north on 41st Street and west on Haverford Avenue.²⁴ The original depot complex was described in depth on the 1882 and 1888 Hexamer Surveys, which showed a large complex of interconnected brick buildings on Haverford Avenue in between 41st and Somerset Streets. The buildings included waiting rooms and offices, car houses, stables, repair shops, and a black smith shop among other functions.²⁵

In 1876, occurring in conjunction with the Centennial International Exposition at nearby Fairmount Park, the WPPRC increased their operations as millions of people came to the city for the fair. In addition to further westward rail expansion along Haverford Avenue to the city's western boundary, the company also built a new carhouse building directly across the street from the complex, at the southwest corner of the Haverford Avenue/41st Street intersection (see Figure 19).²⁶ The 1882 Hexamer Survey also included the "new" carhouse in their report, which noted that the building served as a car house and included space to store the "Dummy Engine," a horseless steam powered engine that debuted during the exposition and was built to resemble a typical streetcar carriage, thought to be less frightening to horses.²⁷

²² Robert Carl Jackle, "Philadelphia Across the Schuylkill: Work, Transportation and Residence in West Philadelphia, 1860-1910," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1985), 43.

²³ Today, only the subject building remains of the WPPRC depot complex.

²⁴ Samuel Smedley Atlas, 1862.

²⁵ "West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company's Car Houses & Stables." Hexamer General Surveys. (Philadelphia: Hexamer, 1882), v. 17, p. 1624-25.

²⁶ Jackle, "Philadelphia Across the Schuylkill," 43; "Rapid Transit in Philadelphia, The New Steam Cars on the Market Street Line," *New York Daily Graphic*, 1877.

²⁷ "Steam Street Cars: Inaugural Trip of the New Market Street Dummies," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 22, 1877; "West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company's Car Houses & Stables." Hexamer General Surveys. (Philadelphia: Hexamer, 1882), v. 17, p. 1624-25.

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Figure 21: “Rapid Transit in Philadelphia. The New Steam Cars on the Market Street Line,”
New York Daily Graphic, 1877.

Just as streetcar rails spelled the end of the omnibus, further technological advancements in the transportation industry brought about the end of the streetcar system. The overhead cable system and, then, the electric trolley were both invented in the mid-1880s, with the electric trolley viewed as the clear path for the future of localized transportation. During this period, the horsecars were abandoned for electric trolleys, rendering much of the WPPRC facility as excess space due to its use as stable facilities.

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Occurring almost simultaneously with the creation of the electric trolley, was the development of a new transportation company that sought to consolidate the numerous streetcar companies throughout Philadelphia. In 1883, William Kemble, Peter Widener, and William Lukens founded the Philadelphia Traction Company (PTC).²⁸ The two creations played a direct role in the demise of the WPPRC.

In the 1880s, the WPPRC began leasing its lines to other rail companies; one such company was the PTC in 1884. To further benefit their desire to upgrade the existing streetcar system, the PTC also introduced the overhead trolley system to the WPPRC's lines, which had an immediate impact on the number of horses required by the pioneering company; in 1882, the WPPRC owned 700 horses to operate 106 streetcars, by 1888, following the PTC's improvements, the WPPRC downsized to only 100 horses.²⁹ During the 1890s, the PTC succeeded in consolidating many of the city's locally-based streetcar companies, with the WPPRC being one of their many acquisitions.

Following the death of William Kemble in 1891, the two remaining founders of the PTC decided to abandon overhead cable operations and solely focused on electrified rails. In 1895, Widener and Elkins developed a second corporation, the Union Traction Company following further consolidation efforts.³⁰ The two formed a third company in 1902, with the incorporation of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company (PRTC), which then controlled all surface streetcar lines in the city. The PRTC later constructed the Market Street Subway Elevated Line which opened in 1907.³¹ The PRTC maintained the Haverford Avenue streetcar depot complex, including the WPPRC Carhouse at 4100 Haverford Avenue, until the early-1920s, when the company modernized yet again from trolleys to buses. Prior to 1922, the subject building ceased use as a carhouse and became utilized by the Fairbanks Company as a warehouse.³² During this time period, the remaining former WPPRC assets at the Haverford complex were sold and the site cleared for new, unrelated uses. The "old" depot across Haverford Avenue, to the north, remained in operation until it was demolished in 1967 and replaced with low-rise multi-family housing.³³

