

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: **2006 Chestnut Street**

Postal code: **19103**

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **The Durham & Co. Radio Station, Philadelphia W3XM Radio Station**

Current Name: **Row Zone**

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): **1928**

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: **1928**

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: **Silverman & Levy, Architects**

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: **S.H. Levin, Contractor**

Original owner: **Paul A. Rinck**

Significant persons: **Francis R. Ehle (1897-1931)**

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: **Historic Building Preservation Task Force of the Center City Residents' Association**

Author: **Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian
Keeping Society of Philadelphia**

Date: **29 October 2020**

Address: **1315 Walnut Street, Suite 320
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107**

Telephone: **717.602.5002**

Email: **keeper@keepingphiladelphia.org**

Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 10/29/2020

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 12/14/2020

Date of Notice Issuance: 12/18/2020

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Agas Holdings LLC

Address: 2710 E Tioga St

City: Philadelphia

State: PA

Postal Code: 19134

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 1/20/2021

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 2/12/2021

Date of Final Action: 2/12/2021, Criteria C & D

Designated Rejected

12/7/18

NOMINATION

FOR THE

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Figure 1. The primary (north) elevation of the subject property. Source: Tim Kerner, 2020.

THE DURHAM & Co. RADIO SHOWROOM PHILADELPHIA W3XM RADIO STATION IN THE ART DECO STYLE

—
BUILT 1928
—

2006 CHESTNUT STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19103-4411

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot of piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, SITUATE on the South side of Chestnut Street at the distance of 60 feet westward from the West side of South 20th Street, CONTAINING in front or breadth on Chestnut Street 20 feet, and extending of that width and in length or depth Southward between parallel lines at right angles to the said Chestnut Street, 120 feet to Ionic Street.

BEING known as 2006 Chestnut Street.

