

ADDRESS: 1206 CHESTNUT ST

Name of Resource: Philadelphia Federal Credit Union

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: 1206 Chestnut LLC

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1206 Chestnut Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that building, constructed in 1922 and re-clad in 1963, satisfies Criteria for Designation A and D. Under Criterion A, the nomination contends that the property represents the development of Center City, Philadelphia from residential to commercial in the late-nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the front façade of the building, installed in 1963, embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern style.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1206 Chestnut Street satisfies Criterion for Designation D, and that the arguments made for Criterion A better reflect Criterion 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: 1206 Chestnut St

Postal code: 19107

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Colonial Federal Savings and Loan

Current/Common Name: Philadelphia Federal Credit Union

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: Commercial

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 1962 to 1978

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: Original construction 1922; significant alteration 1963

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Lee Casaccio, architect

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: _____

Original owner: at the time of significant alteration: Colonial Federal Savings & Loan Association

Other significant persons: _____

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 Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia Date December 14, 2020

Name with Title Libbie Hawes, architectural historian Email Libbie.hawes@gmail.com

Street Address 1608 Walnut St, Suite 1702 Telephone 215-546-1146

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19103

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 12/14/2020

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 12/17/2020

Date of Notice Issuance: 12/18/2020

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: 1206 Chestnut LLC

Address: 1118 S 12th St, 1st Flr.

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19147

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

1206 Chestnut Street | Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All that certain lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate on the South side of Chestnut Street at the distance of 74 feet Westward from the West side of Twelfth Street, containing in front or breadth on the said Chestnut Street 24 feet and extending of that width in length or depth southward between lines parallel with the said Twelfth Street one 144 feet, bounded Southward partly by the head of a certain four feet wide alley leading to Sansom Street.



6. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Located on the south side of Chestnut Street, between 12th and 13th Streets, in the dense Market East commercial corridor of Center City, Philadelphia 1206 Chestnut Street is a four-story commercial building. The building is mid-block on a diverse row of late-19th through 20th century commercial buildings of varying heights and styles. Most are mixed-use with altered retail storefronts at ground floor, most of which are incongruous with the intact historic design of the historic upper floors. Use varies between office or residential, typical of the urban commercial district. The facade at 1206 Chestnut St is one of few iconic Mid-Century storefronts in Market East that remain intact.



Image 1: 1206 Chestnut Street, showing current context, September 2020

1206 Chestnut Street fronts 24 feet on Chestnut Street. Only the façade of the building is apparent from pedestrian view. The adjacent building to the east, 1204 Chestnut Street, obscures the east elevation of the building. The fenestration on the fourth floor of the west elevation is just visible over the adjacent three-story building at 1208 Chestnut Street.



Image 2: 1206 Chestnut Street with Mid-Century Modern façade built 1963, September 2020

The building was constructed in 1922 but is now characterized by a dynamic Mid-Century Modern façade, an alteration made in 1963. At the first floor of the building, a reinforced concrete canopy of four round arches sets off the retail storefront from the upper floors. This feature extends inside the branch bank lobby, creating a modern barrel vaulted ceiling. The design of the canopy includes recessed fixtures which light the storefront entrance. Under the canopy, a glass curtain wall is set back from the front elevation to create a narrow outdoor entrance lobby with transparent view into the branch bank. The plate glass was installed with stainless steel mullions, dividing the storefront in four arched sections across the width of the building. Each section is divided horizontally with a round arch mullion, which echoes the canopy shape.



Image 3: 1206 Chestnut Street, first floor storefront detail, September 2020



Image 4: 1206 Chestnut Street, concrete canopy detail, September 2020

On the east side, the first section under the arch was later altered to accommodate an automatic teller machine. On the west side, a glass double door was designed to fill the arched section. These doors have been replaced with a single glass commercial door fitted under the arch. Above the door, a streamlined clock, with stainless steel features, is extant. On either side of the recessed storefront, the reveal is finished with black polished granite panels.



Image 5 (left): 1206 Chestnut Street, showing recessed entrance extant original clock and glass wall with stainless steel mullions, September 2020 **Image 6 (right):** 1206 Chestnut Street, stainless steel mullion joint detail, September 2020

Above the canopy, the façade is covered with 50 black polished granite panels, set in a ten by five grid. At the second floor, the space of three rows of panels was designed to accommodate a retail sign. The current box sign was installed for the last active tenant.

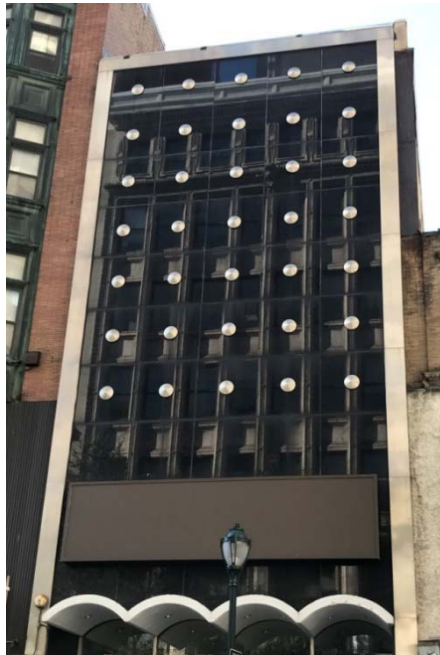


Image 7 (left): 1206 Chestnut Street, upper floors of façade, showing cladding in rows of polished black granite panels with stainless steel discs, September 2020 **Image 8 (right):** 1206 Chestnut Street, detail of polished black granite panels with stainless steel discs and stainless steel band trim, September 2020

The third and fourth stories of the façade are covered in seven rows of the granite panels, with a stainless steel disc shaped into a shallow cone centered on each. The discs were originally also backlit. The effect of the contrasting materials and shapes gives the impression of rivets fastening the cladding to the building. The perimeter of the façade is framed in a wide stainless steel band.



Image 9: 1206 Chestnut Street, detail of upper floor cladding and stainless steel discs, September 2020

1206 Chestnut stretches 144 feet deep toward Sansom Street. The south elevation can be seen from the 1200 block of Sansom Street. Constructed in brick, the south elevation shows fire tower exits to covered balconies, a 1963 addition, on the west side at each of the floors.



