

ADDRESS: 1106-14 SPRING GARDEN ST

Name of Resource: Woodward-Wanger Co.

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Mapleville, LLC, Stella and Nga Wong

Nominator: Callowhill Neighborhood Association

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street. The Historical Commission previously designated the property in March 2018. In 2020, the property owners asked the Historical Commission to rescind the designation and then remand the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation for a new review because they had not been sufficiently notified of the consideration of the nomination in 2018 and, therefore, did not have an opportunity to participate in the deliberations. At its December 2020 meeting, the Historical Commission granted the request, rescinding the designation and directing the Committee on Historic Designation to review the nomination again.

The nomination argues that the surviving section of the former Woodward-Wanger Co. or Lawsonia Building, constructed in 1929 as a warehouse and office building, is significant under Criterion for Designation D as a distinctive example of the Colonial Revival Style. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that the surviving section of the building reflects the environment of commercial and light industrial buildings in the Colonial Revival style. The Colonial Revival features are limited to the Spring Garden or front façade.

The property at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street includes a remnant of a building that stands along Spring Garden Street and vacant land at the rear. Several redevelopment projects have been contemplated for the site in the last decade and one was initiated but then abandoned. Numerous zoning permits as well as building and demolition permits for redevelopment were issued from 2013 to 2017. In 2015 or 2016, the rear half of the building was demolished, but work then stopped and the permits expired. The remaining portion of the building is a shell. It is open but boarded at the rear, where the back half was demolished. It has no interior partitions or finishes.

The property owner has submitted reports from a structural engineer and preservation consultant. The structural engineering report demonstrates that the front façade is failing because of a faulty foundation and cannot be reused, but would have to be rebuilt.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff initially recommended that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1106-14 Spring Garden Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and D and that the front façade to a depth of five feet, which is the character-defining feature, should be preserved. In light of the structural engineering report that indicates that the front façade cannot be salvaged, but would need to be rebuilt if reused, the staff revises its recommendation. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction strictly limit the circumstances when reconstruction is appropriate to instances when the understanding of the resource is essential and no other resources can document the history. In light of the limited architectural significance of this resource, which is represented by numerous other resources as the nomination demonstrates, reconstruction is not merited and the Historical Commission should decline to designate this property. There is no need to compel the property owner to reconstruct this partially demolished building when numerous other buildings, some already designated, document the application of the Colonial Revival style to twentieth-century light industrial buildings.

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 ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: **1106-1114 Spring Garden Street**

Postal code: **19123** Councilmanic District: 1

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **Woodward-Wanger Co.**

Other Name: **The Lawsonia Building**

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: **NA**

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a plot plan and written description of the boundary. **SEE ATTACHED SHEET.**

6. DESCRIPTION

SEE ATTACHED SHEET.

Please attach a description of the historic resource and supplement with current photographs.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

[See Attached Sheet]

Period of Significance (from year to year):

1929-30

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration:

1929-30

Architect, engineer, and/or designer:

Unknown

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan:

F.B. Davis & Son, Inc.

Original owner:

Woodward-Wanger Co.

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;
X (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
X (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.

SEE ATTACHED SHEET.

9. NOMINATOR: CALLOWHILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Author(s) **Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist**
Email keeper@keepingphiladelphia.org Date **21 December 2017**
callowhill@gmail.com

Street Address **1315 Walnut Street, Suite 320** Telephone **(717) 602-5002**

City, State, and Postal Code: **Philadelphia, PA 19107** Nominators are not the property owners.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 21 December 2017

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 1/11/2018

Date of Notice Issuance: 1/11/2018

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: Greenway Plaza LLC

Address: 550 N 10th St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19123

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 14 February 2018

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 9 March 2018

Date of Final Action: 9 March 2018

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

4/11/13

**Nomination for the
Philadelphia Register of Historic Places**



The Woodward-Wanger Building, later known as the Lawsonia Building, 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street. Source: Andrew Palewski.