Map Registry No. 001S240075

OPA Account No. 882390193

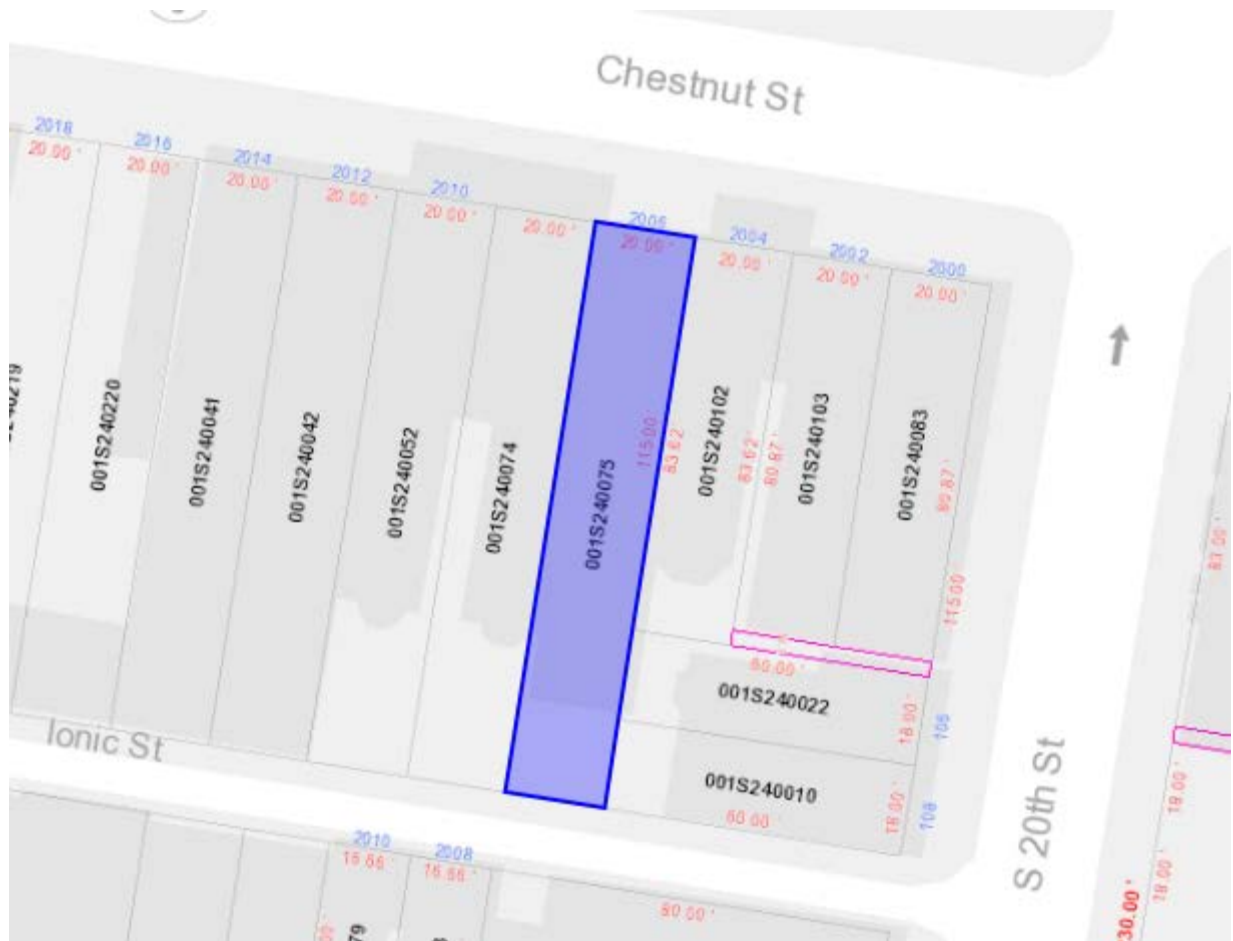


Figure 2. The boundary for the subject property is delineated in blue. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2020.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Durham & Co.'s Radio Showroom, Philadelphia W3XM Radio Station at 2006 Chestnut Street, is a two-story masonry commercial structure with a limestone façade. The attached rectangular building form is dictated by its row lot that extends from Chestnut Street at the north to Ionic Street at the south in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood of Philadelphia. Half the height of the adjacent structures, the flat-roofed building is recessed from the neighboring four-story townhouses by several feet, reflecting the changing building line requirements that evolved as Chestnut Street became primarily commercial in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While relatively low in height compared to its contextual built environment, the building is a “Modernist,” Art Deco style gem with restrained, but distinctive architectural details, featuring a set-back that bolsters its individuality. The masonry façade frames a two-story show window that is subdivided by a replacement or possibly concealed spandrel between the first and second floors. The first-floor opening appears to contain modern materials that are typical of contemporary commercial storefronts. The second-floor window appears to have originally been divided into two panels by a single, vertical lintel. A ribbed molding separates the lower window from the five-part mullion transom above, which may contain separate, single sash windows. Delineating the two-story window, the architrave serves as the vertical feature that typifies most Art Deco facades. The vertical projection extends from the ground floor to about eighty percent of the total height of the façade. This verticality is achieved by geometric, tiered pilasters that feature a stone banner above the second-floor transom, which is detailed with various geometric forms.



Figure 3. The primary (north) elevation of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.



Figure 4. Left: The transom set defined by a ziggurat motif. Source: Tim Kerner, 2020. Figure 5. Right: The transom's ziggurat motif and its continuation into the second floor of the primary (north) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.



Figure 6: The fenestration of the first floor of the primary (north) elevation. Source: Tim Kerner, 2020.

Set within the carved limestone façade, the first-floor features two single pedestrian doors that flank the central shop window, the architraves and transoms of which appear to be original, while the individual door fixtures are replacement, metal commercial versions. Simple wooden sills separate the doorways from the transom above. The transoms are delineated in the ziggurat form

or motif, containing a leaded glass window in a fish scale pattern.¹ The westerly transom features vintage-style numbering: “2006.”

Extending from the transoms through the lower two-thirds of the second floor, the ziggurat motif is used to form recessed panels within the limestone façade that also flank the central window. In the second floor, the recessed portion of the panels are interrupted by single windows, each containing a one-over-one replacement fixture. Rising above these windows are low-relief limestone panels that are identically defined by a geometric floral motif that mimics a sunrise pattern. The limestone panels comprise the most detailed surfaces of the entire façade, though even these features derive from a simple Art Deco design. Rising with the central show window to the upper portion of the façade, the said architrave and its surrounded and header comprise a simple smooth face plain of stone.² Wave-like details rise along the roofline, giving the parapet definition that is indicative of geometric decoration of the period.

The rear elevation features a 20’x22’ concrete block addition constructed in 1987 that is non-contributing.³



Figure 7. The rear (south) elevation of the subject building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

¹ Matthew Rice. *Rice’s Language of Buildings*. (Great Britain: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009), 182.

² Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018), 466.