Image 10: 1206 Chestnut Street, view from 1200 block of Sansom Street, September 2020

The brick west elevation of the building can partially be seen from this pedestrian view. 1206 Chestnut Street shares a wall with the adjacent three-story 1208 Chestnut Street for the approximately 50' on the north end of the west elevation. Above the neighboring roofline, 1206 Chestnut is stuccoed. The fenestration on the west elevation second, third and fourth floors can also be seen from Sansom Street. The second and third stories have rows of evenly spaced windows from the back of 1204 Chestnut Street to the fire tower. The fourth story has the same fenestration pattern, but every other window appears to have been bricked in.



***Image 11:** 1206 Chestnut Street, west elevation detail, showing fenestration, view from 1200 block of Sansom Street, September 2020*

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This nomination focuses on a major renovation to 1206 Chestnut Street, undertaken in 1963, which updated the 1922 building for use as retail branch bank and headquarters for Colonial Federal Savings and Loan Association, a burgeoning local bank who benefitted from the post-war economic boom. Designed by architect Lee Casaccio (1925-1981), these comprehensive changes have gained historic significance in their own right by the value of the design and presence as one of few extant Mid-Century Modern facades on Chestnut Street in the Market East commercial district. The boldly designed facade is a model of Mid-Century Modern urban commercial design, using new materials, textures and shapes to create eye-catching, innovative architecture for its time. Breaking from the monumentally secure Neo-Classical design of traditional bank buildings, the new design intent expressed the confidence and financial optimism of post-war prosperity related to the rise in the housing market in 1960s.

The history of the 1206 Chestnut Street parcel exemplifies the 20th century evolution of the urban commercial core in Philadelphia. From the mid-19th century through the early-20th century, the property transitioned from a typical family rowhouse residence later adapted for commercial and light industrial use. In 1922, the earlier building was demolished in favor of a "modern store building," suitable for the developing downtown commercial district. After decades of various retail tenants, in 1962, the property was sold to Colonial Federal Savings and Loan Association and adapted with the Mid-Century Modern façade.

1206 Chestnut Street merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places for its significance under the following Criteria for Designation:

(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

(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Criterion (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

The history of the 1206 Chestnut Street parcel is significant as a model of the development of Center City, Philadelphia urban fabric from residential to commercial property in the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries. The earlier building on the property transitioned from a typical vernacular townhouse residence to a multi-unit mixed-use residential and commercial building. Amid the downtown boom of the 1920s, the modified townhouse was razed and a new building was constructed for commercial use by multiple tenants. The story reaches an apex with the comprehensive renovation of the building in 1963 to suit a new owner who would occupy all four stories with a storefront bank and office headquarters.

Oliver H. Willard and Reverend John Axford Higgons

The 1858-60 Hexemer and Locher atlas shows 1206 Chestnut as a typical Philadelphia townhouse plan, three and a half stories, with two-story piazza, occupied by Oliver H. Willard (1828-1875) and family. Willard was a portrait photographer who produced wet plate and salted paper photographic processes, circa 1850-1875. After practicing in studios on Market Street and other downtown locations, Willard operated his "New Galleries" on the first floor of 1206 Chestnut Street, also his family's home.

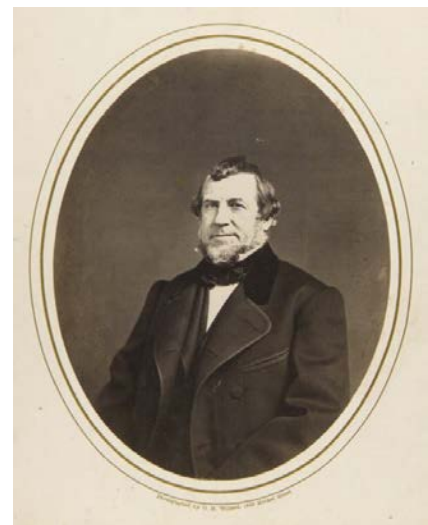
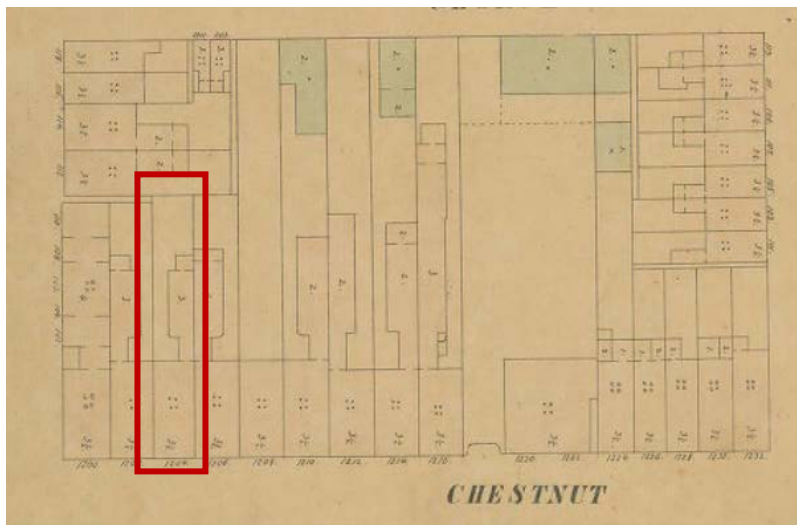


Image 13 (left): 1858-1860 Hexemer & Locher atlas, annotated to show townhouse at 1206 Chestnut Street. Maps Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia. **Image 14 (right):** Oliver H. Willard, Self Portrait, ca. 1855, Smithsonian American Art Museum

The property stayed in the Willard family after his death, occupied by a series of residential and commercial tenants, such as photographer studios, stationers and furriers. The building was repeatedly renovated inside and out in the late 19th and early 20th century, to further adapt the first and second floors for retail uses, some with clothing and milliner workrooms and warehouses, as well as office and residential units on upper floors. Notably, Philadelphia builder Ashton Tourison was hired to renovate the building for H.C. Phillips Photography Studio in 1900.



Builder A. S. Tourison started yesterday to make extensive improvements at F. H. Bohlen's residence, Sunset avenue, 200 feet south of Bethlehem Pike, in the Twenty-second ward, to cost \$6500. This contract calls for a three-story brick and stone addition, 18x28 feet, overhanging bay windows, 4x12 feet; a new heater and interior alterations. Woodville & Markoe are the architects. Mr. Tourison also has the contract to build an overhanging metal covered bay window, 3.6x12 feet, move partitions, put in new stairways, a new heater and to make general interior alterations at 1206 Chestnut street, for H. C. Phillips. Samuel R. Davis made the plans. The work will cost \$2500.