**The Woodward-Wanger Co.
also known as the Lawsonia Building
1106-1114 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary description is as follows:

BEGINNING at a point on the Southerly side of Spring Garden Street (120 feet wide) at the distance of 59 feet Westwardly from the Westerly side of 11th Street (50 feet wide); thence extending Southwardly on a line at right angles to Spring Garden Street 105 feet 11-3/4 inches to a point; thence extending Eastwardly on a line parallel with Buttonwood Street 47 feet 7-1/4 inches to a point on the Westerly side of 11th Street; thence extending Southwardly along the said side of 11th Street 15 feet 6 inches to a point, said point being 125 feet 4-1/2 inches Northwardly from the Northerly side of Buttonwood Street; thence extending Westwardly on a line parallel with Buttonwood Street, crossing a certain 3 foot wide alley, 77 feet 5 inches to a point on the Westerly side of said alley, said alley extending Southwardly and communicating with a certain court leading into Ridge Avenue; thence extending Southwardly on a line parallel with 11th Street along the Westerly side of said alley 15 feet 1-1/4 inches to a point in the head of said court 8 feet to a point on the Westerly side of said court; thence extending Southwardly on a line parallel with 11th Street along the Westerly side of said court 25 feet 8-3/4 inches to a point on the Northeasterly side of another certain 3 feet wide alley; thence extending Northwestwardly along the Northeasterly side of the last mentioned 3 feet wide alley 60 feet 2-3/8 inches to a point; thence extending Westwardly on a line parallel with Buttonwood Street crossing the head of the last mentioned 3 feet wide alley 47 feet more or less to a point; thence extending Northwardly on a line at right angles to Spring Garden Street 106 feet 5-1/8 inches to a point on the Southerly side of Spring Garden Street aforesaid; thence extending Eastwardly along the said side of Spring Garden Street 109 feet to the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

Map Registry No. 003N180279

Parcel No. 881580045



The boundary for the subject property is in blue; however, a more specific boundary related to the significant portion of the proposed designation is indicated in the dashed black line. Source: Philadelphia Water.

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The Woodward-Wanger Building, later known as the Lawsonia Building, 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street. Source: Michael Bixler.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Situated at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street, the former Woodward-Wanger Co. is a two story Colonial Revival industrial building that was constructed in 1929. Of steel frame construction, the building is clad in red brick with a flat roof. Adhering to a primary tenant of the Colonial Revival style, the red brick façade is symmetrical in the design and treatment of primary elevation, which spans seven bays along the south side of Spring Garden Street. The entire façade features a base course of soldier brick, which is mimicked in a course that spans the façade beneath the windows. The entire façade features redbrick that is laid in a Flemish bond.

First Floor. The central bay projects slightly at the first floor, placing a visual emphasis on the primary, pedestrian entrance, and showcasing the Georgian-inspired door surround and infill. The aperture features double paneled wooden doors with an elliptical fanlight overhead. The opening is delineated by an architrave of tiered red soldier brick. Lightly-colored, smooth-faced stone or concrete key blocks define the base of the fanlight opening and a like keystones is positioned at the center of the arch. The interior is accessed by a large granite step that doubles as a threshold. Flanking the doorway are vertical panels within the red brick façade formed by decorative brickwork further defined by lightly-colored, smooth-faced stone or concrete key blocks. A decorative belt courses spans the projecting bay immediately above the doorway. The roofline of the single-story projection is defined by an elegant cornice of a lightly-colored, smooth-faced stone or concrete.



Looking southeast, the central bay of the subject property. Note the brickwork, the stone or concrete details, and the original windows. Source: Michael Bixler.

Flanking the central bay are two bays designed, one at the east and one at the west, for loading and unloading vehicles. Like most loading bays, the openings are slightly elevated from the sidewalk. The loading section of each aperture features replacement infill windows, which are capped by lintels that also support three-part transoms overhead. Elements of the original transom windows survive with a wide central window of ten lights flanked by smaller windows of six lights. This design and configuration is repeated in the next set of apertures that flank the three central apertures. Both are three-part mullion windows with a wide ten-over-fifteen sash at center and narrower six-over-nine sash on each side. Slightly narrower, an additional set of apertures flank the five previously described. These openings also contain three part mullion windows, being slight reductions of those previously described with three six-over-nine sashes. A course of soldier brick spans the façade serving as lintels above the first floor openings, excluding the central bay.

Second Floor. The first and second floors are delineated by horizontal spandrels that are formed by decorative brickwork and key blocks between the windows in all of the bays aside from the center. The fenestration of the second floor mimics that of the first with what appears to be metal multi-light industrial sash windows. All of the windows and loading bay openings feature lightly-colored, smooth-faced stone or concrete sills.

Above the second floor windows is a simple projecting cornice above which is a low, but notable brick parapet with rising sections that delineate the piers between the apertures.

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Detail photograph of key block within the central bay and the door surround of the primary entrance.
Source: Andrew Palewski.



