

**ADDRESS: 1716 CHESTNUT ST**

Name of Resource: Wall and Ochs Building

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Tuscan Realty of PA, LLC

Nominator: Center City Residents Association

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, [megan.schmitt@phila.gov](mailto:megan.schmitt@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1716 Chestnut Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the subject property is a “notable example of a Renaissance Revival-style commercial building of the turn of the twentieth century.” Under Criterion E the nomination argues that the 1716 Chestnut Street was designed “by the architectural firm of Addison Hutton, a designer that greatly influenced the City of Philadelphia and the larger region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.” Under Criterion J, the nomination suggests that the subject property is significant because it was constructed for and housed opticians Wall & Ochs, whose business was representative of “the economic, social, and historical heritage of optometry in Philadelphia, as the field and industry evolved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to become a recognized health care profession nationwide.”

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1716 Chestnut Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D, E and 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: **1716 Chestnut Street**

Postal code: **19103-4411**

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: **The Wall & Ochs Building**

Current Name: **Gran Caffè LaQuila**

**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): **1898-1957**

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: **1898**

Architects: **Addison Hutton; Lawrence Visscher Boyd**

Builders: **George Watson & Son; P.J. McDevitt**

Original owner: **Agnes Bowers Wall**

Significant person: **Charles Frederick Wall, Optician**

**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: **16 December 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: December 16, 2020

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 30 April 2021

Date of Notice Issuance: 30 April 2021

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Tuscan Realty of PA LLC

Address: 1716 Chestnut Street

City: Philadelphia

State: PA

Postal Code: 19103

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

**NOMINATION**  
FOR THE  
**PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**



Figure 1. The primary (north) elevation of the Wall & Ochs Building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

**THE WALL & OCHS BUILDING**  
**MANUFACTURING OPTICIANS**  
**BUILT 1898**  
—  
**DESIGNED BY ADDISON HUTTON, ARCHITECT, IN 1898**  
—  
**1716 CHESTNUT STREET**  
**PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**



Figure 2. The boundary for the proposed designation is delineated in blue. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

SITUATE in the City of Philadelphia, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, on the south side of Chestnut Street. Containing in front or breadth on both Chestnut Street and Stock Exchange Place approximately twenty feet east to west, extending north to south in that width one hundred and forty-five feet.

BEING known as No. 1716 Chestnut Street.

Map Registry No. 001S220095

OPA Account No. 871000750



Figure 3. The primary (north) elevation of the Wall & Ochs Building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

## 6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Situated on the south side of the 1700 block of Chestnut Street, the Wall & Ochs Building is a four- and five-story masonry building with physical features evocative of the Italian Palazzo and Renaissance Revival styles as applied to commercial buildings at the turn of the twentieth century. In keeping with Philadelphia's urban tradition of single-wide commercial structures, the subject building is like many others in Center City, occupying nearly every inch of the parcel. Its elaborate front faces onto fashionable Chestnut Street at the north with a more commonplace historic façade at narrow Stock Exchange Place at the south. The northern portion of the building appears to be four stories, while the southern portion is five full floors.



Figure 4. Left: A detail of the current terra cotta storefront surround of the primary (north) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020. Figure 5. Top right: An early photograph of the Wall & Ochs Building, showing a detail of the terra cotta of the first floor, suggesting that the upper portion may date to the original construction. Source: Frank Taylor Photographs, The Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 6. Bottom right: A later photograph of the Wall & Ochs Building, showing the storefront as it was in the 1920s, the surround of which appears to be largely intact. Source: The Boies Penrose Collection, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The primary (north) elevation features an historic storefront alteration at the ground floor with modern infill, including an entrance to the upper levels at the east followed by the larger, entirely glazed commercial frontage (Figures 4, 5, and 6). The storefront is delineated by an historic terra cotta surround. Dominating this frame, the upper terra cotta cornice, including the supporting echinus-and-astragal (or egg-and-dart) and dentil moldings, appears to be the earliest portion of the ground floor details to survive. A reconfiguration of terra cotta architectural details was completed during a storefront renovation, which ultimately simplified a more ornate fenestration

(Figures 4, 5, 6, and 13). The reliefs are employed sparingly in the form of garland, shells, and other details.