Image 15 (left): On the right of this photograph of 1204 Chestnut Street, there is a hint at the traditional rowhouse at 1206 Chestnut Street, altered to accommodate commercial tenants, including H.C. Phillips Photography Studio, on the first floor. Schmoele & Company, ca. 1900, 1204 Chestnut Street, Free Library of Philadelphia Print and Picture Collection **Image 16 (right):** Philadelphia Inquirer, (Page 11 of 16) July 3, 1900

Dann Millinery Importer

As commercial tenants revolved through 1206 Chestnut Street, the property was eventually inherited by Oliver Willard's son-in-law, John Axford Higgons (1863-1951), a Presbyterian Minister. By 1922, Higgons was looking for a more sustainable investment. He granted a long-term lease to millinery merchant entrepreneur Max Dann. Dann planned to demolish the old building and to construct a "modern store building" in which to open retail store and warehouse, as well as manage the tenancy of the upper floors.

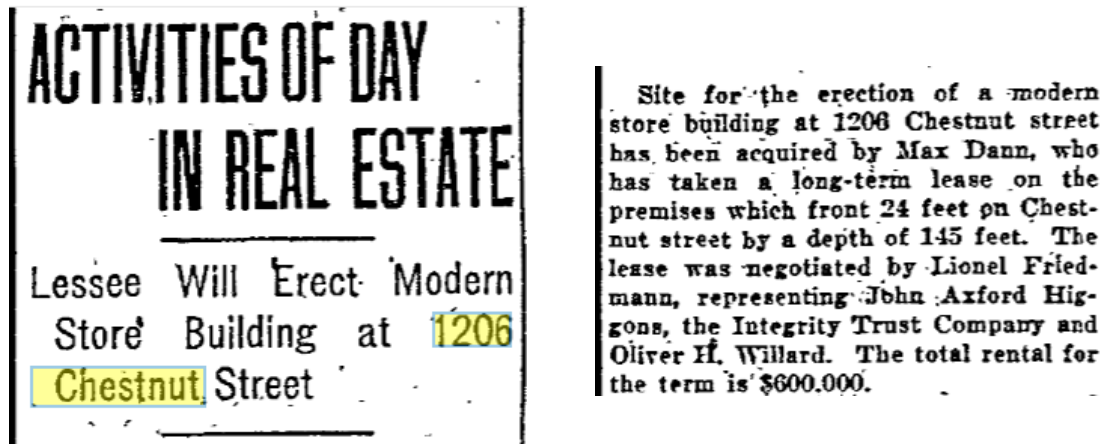


Image 17: "Activities of Day in Real Estate: Lessee Will Erect Modern Store Building at 1206 Chestnut." Philadelphia Inquirer 186, no. 134, May 14, 1922: 17.

Dann hired architect Frank E. Hahn (1879-1962), a protégé of Paul Cret, to design the new store building. As constructed in 1922, 1206 Chestnut Street was a four-story commercial row, 24 feet wide and 92 feet deep, with the volume reaching less than halfway to Sansom Street. It was designed in a Modernist style, with simplified Classical details rendered in brick, artificial stone, concrete, steel and ornamental iron, reflecting the influence of mentor Paul Cret on the architect.¹ The first floor was designed for a millinery store with requisite storefront, including display windows. Each of the three upper floors had tripartite windows divided by masonry mullions. The fourth-floor window was elaborated with decorative corbels, an iron railing and a modillioned cornice.² The building included all modern systems, including an elevator.³ Builder Ketchem and McQuade was awarded the construction contract.⁴

¹ Tatman, Sandra. Hahn, Frank Eugene. Philadelphia Architects and Buildings

https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/22009

² See 1960 images from FLP

³ Advance Construction News, Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide, v. 37, 1922, p. 489 (8/2/1922), http://philageohistory.org/rdic-images/view-bookuv.cfm/PhilaBuildersGuide_v37_1922#?ft=&q=%221206%20Chestnut%22&c=&m=&s=&cv=608&xywh=1375%2C1540%2C3040%2C602

⁴ Contracts Awarded, Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide, v. 37, 1922, p. 528 (8/16/1922), http://philageohistory.org/rdic-images/view-bookuv.cfm/PhilaBuildersGuide_v37_1922#?ft=&q=%221206%20Chestnut%22&c=&m=&s=&cv=655&xywh=-256%2C-79%2C3509%2C1217

Store Building (alts. and add.), 1206 Chestnut street, Philadelphia. Architect, Frank E. Hahn, 1112 Chestnut street, Philadelphia. Owner, Max Dann, 1312 Chestnut street,

Philadelphia. Plans about completed. Architect will take bids in a few days.

Building (alts. and add.), 1206 Chestnut street, Philadelphia. Architect, Frank E. Hahn, 1112 Chestnut street, Philadelphia. Owner, Max Dann, 1312 Walnut street, Philadelphia. Brick, artificial stone, concrete and steel, 4 stories, 92x24 feet, slag roof, cement and North Carolina pine floors (electric work, heating, plumbing and elevators reserved), metal lath, roof ventilators, tile and marble work, sheet metal sash, rolled steel skylights, kalamein doors, bond, metal bulks, waterproofing, dampproofing, ornamental iron work. Architect taking bids due August 5th.

Image 18 (left): *Advance Construction News, Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, v. 37, 1922, p. 457 (7/19/1922) **Image 19 (right):** *Advance Construction News, Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, v. 37, 1922, p. 489 (8/2/1922)



Image 20: There is little documentation of the original building as constructed in 1922. This image shows the building c. 1960 after substantial changes to the first-floor storefront in the 1930s and 1950s, but shows the Modernist details designed by Hahn on the second through fourth floors. Tuerkes, ca. 1960, 1206 Chestnut Street, Free Library of Philadelphia Print and Picture Collection.

By May 1923, construction was complete for the opening of the new Dann Building and Millinery Importer at 1206 Chestnut Street. The other floors of the building were let to dress and tailor shops, a hair salon and a photography studio.

bound to observe the association's code of ethics. This section will not have their [pared the loss of all dresses and even-
of ethics. These trust companies can [institutions that intend to observe their] coats, valued at \$245.

Dann
MILLINERY
IMPORTER
1206 CHESTNUT STREET

Announcement

Formal Opening
of the
NEW DANN BUILDING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19th, 1923

*A perfectly appointed shop
not only the finest in the city but the*

Largest Exclusive MILLINERY SHOP in America

THE Opening of the New Dann Store exemplifies the growth of the Dann Organization and realizes a three-fold ideal. For the past fifteen years Dann has been recognized for having the distinction of presenting Exclusive Millinery to the women of Philadelphia—Millinery of an original type that could previously have been secured only in New York or abroad. The first of its kind to be devoted exclusively to the exposition of Millinery of the highest type.