³ Philadelphia zoning permit application #126526, approved 7/27/1987 and available on Atlas.phila.gov.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Durham & Co.'s Radio Showroom, Philadelphia W3XM Radio Station (Radio Showroom & Station) at 2006 Chestnut Street in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood of Philadelphia is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Located in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood of Philadelphia, the building satisfies the following Criteria for Designation as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

- c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; and
- d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen.

The period of significance dates to the time of construction in 1928.



Figure 8. The primary (north) elevation of the subject property. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission, 1994.



Figure 9. Left: An advertisement for Philco, All-Electric, Radio by Durham & Co., Inc. at the subject property. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 May 1929, 40. Figure 10. Right: An advertisement for the RCA Radiola 66, by Durham & Co., Inc. at the subject property. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 November 1929, 28.

HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE EARLY HISTORY OF 2006 CHESTNUT STREET

Formerly the site of a four-story marble-clad townhouse, the subject property changed hands in July 1927, being sold by Paul A. Rinck to G.J. Schorr for \$70,000.⁴ Francis R. Ehle (1897-1931), President of the International Resistance Co., and Vice President and Director of Durham & Co. became associated with the subject property at some point between 1927 and 1928.⁵ In May 1928, Silverman & Levy, Architects, whose offices were at 313 South Smedley Street, were commissioned to design a new two-story commercial building. The four-story townhouse was demolished and a two-story brick structure with a carved limestone façade was constructed on the site by S.H. Levin, Contractor.⁶ The new building appears to have served as a radio station and showroom for Durham & Co, Radio Engineers. They sold Philco and the RCA Radiola, among other brands, and were also associated with the International Resistance Co. Radio broadcasting, engineering, and sales constituted a decidedly modern enterprise and use that was invariably linked to the new building’s Art Deco style façade.⁷

After the untimely death of Francis R. Ehle in 1931, the subject building would go on to serve as a showroom for Standard Air Conditioning, Inc. (Figure 31). A subsidiary of the American Radiator & Standard Sanitary Corp., the company sold portable air conditioners during the 1930s, another emerging product suited to the architectural style of its chosen place of business.⁸

⁴ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 July 1927, 19.

⁵ “Ehle Was Noted in Radio Field; Had Office Here,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 November 1931, 19.

⁶ *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide*, 2 May 1928, 278.

⁷ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 May 1929, 40.

⁸ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 July 1938, 30.; and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 July 1939, 4.

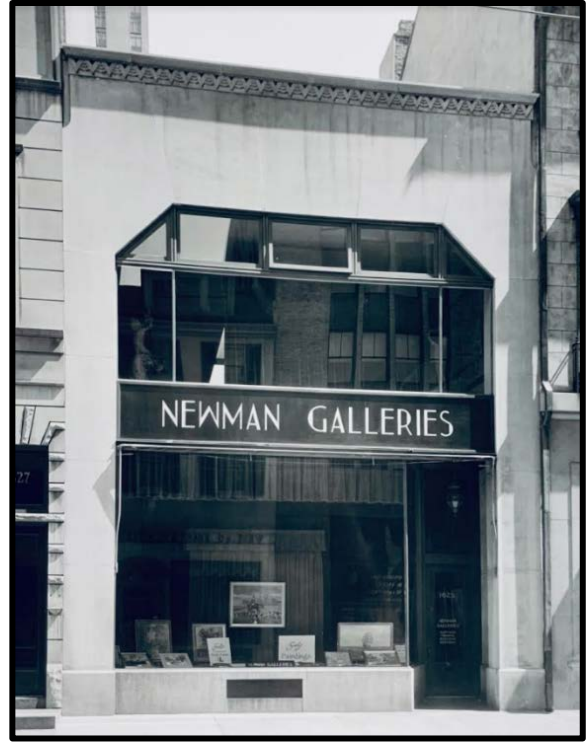


Figure 11. Left: Featuring a distinctive Art Deco façade, the Rex Cole Company Showroom, 2392 Grand Concourse, the Bronx, designed by Hood & Foulhoux, 1929, showing the General Electric refrigerator front and center in the two-story show window. Source: Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and Thomas Mellins. *New York 1930: Architecture And Urbanism Between The World Wars*. (New York, New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1987), 320. Figure 12. Right: Newman Galleries, Walnut Street, Philadelphia, a two-story, limestone commercial building with modest Art Deco details for what was essentially an art showroom. Source: Boies Penrose Collection, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

CRITERIA C & D

The Radio Showroom & Station at 2006 Chestnut Street embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Art Deco style as applied to modest new commercial buildings in Philadelphia.⁹ The subject building represents an era of low-rise commercial buildings in the Art Deco style that defined business districts across the country.