In 1940, the PRTC merged with other Philadelphia transit companies to form the Philadelphia Transportation Company when they gained control of all Philadelphia "public" transportation. In 1955, Philadelphia Transportation Company was acquired by National City Lines and much of the city's remaining trolley system was converted to bus operation. By act of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) was formed in 1964 to coordinate transportation in the Philadelphia region. Following

²⁸ Hepp, "Streetcars."

²⁹ Beisert, "West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Co. Depot.;" "West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company's Car Houses & Stables." Hexamer General Surveys. (Philadelphia: Hexamer, 1882), v. 17, p. 1624-25; "West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company's Car Houses & Stables." Hexamer General Surveys. (Philadelphia: Hexamer, 1888), v. 23, p. 2169-2170.

³⁰ Hepp, "Streetcars."

³¹ Beisert, "West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Co. Depot," 18.

³² Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Fire Insurance Maps, Philadelphia, PA, 1922.

³³ Historic Aerial Photographs, *HistoricAerials.com*, 1967, accessed June 22, 2020.

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five years of negotiations, SEPTA purchased the Philadelphia Transportation Company in 1968, at which time the transit system became a truly “public” system for the first time in its historic. Today, SEPTA continues to operate five streetcar lines in West Philadelphia, the closest streetcar line approximately three blocks to the east and north servicing Lancaster Avenue.³⁴

Conclusion

The West Philadelphia Passenger Railroad Company Carhouse, located at 4100 Haverford Avenue, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Transportation between 1876 and c. 1922, from its original construction to the year it ceased operating as a trolley carhouse. The development of the streetcar industry, which traveled on rails set within paved streets, as opposed to horse-drawn carriages traveling on unpaved roads, coincided with the Consolidation of 1854 that expanded Philadelphia to its modern extent. The West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company was the first streetcar company to operate in West Philadelphia and helped to establish this area of the city as a “streetcar suburb.” The streetcar industry, including the WPPRC, had a direct impact on the residential development of the district, which was constructed around the streetcar lines to offer easy commuter travel to Center City Philadelphia. The WPPRC established its physical plant at N. 41st and Haverford Avenue. The WPPRC Carhouse stands as the sole remaining vestige of the WPPRC complex and exemplifies the mode of transportation that enabled the development of West Philadelphia in the late-19th century.

³⁴ Eugene L. Meyer, “SEPTA to Take Over PTC Tomorrow to Cap Five Years of Negotiations,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 29, 1968.

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<https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/streetcars/#:~:text=The%20first%20streetcars%20in%20the,the%20omnibus%2C%20became%20street%20railways.>
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property: 0.27 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates:

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | 39.962518 | Longitude: | -79.942491 |
| 2. Latitude: | 39.962034 | Longitude: | -75.205591 |
| 3. Latitude: | 39.961999 | Longitude: | -75.205946 |
| 4. Latitude: | 39.962469 | Longitude: | -75.205989 |
| 5. Latitude: | 39.962192 | Longitude: | -75.205877 |
| 6. Latitude: | 39.962464 | Longitude: | -75.205917 |

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is formed by Haverford Avenue to the north, N 41st Street to the east, Brandywine Street to the west, and separate unrelated parcels to the west.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for the WPPRC Carhouse reflects the existing tax parcel boundary for the property (Philadelphia OPA #884340625).