Looking southeast, an eastern bay of the primary elevation showing the windows at the first and second floors. Source: Andrew Palewski.

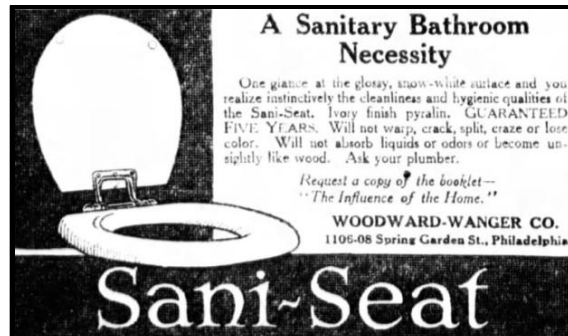


Looking northwest at the rear and interior of the subject building. Source: Michael Bixler.

East, West, and Rear Elevations. The east and west elevations were designed as party walls, and the wall that comprised the rear elevation has been demolished.



Looking north at the rear of the subject building. Source: Michael Bixler.



Advertisement. *Evening Public Ledger*. (Philadelphia: 15 November 1918), p. 12.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Woodward-Wanger Co. at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street 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 Callowhill neighborhood, the subject 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 for the subject designation is 1929 to 1930.

Historic Overview. Established earlier, the Woodward-Wanger Co. was granted a charter by Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on August 18, 1911 with a capital of \$50,000.¹ The company was a successful “plumbing supply house” of Philadelphia, later expanding to include other products. Starting at 1106 Vine Street, the Woodward-Wanger Co. moved to two row houses at 1106-1108 Spring Garden Street, and later added 1110, 1112, and 1114 to their operation. In May 1929 there was a major fire in the building that ultimately led to demolition.² After the fire, the Woodward-Wanger Co. commissioned F.B. Davis & Son, Inc. to construct a “two-story warehouse and office building” at an estimated cost of \$40,000. The permits were granted for construction in September 1929.³ Construction was completed in 1930. The company operated in this building until 1949 when they moved to the intersection of Ridge Avenue and Crawford Street. The subject building was sold to the Lawsonia Manufacturing Company in late 1949. For more than fifty years the company used the building for the manufacture of “high-end furniture.”⁴

¹ “Many Charters Granted,” *The Evening News*. (Wilkes-Barre: 18 August 1911), p. 4.

² “2 Fires Menace Centre City Area; Nuns Rescue 78.” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: 24 May 1929), p. 1.

³ “Activities Of Day In Real Estate,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: 4 September 1929), p. 7.

⁴ Grojart. “New Life for Spring Garden’s Long-Vacant Lawsonia Building?” Hidden City Philadelphia. Published on 31 August 2015. Accessed on 20 December 2017.

<<https://hiddencityphila.org/2015/08/renovations-furnish-lawsonia-building-with-good-fortune/>>

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Looking south at the primary elevation of the subject building in c. 1949, during the last years of Woodland Wanger Co.'s use of the building. Source: the Free Library of Philadelphia.

CRITERION D

The former Woodward-Wanger Co. at 1106-1114 Spring Garden Street is a distinctive example of the Colonial Revival style as applied to commercial and industrial buildings in Philadelphia in the first half of the twentieth century.

Background. According to the Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide by the Historical and Museum Commission, the Colonial Revival Style 1880-1960 is “...one of the most frequently produced and enduring popular styles in America...” The style enjoyed huge popularity as a result of the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876, and further popularized by the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. Like other revivalist movements, the Colonial Revival movement didn’t always produce period Georgian replicas, but, instead, inspired the employment of the stylistic characteristics and features in new and innovative ways.⁵ The style guide states the following regarding the applicability of the style to new buildings and renovations in the period between the First and Second World Wars:

Generally, the Colonial Revival style took certain design elements - front façade symmetry, front entrance fanlights and sidelights, pedimented doorways, porches and dormers - and applied them to larger scale buildings. These colonial era details could be combined in a great variety of ways, creating many subtypes within this style.⁶

⁵ Virginia Savage McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses—The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America’s Domestic Architecture. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), pp. 408-432.

⁶ The Colonial Revival Style 1880-1960, Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, published online by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Common Building Type. The style guide also calls out commercial buildings as a common building type related to the Colonial Revival style. The subject property is a distinctive of an era that was defined by low-rise commercial and light industrial buildings that featured Colonial Revival façades in the first half of the twentieth century.