CRITERION D: THE ART DECO STYLE (1925-1940)

The Art Deco was a “Modernist” architectural style that was prominently employed in commercial, institutional, and residential design in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.¹⁰ The aesthetic criteria is one defined by “sharp-edged looks and stylized geometrical decorative details” that were quite distinctive as a complete departure from architectural tradition.¹¹ Popularization of the style in American architecture initiated “in 1922 when the *Chicago Tribune* held a world-wide competition for a headquarters building in Chicago,” which led the newspaper powerhouse to select a Gothic

⁹ *Commercial and Government Radio Station of the United States*. (Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce, 30 June 1930), 196.

¹⁰ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018), 465-66.

¹¹ “Art Deco Style (1925-1940),” Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide. (Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, 2015). <<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/art-deco.html>> Accessed on 3 October 2020. <<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/art-deco.html>

Revival design. Second place was awarded to the young Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen (1873-1950) for a design in the Art Deco style, which was widely published throughout the architectural community nationwide. This would ultimately help to promulgate widespread employment of the style.¹² The aesthetic criteria that came to fore was the culmination of many preceding movements, as described by Benjamin Leech, Architectural Historian:

While French inspiration was indeed prevalent in the American incarnation of the style, so too was the influence of Viennese Secessionism, German Expressionism, Italian Futurism, Beaux-Arts Classicism, and the domestic Arts and Crafts and Prairie School movements of the late nineteenth century.¹³

Popularity of the style was further amplified among architectural professionals after the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in 1925, a Parisian design exhibition where the term “Art Deco” is said to have originated.¹⁴

As the Art Deco emerged and evolved over time, the following architectural details and features became the definitive of the style, as defined by in *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide* published online by the State Historic Preservation Office:

1. Smooth wall surface
2. Sharp edged, linear appearance
3. Stylized decorative elements using geometrical forms, zigzags, chevrons
4. Low relief decorative panels
5. Stepped or set back front facade
6. Strips of windows with decorative spandrels
7. Reeding and fluting around doors and windows

Despite the relatively small field that comprises the subject building’s primary elevation, the Radio Showroom & Station contains all of the hallmarks of an attached commercial building executed in the Art Deco style. The features include a smooth-faced limestone facade; a sharp edged, linear appearance; stylized decorative elements and openings, presenting popular geometrical forms, the ziggurat motif, etc.; low relief limestone panels, each containing a geometric floral motif, articulated in a sunrise pattern; and reeding and fluting that define apertures for doors and windows, as well as panels and planes.¹⁵

¹² Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018), 465-66.

¹³ Benjamin Leech. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Overseas Motor Works, 1501-05 Fairmount Avenue*. (Philadelphia: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, 2014), 4-5.

¹⁴ Bevis Hillier, *Art Deco of the 20s and 30s*. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1968, 13.

¹⁵ “Art Deco Style (1925-1940),” *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide*. (Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, 2015). <<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/art-deco.html>> Accessed on 3 October 2020.



Figure 13. WCAU Building, 1618-20-22 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. Source: The George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Collection, Temple Digital Collections, Temple University.

The architectural details, materials, and overall design of the subject building both emulates and pre-dates many of the most significant Art Deco buildings of the era. Well-known and significant buildings of the period were defined by smooth-faced, limestone facades with minimal geometric details and occasional low-relief limestone panels, including the Boston Avenue Methodist Church (1926-29), Tulsa, Oklahoma; the Bronx County Courthouse (1931), Bronx, New York; the Louisiana State Capitol (1930-31), Baton Rouge, Louisiana; the United States Courthouse and William Penn Annex Post Office (1940) (Figure 14), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the United States Federal Building and Courthouse (1932), Wichita, Kansas.¹⁶ One of the most definitive details related to the Art Deco was the ziggurat motif that delineates the transoms and the panels above each doorway, an element of design often found in larger, detached and semi-detached

¹⁶ Clara Breeze. *American Art Deco, Architecture and Regionalism*. (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 67-69, 82-83, 130-131, and 134-135.