This Organization has since its establishment been the Standard by which others were measured

And now its three-fold destiny is complete, in that the ideal has been realized through methods that have merited and won public approval—in that Dann Millinery is of the highest character—in that it is now presented in a rarely beautiful setting—a background that forms an harmonic synthesis with the loveliest creations of Millinery Art.

THE FIRST STORE IN AMERICA EXPRESSLY PLANNED AND BUILT AS A MILLINERY SALON

Luxurious carpets . . . cases and sleeves inspired by Classic Architecture . . . neutral backgrounds . . . gorgeous lighting effects . . . decorative arches, walls and ceilings that rival Byzantine splendor . . . such an atmosphere awaits the women who would choose her Spring Chapeau in a setting of refinement and beauty.

SPECIAL OPENING FEATURE
A Brilliant Assemblage of Beautiful Spring Hats
An unequalled combination of style, quality and value. The newest phases of the Mode presented with those inimitable touches of individuality that always characterize Dann Hats.

\$10

Image 21: Dann Store Advertisement, Philadelphia Inquirer February 18, 1923

A.S. Beck Shoe Store

Despite the new building and long-term lease, the Dann Millinery store was not a lasting success. In 1928, the storefront of the building was renovated by architect Solomon Kaplan and Greenbaum Woodworking for an A.S. Beck shoe store. Alexander S. Beck was a

Hungarian immigrant who set up a shoe store chain in New York. So successful was he by 1920, Beck sold the business to the Diamond Shoe Corporation for \$1 million. The agreement stipulated that the company would always retain his name.⁵ Through 1930, A.S. Beck shoe stores opened at 10th & Market, in Germantown and other commercial districts in the city, all using Sol Kaplan as the architect, suggesting that the company was adopting a consistent and recognizable storefront design for the chain.

Store and Office (alt.), 1206 Chestnut street, Philadelphia, \$3,000. Architect, private plans. Owners, A. S. Beck Shoe Co., 139 Duane street, Philadelphia. Contract awarded Greenbaum Woodworking Co., 10 South Eighteenth street.

Shoe Store (alts.), 1206 Chestnut street, Philadelphia. Architect, Sol Kaplan, 10 South Eighteenth street, Philadelphia. Owner, name withheld. Brick, stone, tile, marble, bronze, plate glass, interior alterations, new front. Plans in progress.

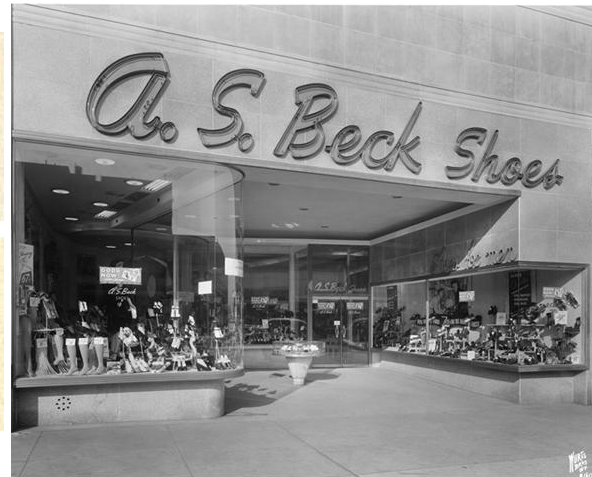


Image 22 (left): Advance Construction News, Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide, v.43, 1928, p.404 (6/27/1928) **Image 23 (right):** A.S. Beck Shoes, 63rd Drive, Rego Park, Queens, NY, 11/19/1943, Wurtz Brothers Collection, Museum of the City of New York

After Beck's, again a succession of businesses providing personal goods and services were advertised as building occupants, including milliners, dressmakers, tailors, furriers, beauty salons and photographers. This pattern of business types reflects the character of the bustling Center City commercial district in the second quarter of the 20th century. Retail shops and studios on first and second floors served the personal style and service needs of Philadelphians with some means. Workrooms for small industrial operations on the upper floors and rear rooms offered employment to working class Philadelphians, especially as migration and immigration trends flooded the city with new residents through the second quarter of the twentieth century.

Tuerkes

Finally in 1951, Tuerkes, a retailer of luggage out of Baltimore, opened a Philadelphia flagship location in the first floor of 1206 Chestnut Street. Offering leather goods, specialty gifts and

⁵ Marzlock, Ron, *A.S. Beck Was a Real Shoe In*, Queens Chronicle (3-12-2015)

https://www.qchron.com/qboro/i_have_often_walked/a-s-beck-was-a-real-shoe-in/article_d5f6df54-bc3d-5309-a548-12d8349050ce.html

featuring engraving service, Tuerkes ushered in the availability of small luxury travel items to the post-war middle class.



Image 24 (left): Tuerkes Advertisement. "The Public Ledger, May 14, 1961. Image 25 (right): Tuerkes, ca. 1960, 1206 Chestnut Street, Free Library of Philadelphia Print and Picture Collection.

Higsons Estate Sells to Colonial Federal Savings and Loan

Tuerkes served as a dependable tenant after Higsons' death in 1951, but by 1961, his estate, managed by Montgomery Bank and Trust Company, sought to sell the property. Colonial Federal Savings and Loan Association, having maintained a main office at 1326 Walnut Street and opening a suburban branch in the Manoa neighborhood of Havertown in Delaware County, was looking to further expand their headquarters downtown. Colonial Federal paid \$185,000 for the building.

Colonial Federal Savings and Loan Association hired architect Lee Casaccio to design a fresh façade and comprehensive interior changes to renovate the building for a downtown retail bank and company headquarters. Following the trends of commercial retail design of the 1960s, Casaccio's design used bold shapes and sleek materials to "slipcover" the 1922 building. The first-floor storefront adopted a new trend of structural glass under a cast concrete canopy. The façade renovation removed the original windows and demolished the projecting masonry details and iron railing, completely covering the four-story height of the 1922 building with polished stone panels and contrasting stainless steel features. Above the canopy, a large sign announced the bank name in script letters.