Figure 7. The upper three stories of the Wall & Ochs Building, showing the current appearance, which is almost identical to how it appeared historically. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

The upper floors are of pristine integrity, featuring unique fenestrations of architectural details at each level, as can be seen in comparing in Figures 7 and 9. The rhythm of three is omnipresent with three windows per level, along with three tiers of the façade at each aperture of the second and third floors, creating a greater sense of depth with each recession. The architectural details that adorn each aperture are also presented in like sets of three. The façade of the upper floors is largely comprised of buff face brick with terra cotta reliefs and other trimmings.

The second floor is perhaps the most simplistic of the upper levels. Each aperture is framed by the said stages, starting from the primary elevation, which is followed by a recession to buff face brick jams, which frame a further recessed wooden architrave. What appear to be original or sympathetic one-over-one wooden sash windows are present in each aperture. Flush within the buff face brick facade, the head of each window is distinguished by a flat arch. At the center of each flat arch is an ancon-like, terra cotta keystone, replete with an acanthus leaf at the base from which two strands of vertical beading rising to an egg-and-dart molding.

The third-floor features similar apertures with the aforementioned recessions and window fixtures. Elaborate terra cotta window heads defined by open pediments differentiate this level from the floor below. Each pediment has a low-relief panel at center, egg-and-dart moldings within the hood and dentil moldings at the base. Both moldings form independent terra cotta coursing that connect the three window hoods. The individual pediments are supported by brackets each of which is detailed with paired strands of vertical beading. The central relief in each pediment features a shield flanked by three-part scrolls that radiate from behind the individual shields. The window sills are also terra cotta with egg-and-dart molding at each base.

The fourth floor is differentiated from the third by a projecting course or molding, the upper portion of which features a Greek key motif. The fourth floor also features three apertures set off by four

buff face brick accouplements of pilasters, each with a terra cotta capitol and base. The eastern and western most accouplements feature fairly simple capitals, though a small band of egg-and-dart molding is present, the base is also fairly simple. The center most accouplements, flanking the central window, feature Ionic headers with scroll work, connected by egg-and-dart molding. These also include complex molded bases. Each window is of the round-arch form with terra cotta moldings that project from the facade, featuring diminutive brackets as keystones. The round-arch windows appear to be original, one-over-one wooden sash fixtures. Rising above the third floor is an elaborate terra cotta entablature that rests upon the said pilasters below, featuring an architrave, frieze, and cornice. The projection of the architrave extends outward as it rises vertically into six tiers, four of which are smooth-faced, while the other two feature egg-and-dart motifs. The frieze is defined by four pairs of elaborate modillions that rise above each of the accouplements of pilasters below. Each modillion features an acanthus leaf at its base from the center of which extends a vertical band of beading that terminates beneath a diminutive molding of an egg-and-dart motif. In the fields between the paired brackets is a modillion band with half-circles at each end centered on a full circle delineated by a three-tiered molding. Rising above the frieze, the cornice includes dentil and egg-and-dart moldings at its base, supporting a larger, projecting upper molding.

As shown below in Figure 8, atop the cornice and along the roofline of the building is a balustrade that is separated into three sections by pedestals adorned with projecting plinths, both of which are of buff face brick and fall in line with the accouplements and modillions in the floors below. The balusters are two-part with sleeves at the top and bottom, leading to two belly components separated by slightly magnified beading at center. While the lower portion of the balustrade is not visible, the upper railing, also of terra cotta, is the highest point of the building's primary (north) elevation. The building features a flat roof.

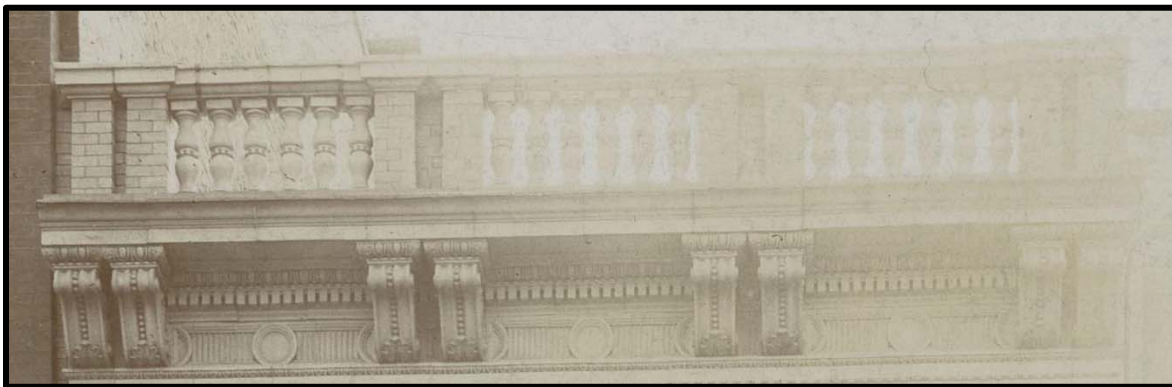


Figure 8. The cornice as it appeared early in its history, looking very similar at present. Source: Frank Taylor Photographs, Free Library of Philadelphia.