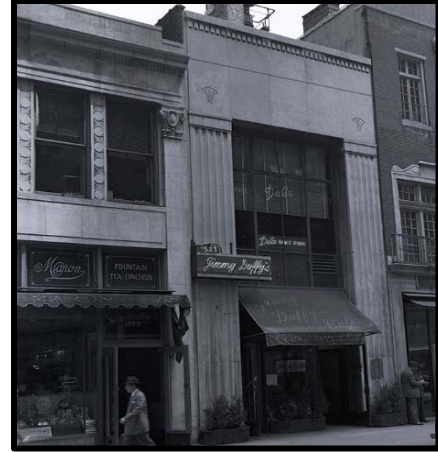
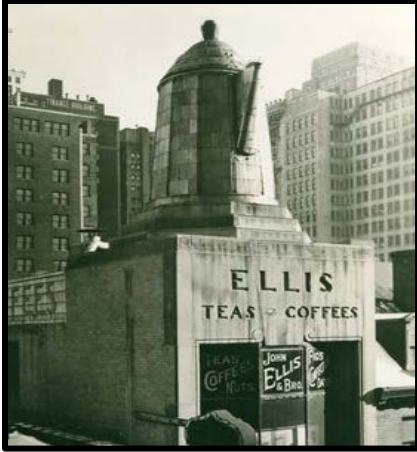
buildings such as the Buffalo City Hall (1929-31), Buffalo, New York; the Church of the Most Precious Blood (1932), Long Island City, New York; the National Shrine of the Little Flower (1931-36), Royal Oak, Michigan; and the Union Trust Building (1929), Detroit Michigan.¹⁷ Just a few blocks from the subject property is another building that employed a ziggurat motif in its upper stories was the WCAU Building 1618-20-22 Chestnut Street (1928) (Figures 13 and 21), which housed an established radio station, along with ground floor commercial space. Though this is a much larger and more prominent example the details employed possess interesting parallels. Another feature of the subject building is the repetition of a simple, wave-like detail along the parapet, defining the roofline against the sky above, a design detail employed in buildings like the Avalon Casino (1928-29), Catalina Island, California; the Joslyn Art Museum (1928-31), Omaha, Nebraska; Midtown Theater (Metro Theater) (1933), Bronx, New York; Maricopa County Courthouse and Phoenix City Building (1928), Phoenix, Arizona; Mundelein College (1929), Chicago, Illinois; the S.H. Kress Building (1930), Hutchinson, Kansas; and the S.H. Kress Building (1937), El Paso, Texas.¹⁸ Of all these famous examples of far more substantial buildings, less than half pre-date the design and construction of the subject property, which speaks to its place in the architectural and design context of that moment. Despite the Crash of 1929, the style further evolved in the 1930s when streamlined Art Deco details became attractive in the design and manufacture of airplanes, automobiles, and ships, which ultimately led to streamline modernism in industrial design.



Figure 14. The United States Court House and William Penn Branch Post Office, 9th and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia. Source: Oscar Beisert Collection.

¹⁷ Clara Breeze. *American Art Deco, Architecture and Regionalism*. (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 62-63, 74-76, 100-101, 120-121, 168-170, and 172-173.

¹⁸ Clara Breeze. *American Art Deco, Architecture and Regionalism*. (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 26-27, 110-111, 206-207, 216-217, and 262-263.



Figures 15. and 16. Left and Center: John Ellis and Bro. Teas & Coffees (1929) was a three-story commercial and showroom building, designed by Architects Tahlheimer & Weitz, at 9 South 16th Street (Demolished), Philadelphia. Source: Jacob Stelman Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia (Figure 15) and the William Rapp Collection (Figure 16). Figure 17. Right: Art Deco style commercial buildings at 1523 Walnut Street, 1948.

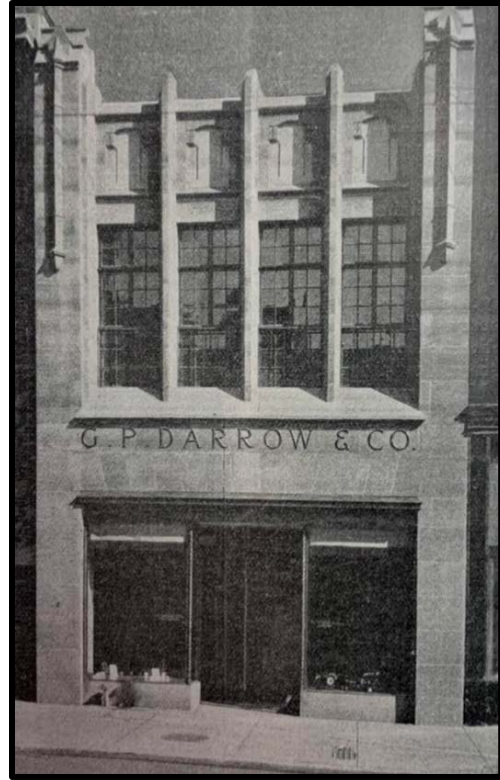
CRITERION C: ART DECO COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS & SHOWROOMS