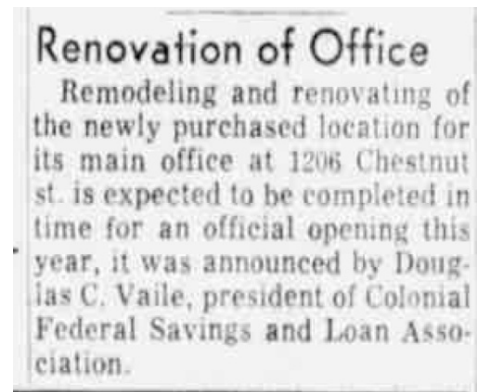
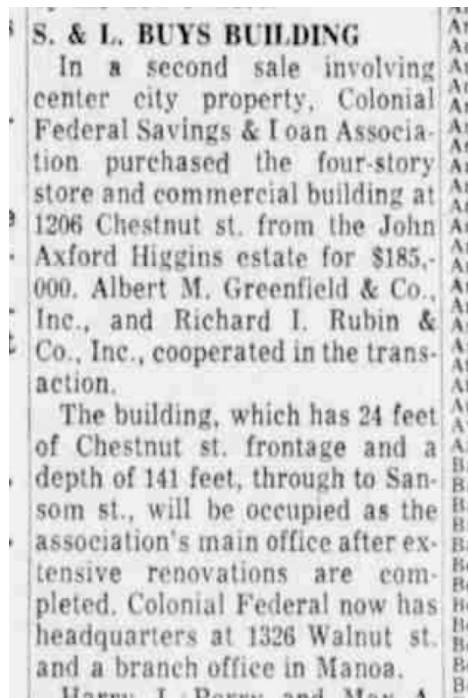


Image 26 (left): "Real Estate News: S. & L. Buys Building" Philadelphia Ledger, (Page 26b of 32) December 28, 1961 **Image 27 (right):** "Renovation of Office" Philadelphia Inquirer, (page 25 of 40), January 22, 1962

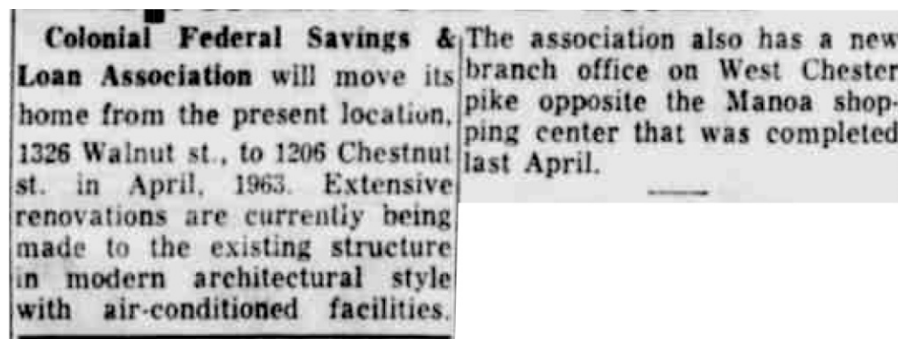


Image 28: "Expansion Plans". The Philadelphia Inquirer, (Page 10 of 36), January 22, 1963

When the building renovations were complete in April 1963, Colonial Federal Savings and Loan moved their downtown Philadelphia headquarters to 1206 Chestnut Street and opened the new retail branch bank in the first floor. The bank continued to see success and opened a second suburban branch in Drexel Hill. The bank retained headquarters at 1206 Chestnut Street until 1978, when they moved to a location at 5th and Chestnut Streets.⁶

⁶ Colonial Federal Savings and loan Association Advertisement. June 5, 1978 (Page 22 of 60)." Philadelphia Inquirer (1969-2001), Jun 05, 1978

you are invited to the grand opening of

COLONIAL

FEDERAL SAVINGS

May 13th through May 31st

Help us celebrate the opening of our ultra modern new home, and win valuable gifts for yourself and family! Enjoy the improved services of Colonial's new facilities.

FREE when you open a new savings account of \$25 or more, or add at least \$25 to your present account.

(1 free gift to a family)

OPEN OUR MAGIC VAULT AND WIN A VALUABLE FREE GIFT!

Come in to our office and get your electronic Magic Key Card. Nothing to sign. No obligation. Winners get their free gift immediately.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

All cards look alike, but they're not alike. Many of them are "magic keys" which can open our Magic Gift Vault for you. If your "key" opens the vault, you can select your own free gift from an assortment of brand name items.

CHATHAM BLANKET
A luxurious medium weight blanket that is machine washable, dries resistant. 72" x 84". Choice of lovely pastel shades.

ELECTRIC HOSTESS SERVER
Cook in it... then in and serve from it! Large milk glass casserole holds 2 quarts. Keeps foods at the right serving temperature.

UMBRELLAS
Cynthia design for the ladies. Solid top, self-opening spring type for max. 40 gts. Brandy, durbine fabrics, handles.

MONOGRAMMED GLASSES
A set beverage set 12 ounce crystal clear glassware with permanently etched initial. Will not wash off, wear off or fade off.

plus... free gifts for everybody!

COLONIAL

FEDERAL SAVINGS

and Loan Association

1206 CHESTNUT STREET

Manoa Branch: West Chester Pike and Claremont Blvd.

INSURED **0%**

CURRENT RATE

COLONIAL

FEDERAL SAVINGS

AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

NOW 2 GREAT

offices to serve you better

WEST CHESTER PIKE & CLAREMONT BLVD.
(OPPOSITE PENN FRUIT)

Manoa, Delaware County, Pa.

1206 CHESTNUT STREET
Philadelphia 7, Pa.

SAFETY FOR YOUR SAVINGS

EACH ACCOUNT INSURED UP TO \$10,000

Matchorama
ARISTOCRAT
MANUFACTURED EXCLUSIVELY BY
UNIVERSAL MATCH CORP.
ST LOUIS, MO. REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

COVERS BY DEXTER, WEST NYACK, N. Y.
PATENT PENDING.

45774-B

Image 29 (left): Colonial Federal Savings and Loan Association advertisement. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, (Page 10 of 38), May 13, 1963 **Image 30 (right):** Colonial Federal Savings and Loan Association matchbook advertising two locations, including 1206 Chestnut Street, eBay

Philadelphia Federal Credit Union

On January 31, 1978, 1206 Chestnut Street was sold to Philadelphia Federal Credit Union, who occupied the building as a flagship branch location and headquarters until March 2019. Philadelphia Federal Credit Union adopted the iconic architectural design of the building as a logo device, featuring the arched canopy.