Identifiable Features. The style guide also identifies twelve major “identifiable features” that were commonly associated with the Colonial Revival Style. The façade of the subject building possesses more than half of those characteristics (numbers align with the style guide):

- No. 5: Pilasters [in this case the pilasters are simply piers]
- No. 6: Symmetrical façade
- No. 7: Double-hung windows, often multi-paned
- No. 8: Triple windows
- No. 10: Decorative pendants
- No. 12: Cornice with dentils or modillions⁷

While there is no “Columned porch or portico,” (No. 1), “Pedimented door, windows, or dormers,” (No. 2), “Broken pediment over front door,” (No. 3), the building does feature a projecting central entrance with a fanlight that is often found in Georgian and/or Federal period houses. Additionally, what the aforementioned style guide doesn’t identify as among the “identifiable features,” Virginia Savage McAlester does in her updated version of A Field Guide to American Houses (2013). One of these features is the application of the window in the second floor of the central bay in a manner that works to emulate the use of a distinctive apertures and panels often featured above a Georgian doorway that is notable in its own right unlike all the other windows of the fenestration. McAlester also identifies other Colonial Revival features that are integral to the subject facade including the use of the red brick, Flemish bond, and courses of soldier brick and stone or concrete.⁸

Accessed on 20 December 2017. <

<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/colonial-revival.html>>

⁷ The Colonial Revival Style 1880-1960, Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, published online by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Accessed on 20 December 2017. <

<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/colonial-revival.html>>

⁸ Virginia Savage McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses—The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America’s Domestic Architecture. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), pp. 408-432.

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Looking east at the Colonial Revival style building of the former Walls & Pearsall, also a plumbing supply company, that constructed this building in 1902. Source: Michael Bixler.

CRITERION C

The former Woodward-Wanger Co. reflects the environment of commercial and light industrial Philadelphia in an era characterized by the Colonial Revival style. Enumerable examples of commercial and light industrial buildings with distinctive and unnecessarily stylized Colonial Revival façades may be found in and around Philadelphia. These buildings represent a period when old commercial streets and concerns were “modernizing” and updating; residential streets were becoming commercial; and other areas were developed and/or redeveloped from rural to commercial and/or industrial uses.



Looking northeast at the corner of 8th and Locust Streets, this two-story commercial or light industrial building is designed in the Colonial Revival style. Source: Google.



Looking south in the southwest corner of Washington Square, the George T. Bisel Company on left and the Farm Journal (c. 1912), on right commissioned and/or occupied buildings with strong elements of the Colonial Revival style as adapted for their commercial and industrial uses. Source: Flickr.



W.B. Saunders Company, publishers of medical books, constructed this building on the west side of Washington Square. While a much larger office building, it shares similar Colonial Revival design

details with the subject building. Source: Phillyliving.com.



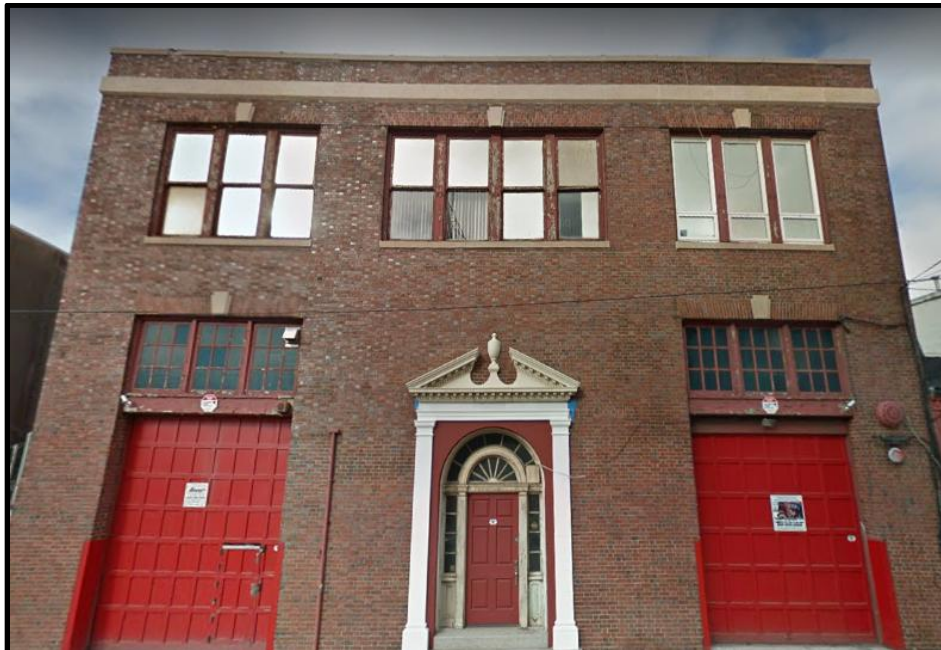
Above: Looking northwest, the Arguto Oilless Bearing Company, located at 149 Berkley Street, Wayne Junction in Germantown is a classic example of a company that started in recycled buildings and later built larger headquarters, employing the Colonial Revival style. Source: Google. Below: An early image of the original building, c. 1910, at Wayne Junction, which, despite being a one-story warehouse and office, was designed in the Colonial Revival style. Source: www.philadelphiabuildings.org.⁹