While the subject building might generally be misidentified as a “taxpayer building,” the potential sales generated by products like the Philco All Electric Set, or the RCA Radiola 66 were more viable motivators for the demolition of a four-story townhouse with rental apartments to create a modern structure designed and constructed specifically as a storefront and showroom with a sleek limestone façade and Art Deco details. Durham & Co. was not only involved in the manufacture and sale of radios and related products, the firm’s new building at 2006 Chestnut Street also housed a small radio station known as Philadelphia W3XM. This was one of numerous experimental radio stations across the country in the late 1920s and early 1930s.¹⁹



Figure 18. Left: Art Deco style commercial buildings at 7037-7039 Garrett Road, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, 1949. Source: Parker & Mullikin, Photographer, Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 19. Right: The Bon-Ton Wall Paper Co. Showroom at 3824 N. Broad Street. Source: Michael Bixler.

¹⁹ *Radio Service Bulletin*, 31 March 1931, 12.



Above are two examples of two modernist style commercial buildings in Philadelphia that were designed to serve commercial sales with showroom space. Figure 20. Left: The three-story “Modernist” showroom for the drapery fabrics and fine wall papers of John H. Whitwell, Inc. at 1702 Walnut Street, advertised by Albert Greenfield in the 1940s. Source: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Figure 21. Right: G. P. Darrow & Co., a “Modernist” Gothic or Tudor style commercial building, at 5623-25 Germantown Avenue (Demolished). Source: The Germantown Historical Society.

Until the mid-1920s, showrooms were essentially housed in factories and “undesigned loft spaces,” a reportedly underwhelming sales environment that evolved with the introduction of the Art Deco, Art Moderne, and other variants of modernism.²⁰ Perhaps John Taylor Boyd, Jr. said it best in 1928: “The new art is...an art of sales.” Major metropolitan areas like New York City, Chicago, and Philadelphia were business and cultural centers of their associated regions, and, as such, the buildings that lined the city streets in business corridors served as “principal showcase[s] for wholesale goods in many fields.”²¹ With the modernization and proliferation of appliances—for example, radiators and refrigerators, automobiles, furniture, radios, and other products, the need to reinvent the wholesale environment, as well as the storefront was a critical step to creating a new market place for new and reinvented products. The subject building represents the Art Deco style commercial building and showroom, as it proliferated as a building type in the 1920s and 1930s, relating to a modern retail phenomenon. Local examples include the Bon-Ton Wall Paper Co. Showroom at 3824 N. Broad Street (Figure 19); G.P. Darrow & Co. Building at 5623-25 Germantown Avenue (Figure 21); John Ellis and Bro. Teas & Coffees at 9 South 16th Street (Figures 15 and 16); and the John H. Whitwell, Inc. Building at 1702 Walnut Street (Figure 20).

²⁰ R.I. Leonard and C.A. Glassgold. *American Art Deco: An Illustrated Survey*. (2013).; and Theodore Menten. *Advertising in the Art Deco Style*. (1988).

²¹ Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and Thomas Mellins. *New York 1930: Architecture And Urbanism Between The World Wars*. (New York, New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1987), 320-322.

Other two-story commercial buildings are also illustrated in this nomination, exhibiting similar stylistic details (Figures 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, and 24).



Figure 22. Left: The Master Floor Covering Building at 2009 Chestnut Street (Altered), a “modernist,” two-story showroom of the 1920s and 1930s. Source: Parker & Mullikin, Photographer, Free Library of Philadelphia.

Figure 23. Right: Commercial buildings in the 5200 block of Chestnut Street in West Philadelphia, reflecting the Art Deco movement in small scale buildings. Source: W.D. Shepherd, Photographer, Free Library of Philadelphia.