Figure 9. The upper three stories of the Wall & Ochs Building, showing its early appearance, which is almost identical to how it appears today. Source: Frank Taylor Photographs, The Free Library of Philadelphia.

Facing onto Stock Exchange Place, the rear (south) elevation is five stories tall with a red brick façade, featuring an altered ground level with four relatively intact floors above. The upper floors feature five bays per level, three at the west and two at the east—separated by large air vent that climbs to the top of the building. As shown below in Figure 12, the upper stories are dominated by a four-bay wide curtain wall which features a three-part mullion window and single, infilled doors, the transoms of which still exist. The windows are irregular, some being one-over-one sash, while others are random replacement fixtures. The door openings are filled with glass block. Spandrels with three panels per level separate each floor beneath the windows. The brick structure itself is visible in the form of a pier on the west and a full bay at the east. The eastern portion of the visible brick structure features a single aperture per floor, defined by segmental arches that are enclosed by glass block infill. A pressed metal cornice unifies the façade. A large vent that rises vertically from the ground floor to the top of the building interrupts the viewshed.



Figure 10. Left: An aerial view of the Wall & Ochs Building. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2020. Figure 11. Center: Looking northeast at the side (west) elevation the buildings from Stock Exchange Place, showing the court in the southern portion of the building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020. Figure 12. Right: The upper four floors of the rear (south) elevation of the Wall & Ochs Building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.



Figure 13. The Wall & Ochs Building (ca.1900) at 1716 Chestnut Street. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia.

## **7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Wall & Ochs Building at 1716 Chestnut Street is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The subject property satisfies the following Criteria for Designation, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (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; and
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

The period of significance begins in 1898 when the building was commissioned by Wall & Ochs, Opticians, through the entirety of their occupancy, a tenure that concluded in 1957.



Figure 14. The 1700 block of chestnut Street with the Wall & Ochs Building at center in the early twentieth century. Source: The Boies Penrose Collection, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE WALL & OCHS BUILDING**

The story of the Wall & Ochs Building at 1716 Chestnut Street took root in July 1896, when Agnes Bowers Wall (1866-1940) purchased the subject property from Mina Hirsh—a wife of one of the Hirsh Bros.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Wall was the wife of the German-born manufacturing optician, Charles Frederick Wall (1863-1940), and the site was secured at a moment when his firm, Wall & Ochs, Opticians, was ascending in the budding field of industrial and retail optometry. Then located just a few doors down at 1702 Chestnut Street, it was likely no coincidence that the Walls purchased the subject property at a time when the City of Philadelphia as enforcing the established building line on certain blocks of principal streets. In many cases this involved demolishing an old façade to construct a new one at the established building line. The condemnation proceedings that took place for the subject property appear to have been resolved in May 1898, when John L. Kinsey, City Solicitor, notified George W. Kochersperger, Esq., Chief Clerk of the Common Council, that a damages of \$2,000 had been awarded for the “widening of Chestnut Street” at the subject property.<sup>2</sup> The widening had already taken place so that this proceeding was simply one to compensate the Walls.

The design of the Wall & Ochs Building was completed by the architectural firm of Addison Hutton (1834-1916), Philadelphia’s eminent Quaker architect, a commission that appears to have been made by George Watson & Son, Builder, on behalf of Charles F. Wall. The design process extended from February 18 through March 16, 1892, producing roughly fifteen drawings, plans,

<sup>1</sup> Deed Registry No. 1-S-22-95. Source: City Archives of Philadelphia (CAP).