⁹ Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. Accessed 20 December 2017. <https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/pj_display.cfm/49886>



The Crescent Iron Works, 4901 Grays Avenue, which was built in the Colonial Revival style in 1929 by Edward H. Reuss, one of the leading plumbing and electrical equipment manufacturers of the day. Source: Michael Bixler.



Looking north, the Colonial Revival building at 1108-1112 Frankford Avenue, which in the 1940s housed the Ajax Electric Furnace Company.¹⁰ This is a smaller building, but has a distinctive Colonial Revival façade. Source: Google.

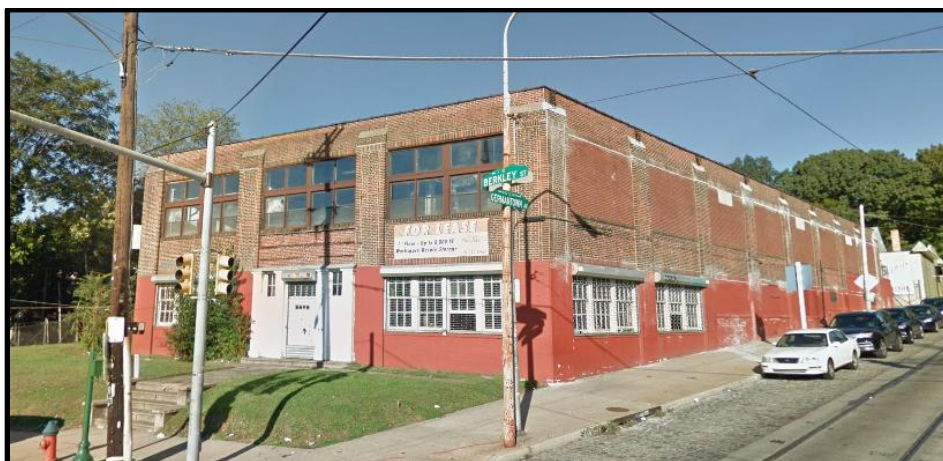
¹⁰ "U.S. Sues 2 Firms for Excess Profits," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: 19 April 1946), p. 3.
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Looking southwest, this former industrial building at 4732 Stenton Avenue, Wayne Junction in Germantown is both Colonial Revival and Art Deco, featuring many historic elements of style that were discussed above. Source: Google.



Looking south at the entrance gate and the associated office buildings at the Navy Yard in South Philadelphia. These are similar buildings designed in the Colonial Revival style. While featuring a more institutional appearance there are similarities. Source: Google.



A typical low-rise industrial building at the corner of Germantown Avenue and Berkley Street, Wayne Junction in Germantown that has some Colonial Revival treatment as applied to more modernist building types. Source: Google.



Looking northwest, this building, located in the 2900 block of N. 16th Street is entirely utilitarian, but does interestingly employ several Colonial Revival features in a minimalist tradition. Note the overall form of the building, the red brick façade, the lightly-colored coping, the broken pediment and door surround, and the fanlight. Source: Google.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

This nomination was sponsored by the Callowhill Neighborhood Association.

The following sites were used to create the nomination:

Newspaper.com

Philadelphia GeoHistory Network

Pinterest—<https://www.pinterest.com/>

Proquest Historical Newspapers

Major Bibliographic References

"2 Fires Menace Centre City Area; Nuns Rescue 78." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: 24 May 1929), p. 1.

"Activities Of Day In Real Estate," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: 4 September 1929), p. 7.

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"U.S. Sues 2 Firms for Excess Profits," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: 19 April 1946), p. 3.

Virginia Savage McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses—The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), pp. 408-432.