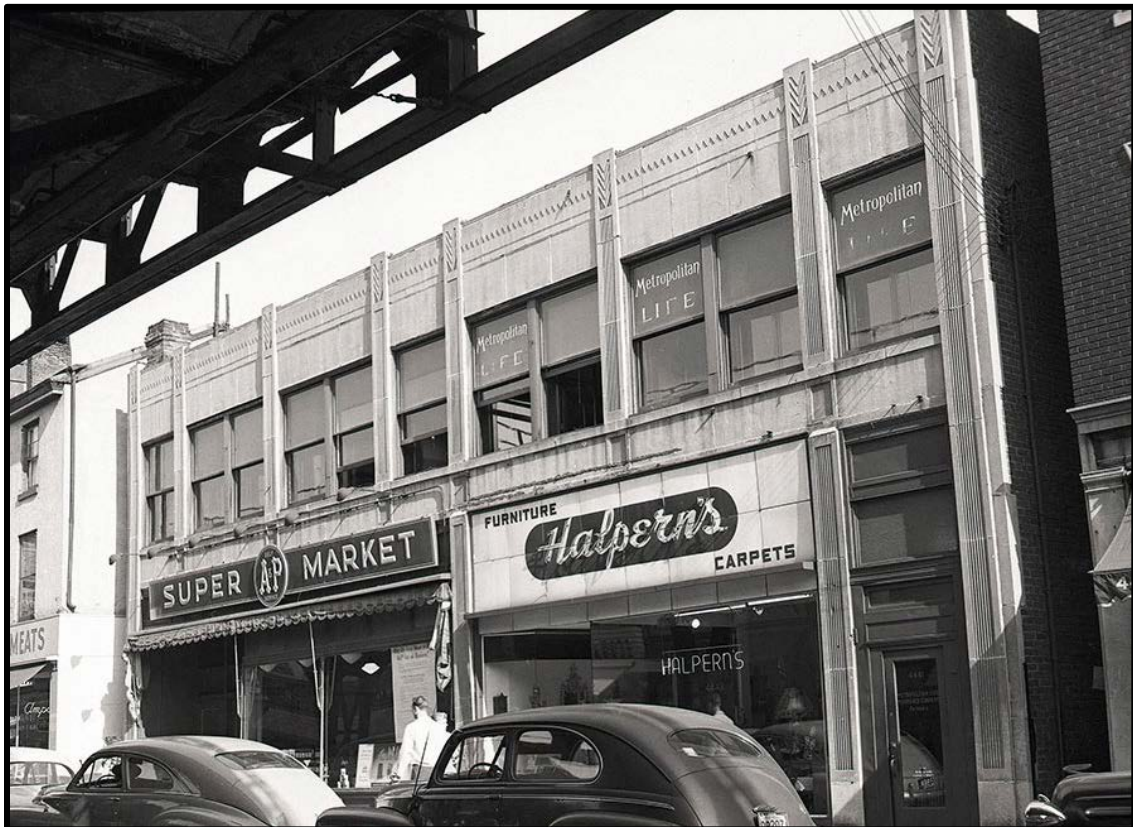


Figure 24. Art Deco style commercial buildings at 4441-4449 Frankford Avenue (Altered), 1949. Source: Parker & Mullikin, Photographer, Free Library of Philadelphia.

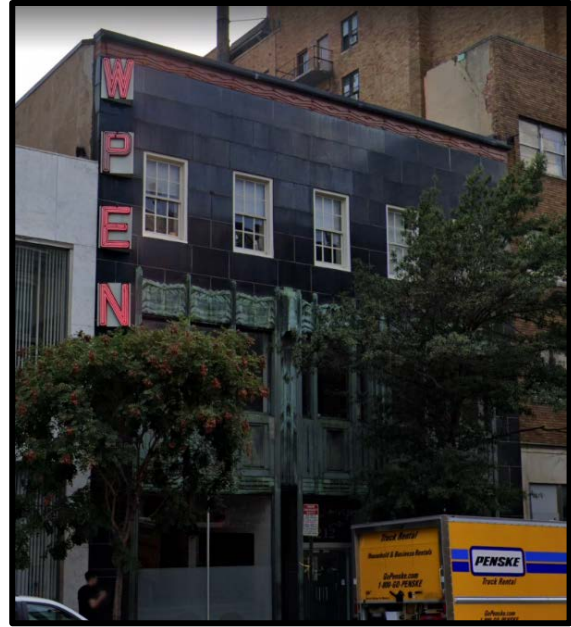


Figure 25. Left: The WCAU Station (1928), 1618-20-22 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. Source: Curbed Philadelphia. Figure 26. Right: The WPEN Station (1928), 2212-14 Walnut Street, Philadelphia. Source: Google Earth.