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: Dunlap Printing Company, 1898), 144-46.

and specifications for a “Store & Office Building” at 1716 Chestnut Street.<sup>3</sup> Shown in Figure 33, Hutton’s ledger confirms their work on the subject building as it appears to-date: “March 11 – 4 – Terra Cotta Lintel & Key Stone – 2<sup>nd</sup> Story Windows;” “March 11 – No. 5 – Pediment head – 3<sup>rd</sup> story window;” “March 11 – No. 6 – Belt Course, Caps & Bases, Architrave & Key – 4<sup>th</sup> story;” “March 11 – No. 7 – Main Cornice;” “March 11 – No. 8 – Balustrade;” etc.<sup>4</sup> These details refute later accounts in 1904 that describe a “new front” for the Wall & Ochs Building by a different architect, which appears to have been limited to the ground floor.<sup>5</sup>

Nearing the end of the design phase on March 8, 1892, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* announced that George Watson & Son would soon begin erecting “a four-story store and office building of brick, stone, and terra cotta, 20x148 feet...,” which further confirms that Hutton’s plans were being used to complete the subject building.<sup>6</sup> By April 1898, *The Jewelers’ Circular* provided updates on construction, announcing that Wall & Ochs were “erecting a new and handsome building at 1716 Chestnut,” where they would begin operations in August of that year.<sup>7</sup> The subject building was not only home to their retail operations at the ground floor, at least one of the upper floors was used by Wall & Ochs to manufacture optical equipment and products. Almost immediately, George Watson & Son were commissioned to enlarge the subject building with two additional floors in 1899.<sup>8</sup>

As the business grew, Wall & Ochs commissioned architect Lawrence Visscher Boyd (1873-1941) as early as 1902 to design “extensive alterations” and an addition of “four stories to the one-story back building...” of the subject property. A “new front” was part of the plans in May 1902, but appear to have been limited to the ground floor based on documentary and visual evidence.<sup>9</sup> Boyd took contractor bids in January 1904 and selected P.J. McDevitt from a pool of seven bids in February 1904.<sup>10</sup> The firm continued their ground floor retail operations (Figure 15) with manufacturing on the upper floors. The excess space did not go to waste; in fact, one primary tenant type was the music industry, as additional studio space was leased to musicians and music teachers and tutors.

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<sup>3</sup> Addison Hutton. Ledger of the Architectural Firm of Addison Hutton, Architect. (Philadelphia: 1898), 180. Source: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

<sup>4</sup> Addison Hutton. Ledger of the Architectural Firm of Addison Hutton, Architect. (Philadelphia: 1898), 180. Source: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

<sup>5</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record & Builders’ Guide*, 28 May 1902, 343.

<sup>6</sup> “Latest News In Real Estate,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8 March 1898.

<sup>7</sup> *The Jewelers’ Circular*, 6 April 1898, 19.

<sup>8</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 September 1899, 14.

<sup>9</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record & Builders’ Guide*, 28 May 1902, 343.

<sup>10</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 January 1904, 11.; and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 February 1904, 9.





Figure 18. Top left: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 July 1892, 8. Figure 19. Top right: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 March 1899, 11. Figure 20. Left: Charles F. Wall. Figure 21. Right: A member of the Wall family working in the subject building. Source: Janet Wall, a descendant of Charles F. Wall.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: A BRIEF HISTORY OF WALL & OCHS**

The firm of Wall & Ochs, Manufacturing Opticians, was established ca.1885 by Charles F. Wall (Figure 18) and John H. Ochs (1865-1896).<sup>11</sup> Wall & Ochs expanded their business with the purchase of the “optical department” from Dr. George I. McKelway’s (1851-1935) pharmacy on September 28, 1887 for \$750 (Figures 16 and 17).<sup>12</sup> The earliest available advertisement for Wall & Ochs was published on July 13, 1892, which included their primary endeavor, the “makers of perfect fitting spectacles & eye glasses,” located at 1702 Chestnut Street.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, Wall & Ochs became important manufacturing opticians in the city, producing optical and other medical instruments and equipment as well as spectacles and eyeglasses. In 1896 John H. Ochs died, after which time Charles F. Wall would continue the business without a partner, yet the business would continue as Wall & Ochs. That same year the Walls purchased the property, after which time the subject building was constructed in 1898. The building would be enlarged over time, representing the growth of the company.

<sup>11</sup> *Find A Grave*. Find A Grave. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>.

<sup>12</sup> Agreement: Dr. George I. McKelway, of the one part, and Charles F. Wall and John H. Ochs, of the other part, 28 September, 1887. Source: A direct descendant of Charles F. Wall.