Image 31: 1206 Chestnut Street as the headquarters and branch bank of last tenant Philadelphia Federal Credit Union, 2013, midtownvillagephilly.org



Image 32: Philadelphia Federal Credit Union logo, incorporating the iconic arched canopy of 1206 Chestnut Street, pcfu.com

From the 19th century through the 21st century, the built environment of Center City, Philadelphia developed from largely 19th century residential rowhouses to a modern commercial district reflecting economic and social changes. The history of 1206 Chestnut Street is one example of this story, a property improved with a residential rowhouse, altered with a first-floor storefront, then subsequent alterations to accommodate multiple commercial and small manufacturing occupants as the city industrialized. In 1922, the rowhouse was demolished and a new commercial building constructed with more capacity for a remarkably similar slate of occupants focused on personal products and services, such as clothing,

accessories and photography, in the rapidly growing commercial district. In the 1960s, with a booming economy, banks looked to situate within commercial districts with access to clients, as another retail service provider. In the case of 1206 Chestnut Street, the 1920s building was renovated in entirely new mode of design, Mid-Century Modern architecture, with attention-grabbing shapes and materials. Occupied as the branch bank and headquarters of two companies until 2019, the Mid-Century character of the building is intact, representing the history of the development of the Market East commercial corridor.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Criterion (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen

The 1963 façade renovation of 1206 Chestnut Street is an important example of Mid-Century Modern architectural design applied to the urban commercial form. In a typical strategy for modernization of an older building, architect Lee Casaccio designed a "slip covered" façade anchored by an "open" or "visual front" on the first floor. This transformed the building from Frank E. Hahn's 1922 streamlined Modern Classical commercial building into an altogether new modern look. Employing futuristic shapes, sleek materials and new building technologies, Casaccio brought an expression of optimism to the fabric of the new headquarters and branch bank of Colonial Federal Savings and Loan Association.

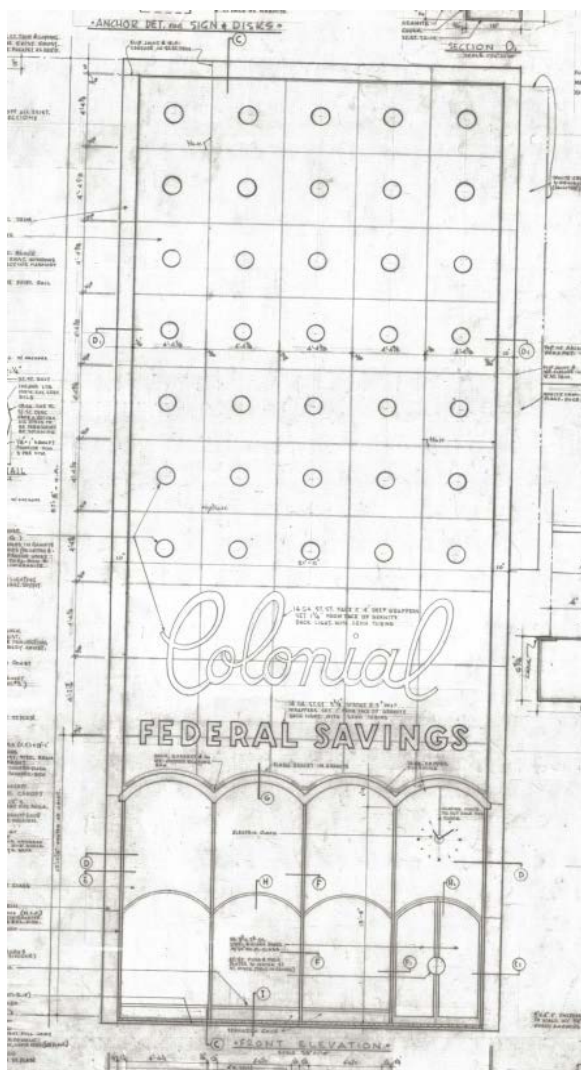


Image 33 (left): Original façade drawing by architect Lee Casaccio, *Alterations Colonial Federal Savings and Loan, Sheet 3 - Front Elevation and Details, 1962*, courtesy of Lee Casaccio, Jr. **Image 34 (right):** Current image of 1206 Chestnut Street, September 2020

The architectural significance of this building relates to the use of Mid-Century Modern commercial design vocabulary applied to the typical urban row building form. The modern characteristics of the building are limited to the façade and the interior. The south and west elevations of the building, though altered with an addition and systems, retains its 1922 brick industrial look. Casaccio's design employed the open storefront, using plate glass windows across the narrow 24-foot width, allowing pedestrian views directly into the deep interior of the branch bank. Even the door (both the original double set and the single replacement) is glass, to not interrupt the view for potential customers. The visual front is divided into two rows of four vertical sections by thin stainless steel mullions, which stretch the perceived height of the storefront. The clock above the door, a staple feature of modern branch banks, follows a minimal unnumbered design.