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11. Form Prepared By

Name: Cindy Hamilton & Michael LaFlash

Organization: Heritage Consulting Group

Address: 15 W Highland Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19118

Telephone: 215-248-1260 Email: chamilton@heritage-consulting.com Date: 09/2020

Additional Documentation

Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: West Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company Carhouse

City or Vicinity: Philadelphia County: Philadelphia State: PA

Photographer: Nick Kraus, Heritage Consulting Group

Date Photographed: March 2020

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1. Photo 1: View of Site and East Elevation, Looking Southwest
2. Photo 2: View of Site and East Elevation, Looking Northwest
3. Photo 3: Exterior View, c. 1885 Addition, South Elevation, Looking North
4. Photo 4: Exterior View, North Elevation, Looking South
5. Photo 5: Exterior View, South Elevation, Looking Northwest
6. Photo 6: Exterior View, West Elevation, Looking Southeast
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10. Photo 10: Interior View, Looking North
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5. Figure 5 (Photo 4): View of North Elevation, Looking South
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9. Figure 9 (Photo 10): View of Interior, Looking North
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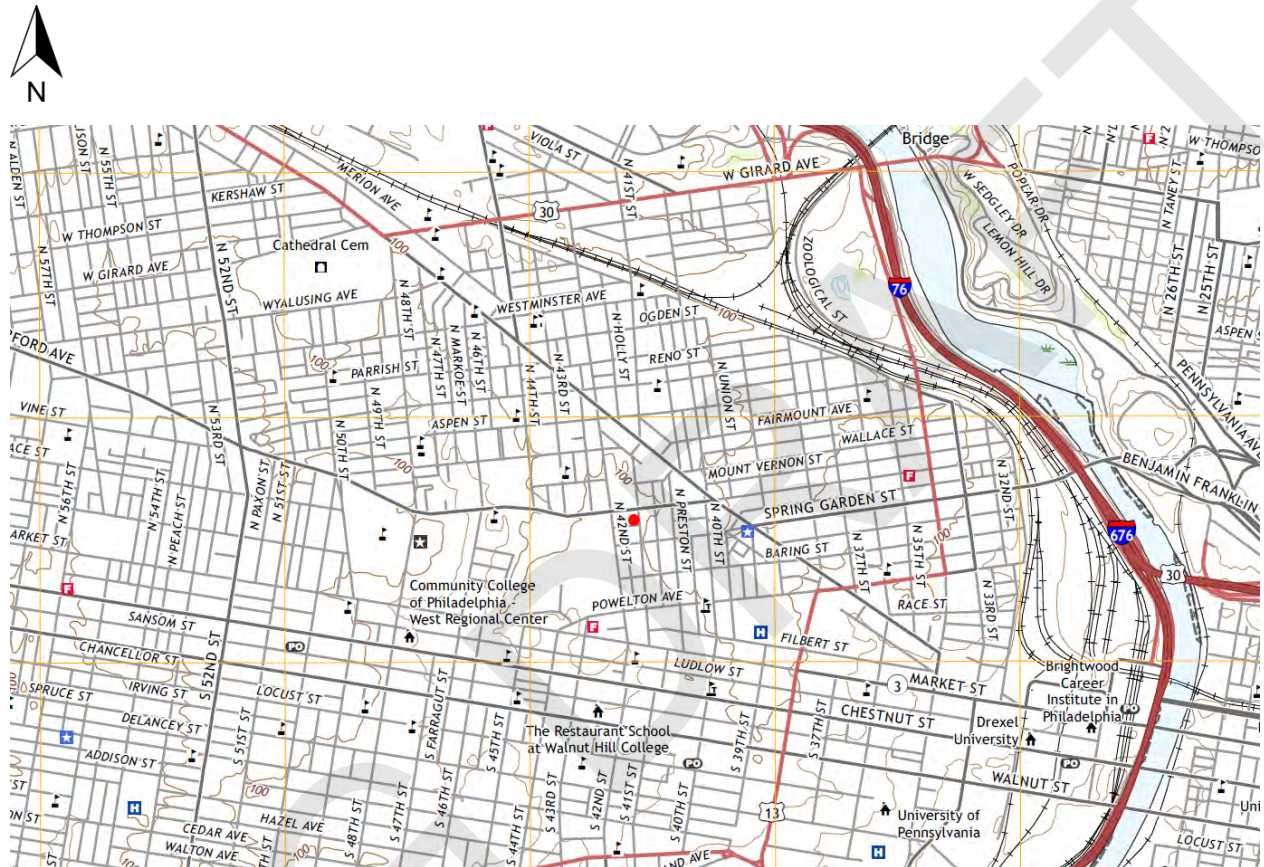
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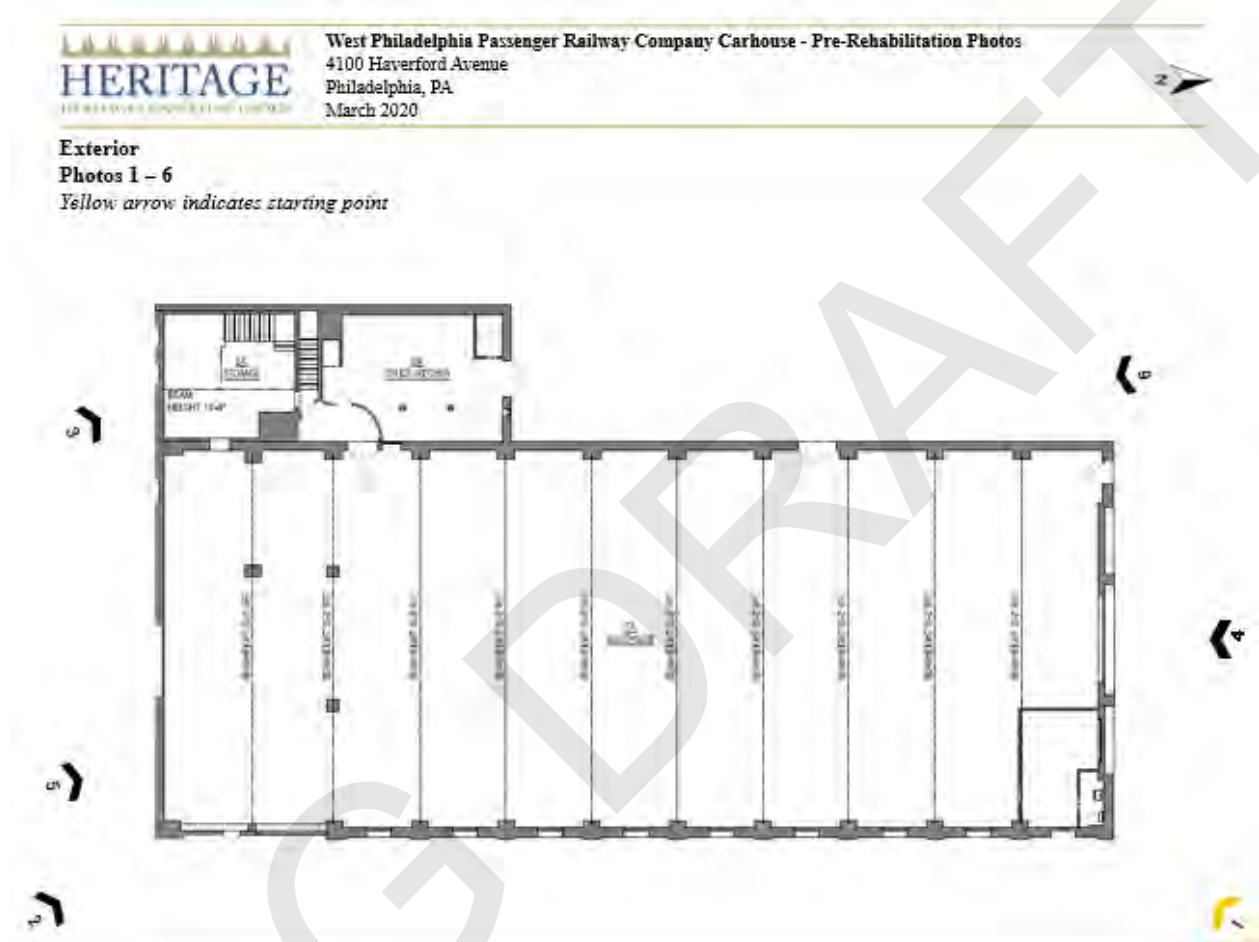
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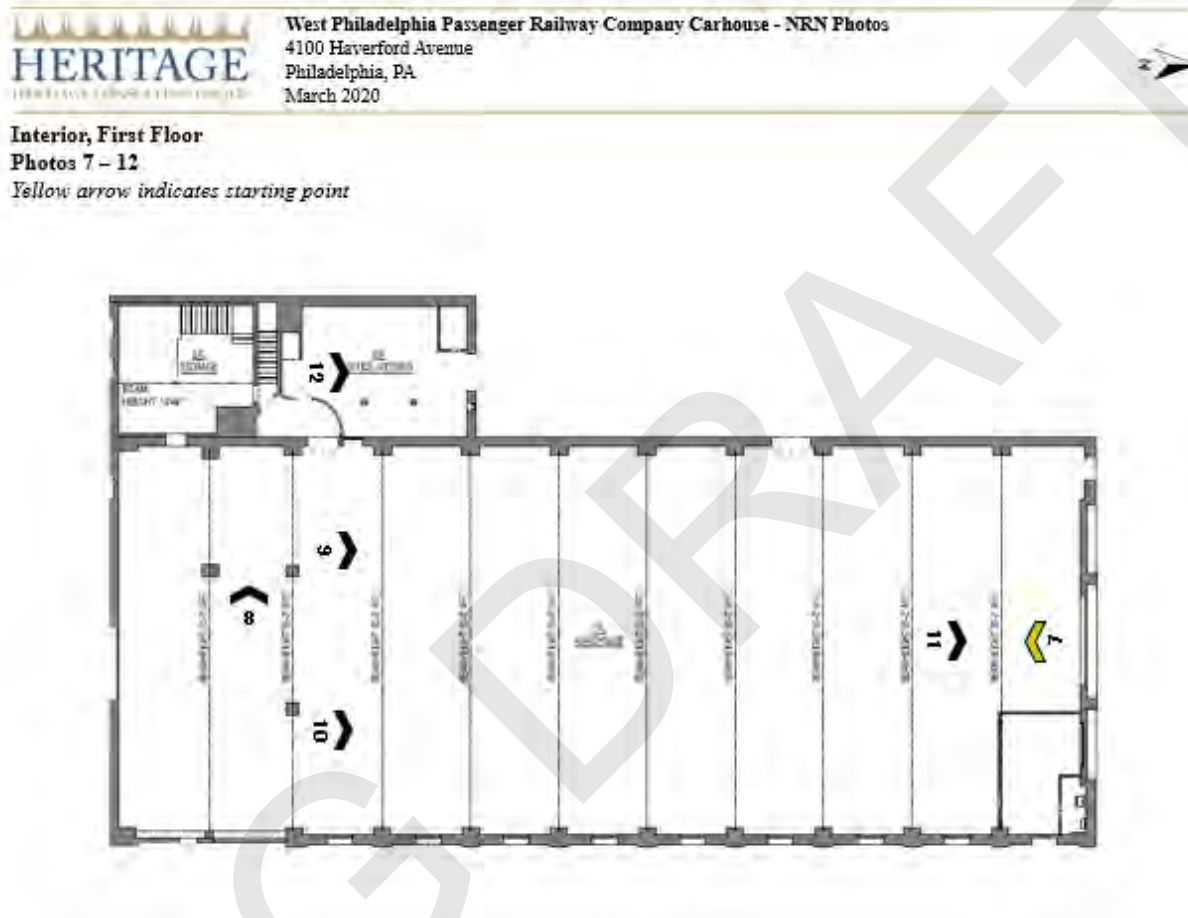
Figure 23: Photo Key, Exterior



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Figure 24: Photo Key, Interior, First Floor



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