The Radio Showroom & Station is representative of a small-scale radio broadcasting station designed in the Art Deco style. Broadcasting buildings were constructed in varying sizes, as related to the economic success and stature of the associated station. While the capacity and scale of these individual buildings varied greatly, this was typology primarily represented by the Art Deco style, being constructed throughout Philadelphia during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

The first radio station to receive a Federal license in Philadelphia was WGL on February 8, 1922.²² Within that year, roughly half a dozen commercial AM radio stations shared the 833 frequency, including Gimbel Brothers' WIP, John Wanamaker's WOO, Strawbridge & Clothier's WFI, Thomas Howlett's WGL, and WCAU.²³ The department store hosts appear to have created designated space for radio broadcasting, though they did not erect new or ancillary buildings. WCAU would ultimately become the Universal Broadcasting Company by the mid-1920s, and would go on to build one of the most important Art Deco buildings in Philadelphia (Figures 13 and 25).²⁴ The fantastic skyscraper at 1618-20-22 Chestnut Street was designed by Gabriel B. Roth, Architect in 1928.²⁵ WPEN commissioned an Art Deco style building on Walnut Street (Figure 26) the same year. Both radio stations were completed the same year as the subject property. Another store and radio broadcasting station was commissioned in 1937 by KYW Radio on designs by Tilden & Pepper, Architects, which was a six-story "Modernist" building (Figures

²² "Broadcast Pioneers of Philadelphia," <<https://www.broadcastpioneers.com/wcauhistory.html>> Accessed on 8 October 2020.

²³ Alex Cosper. "Philadelphia Radio History," *Tangent Sunset*. < <http://www.tangentsunset.com/radiophi.htm>> Accessed on 8 October 2020.

²⁴ "Broadcast Pioneers of Philadelphia," <<https://www.broadcastpioneers.com/wcauhistory.html>> Accessed on 8 October 2020.

²⁵ *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 13 January 1932, 9.

29 and 30).²⁶ That same year another radio station on the west side of 63rd Street south of Passyunk Avenue was built for WFIL Broadcasting Co. by Charles Laessle, Contractor, at a cost of approximately \$10,000.²⁷



Figure 27. Left: Philadelphia WCAU's 50,000-Watt AM Transmitter (1932) at 396 Bishop Hollow Road in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. Source: Broadcast Pioneers. Figure 28. Right: North Plant of the Atwater Kent Manufacturing Company, 5000 Wissahickon Avenue, Southwest Elevation Oblique, Showing Loading Dock and Southeast Elevation of Powerhouse, Looking Northwest. Source: HAER, PA, 51-PHILA, 703A-6, Library of Congress.



Figures 29. and 30. Left and right: KYW Radio Broadcasting Studio, 1619-21 Walnut Street, Philadelphia. Source: Broadcast Pioneers of Philadelphia Archives.

²⁶ *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 14 April 1937, 53.

²⁷ *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 22 December 1937, 217.

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makes year-round
AIR CONDITIONING
available to everyone**

THE AIR CAPTAIN. New, portable room conditioner banishes hot stuffy bedrooms, living rooms, offices.



DON'T swelter these hot, sticky, stuffy days now that you can easily afford air conditioning. There's a new monthly plan which permits everyone to revel in cool, quiet comfort while outside temperatures soar!

What a joy this new portable unit is! It wrings moisture out of the humid, soggy air, fills the room with coolness; and gives you the correct combination of temperature and humidity. Air is filtered free of dust, soot, pollen before you breathe it. Street and traffic noises are hushed to closed-window quiet.

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eliminates stale, parched air. It prevents drafts that cause colds and grippe. It keeps your room cleaner because no outside dirt and dust can come in.

ENJOY THESE COMFORTS yourself on a generous trial basis. Then take advantage of monthly payments when you decide to enjoy it permanently. Don't go thru another sweltering day. Telephone now and say, "I want to try the Air Captain in my home (or office)."



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2006 Chestnut St., Philadelphia

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▶ For as little as \$5 down you can sleep in cool, quiet comfort on the hottest nights. This amazing small unit brings in cool, fresh outdoor air... is your quick answer to summer's discomfort!

Figure 31. Advertisement for Standard Air Conditioning Inc. at the subject property. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 July 1939, 4.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

This nomination was completed for the Historic Building Preservation Task Force of the Center City Residents Association by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia with the primary author as Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist, with assistance from J.M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian, and Kelly E. Wiles, Architectural Historian.

The following sites were used to create the nomination:

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