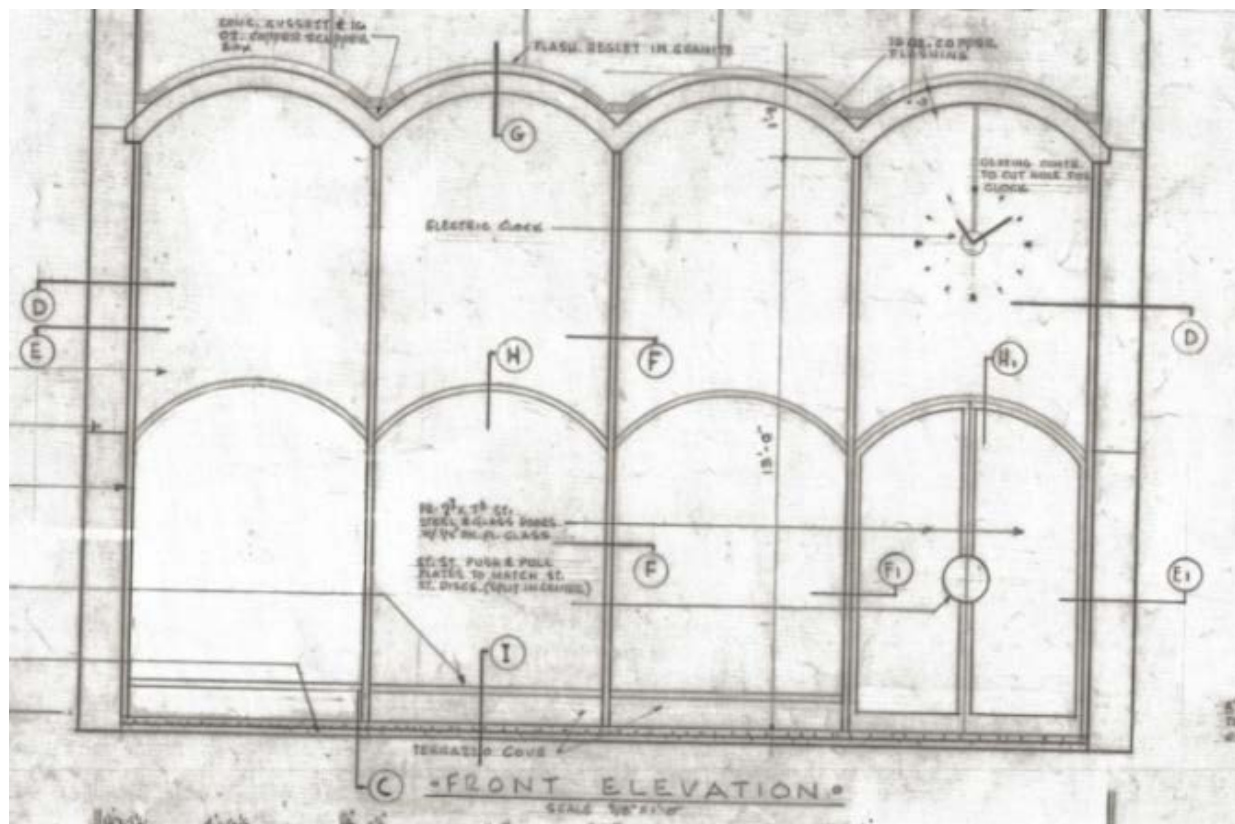


Image 35: Original drawing by architect Lee Casaccio, *Alterations Colonial Federal Savings and Loan, Sheet 3 - Front Elevation and Details, 1962*, courtesy of Lee Casaccio, Jr.

The storefront and entrance are recessed under a canopy of four arches, adding a sculptural element to the design. In this case, the canopy penetrates the front wall, extending well into the bank lobby, forming a barrel-vaulted ceiling, again drawing the eye inside the branch bank. The arches were wired with integral lighting to illuminate both the interior and exterior. The canopy also provides a visual separation between the active retail branch bank on the first floor and the bank headquarter offices in the upper floors.

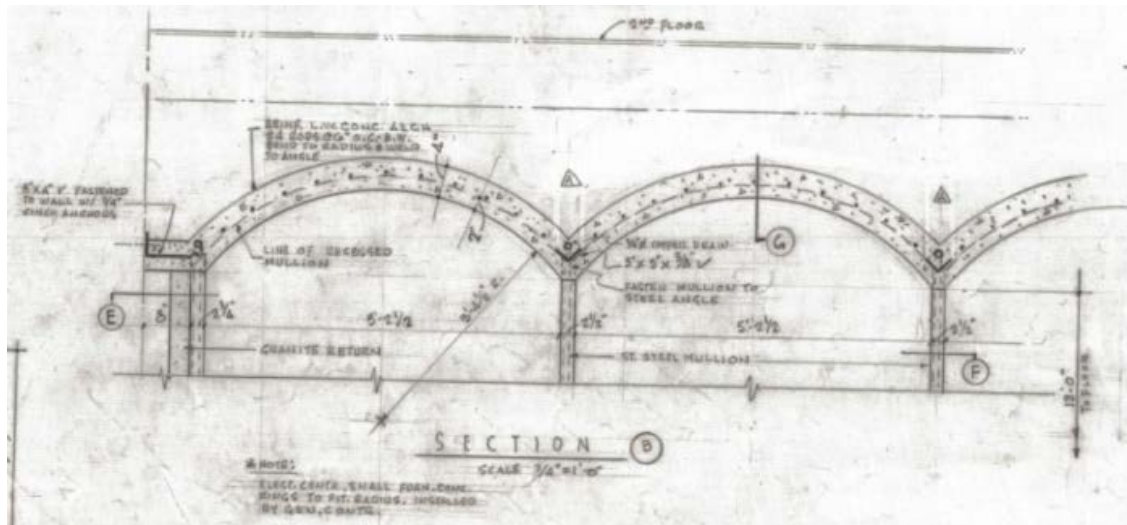


Image 36: Concrete canopy section, *Original drawing by architect Lee Casaccio, Alterations Colonial Federal Savings and Loan, Sheet 3 - Front Elevation and Details, 1962, courtesy of Lee Casaccio, Jr.*

Another frequently used technique to update older buildings with Mid-Century Modern design was to apply a "slip cover," or cladding of new material on the upper floors of a building. Often obscuring windows of the older building, this can have the impact of added emphasis to the storefront, but on 1206 Chestnut Street, the design of the slip cover has a pop-art style that commands attention. Framed above the canopy, black stone panels cover the second through fourth floors of the façade. The panels seem almost fastened to the building with large metal roundels in a five by seven grid. Below the grid, space was allowed as a backdrop for signage.

Sleek materials, newly available for use in architecture were another hallmark of Mid-Century Modern design. The plate glass storefront, framed in thin metal, functions as the structural first floor curtain wall to gain maximum visibility into the attractive bank lobby. The metal frames are constructed of stainless steel, a great choice for the exterior application. Coordinating stainless steel features include the electric clock and door hardware, as well as the decorative metal discs on the upper floors and the wide band framing the façade. The canopy is cast reinforced concrete, allowing a shaped feature with structural qualities. All the exterior cladding, above the canopy and at the recessed entry consists of polished black granite panels. The exterior floor of the recessed entrance was originally Terrazzo, now replaced with concrete sidewalk.

The futuristic emphasis of Mid-Century Modern design is characterized by the use of simple geometric shapes, realized in contrasting colors and textures designed to draw attention. On the façade renovation of 1206 Chestnut, Casaccio used the arched canopy to delineate the two functions of the building: the retail branch bank on the first floor and company headquarters

on the upper floors. The thin stainless steel lines of the storefront windows repeat and reflect the arches below the canopy. The grid of discs on the upper floors further engages the eye in the geometric organization of the facade. Above the canopy, the polished black granite panels provide a sleek background for the contrasting stainless steel discs, which have a matte texture. In section, the discs are actually shallow cones that project slightly from the granite panels. They were designed to be backlit, illuminating the grid and accentuating the contrast of the stainless steel and granite, even at night. The entire façade is bound in a wide stainless steel frame, clearly defining 1206 Chestnut Street from the adjacent buildings.

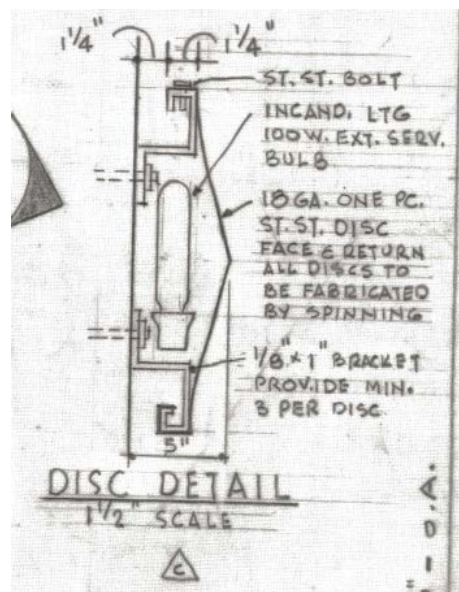


Image 3 7: Disc detail, original drawing by architect Lee Casaccio, *Alterations Colonial Federal Savings and Loan, Sheet 3 - Front Elevation and Details, 1962*, courtesy of Lee Casaccio, Jr.

Another requisite feature of commercial architecture of the period is large scale illuminated signs in vibrant graphic lettering. Perhaps the only loss of integrity on 1206 Chestnut Street is the missing signage announcing Colonial Federal Savings and Loan. Casaccio designed the original sign to fill the area above the canopy and below the grid of discs with a large script "Colonial" in a curved shape paired with small block letters, reading "FEDERAL SAVINGS," set horizontally below. This signage was fabricated in stainless steel and back lit with "Zeon" tubing. This sign was replaced with a large light box sign when the building changed hands to the Philadelphia Federal Credit Union in the 1970s.

There was additional minor signage in the recessed entry, convenient for the pedestrian sightline. An original sign in stainless steel block letters reading "FEDERAL SAVINGS" was placed in the east recessed panel with the insignias of the Federal Home Loan Bank and Federal Savings & Loan Insurance Corporation in bronze. On the west side, an original sign

read "INSURED SAVINGS" with two interlocking stainless steel discs. These signs were removed by the later bank tenant.

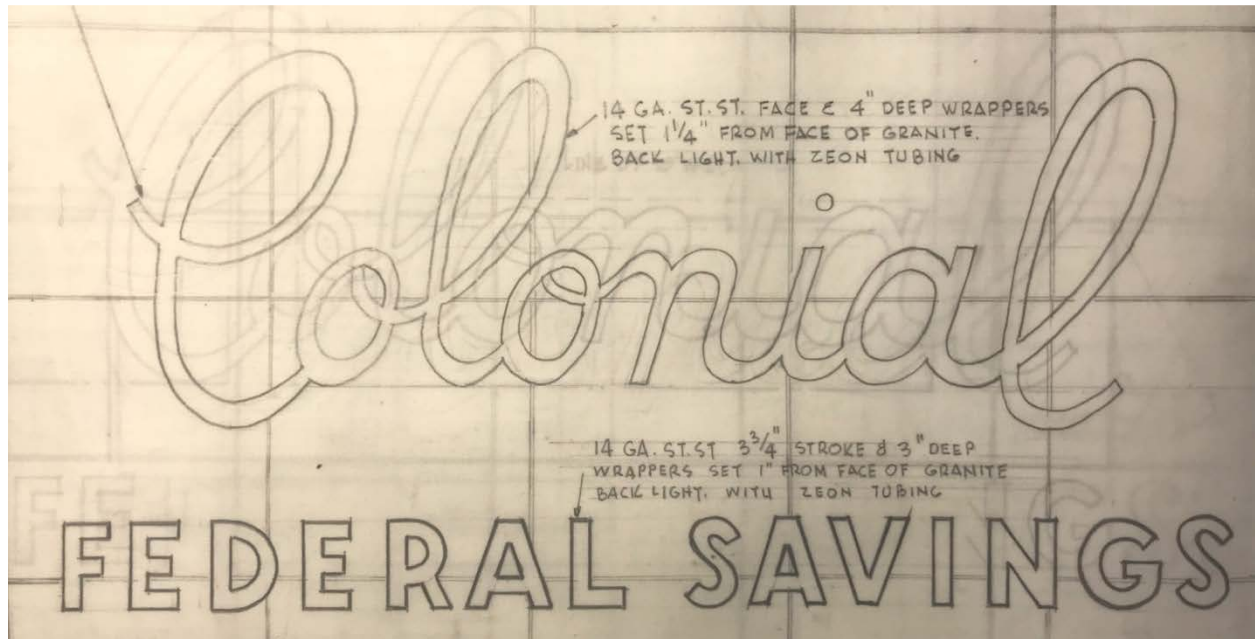


Image 38: Signage Detail, *Original drawing by architect Lee Casaccio, Alterations Colonial Federal Savings and Loan, Sheet 3 - Front Elevation and Details, 1962, courtesy of Lee Casaccio, Jr.*

The irony of the "Colonial" Federal Savings and Loan Association opening their headquarters in a Mid-Century Modern building must be mentioned. The transition of social trust in financial institutions represented by Classical and Colonial Revival architectural styles was supplanted by the more desirable expression of modernism, transparency and efficiency conveyed by Mid-Century design. In fact, banks were one of the foremost institutions to marshal new design to main street America in the 1950s and 60s.⁷

The 1963 alteration to the original 1922 building at 1206 Chestnut Street has gained historic significance in its own right. It is significant as an intact exemplar of Mid-Century Modern commercial design, with the full four stories retaining integrity, despite first floor retail in urban commercial districts often experiencing modifications to suit evolving retail tenants. The façade of 1206 Chestnut Street is comprised of many of the distinctive features that characterize Mid-Century Modern architecture, including the visual storefront, projecting sculptural canopy and upper stories slip covered with a geometric pattern, assembled with modern materials and construction techniques. The flashy style and sleek materials draw attention to the building and business, especially in a row of more traditional late 19th and early 20th century masonry facades with altered storefronts. Vernacular, yet dynamic in

⁷ Carol Dyson and Anthony Rubano, "Banking on the Future: Modernism and the Local Bank," *Preserving the Recent Past* 2, 2000.

design, 1206 Chestnut Street is a holdout among examples of the urban commercial architecture of the recent past in Philadelphia.

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