<sup>13</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 July 1892, 2.

In 1903 Charles F. Wall incorporated Wall & Ochs “to manufacture surgical and scientific instruments” with a capital of \$100,000.<sup>14</sup> In 1906 Wall re-incorporated the business again, earning a profit of \$100,000, becoming one of several stockholders.<sup>15</sup> Over the years other members of the Wall family, as well as additional employees, joined the firm. While the manufacturing component would eventually be lost to other larger instrument makers, the optical health care aspect of the business ranked “high among the leading optical houses” in the United States.<sup>16</sup> In 1941 Wall & Ochs opened a branch office in Harrisburg. Their optical services were expanded beyond its fashionable Chestnut Street address to other centers across the Philadelphia region by 1956: “Frankford—1531 Harrison St.; Germantown—5344 Greene St.; Admore—43 Coulter Ave.; and Media—17 S. Olive St.”<sup>17</sup> In 1957 Wall & Ochs acquired an old competitor, Bonschur & Holmes, Inc., at 1900 Chestnut Street, where the firm moved and opened their new operations on January 1, 1958. Wall & Ochs continued under the same name until the 1970s, when it became U.S. Vision, a company that survives to-date in 2020.

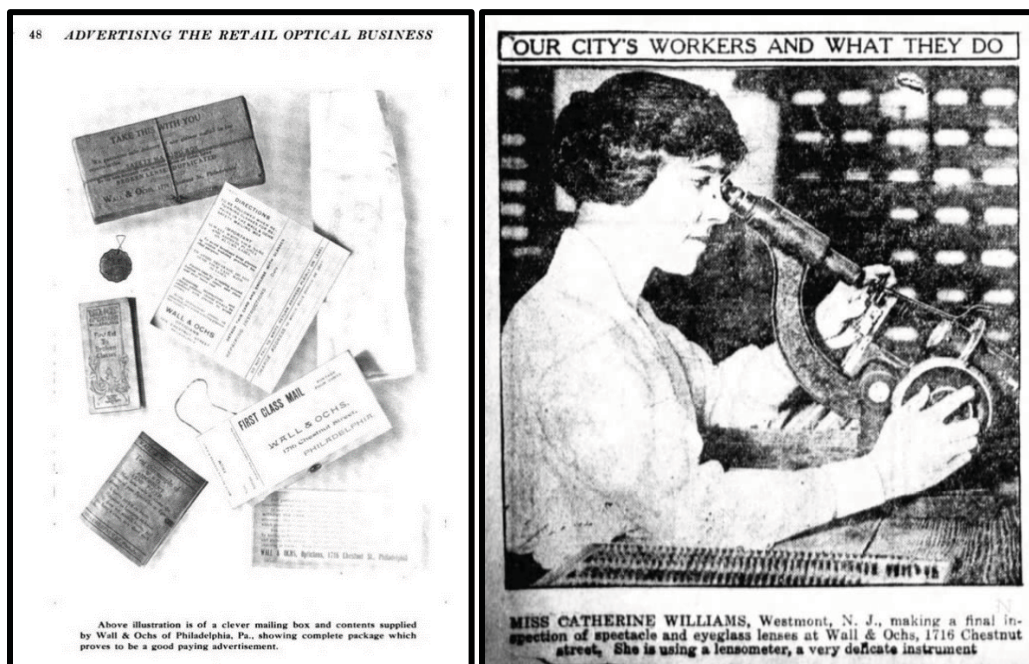


Figure 22. Top left: Advertisements of Wall & Ochs from their early years. Source: *Advertising the Retail Optical Business*. (Page Publishing Company, 1912). Source: Google Books. Top right: Miss Catherine Williams, an employee of Wall & Ochs uses a lensometer to examine spectacles and eyeglasses at the subject property. Source: *Evening Public Ledger*, 7 April 1922, 8. Figure 23. Bottom left: A mirror produced by Wall & Ochs. Source: Oscar Beisert.

<sup>14</sup> *The Iron Age*, 30 July 1903, 30.

<sup>15</sup> *Reports of the U.S. Board of Tax Appeals*, Vol. 4. (U.S. Board of Tax Appeals, 1927), 1093.

<sup>16</sup> *Evening Public Ledger*, 29 December 1921, 26.

<sup>17</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 October 1956, 5.;

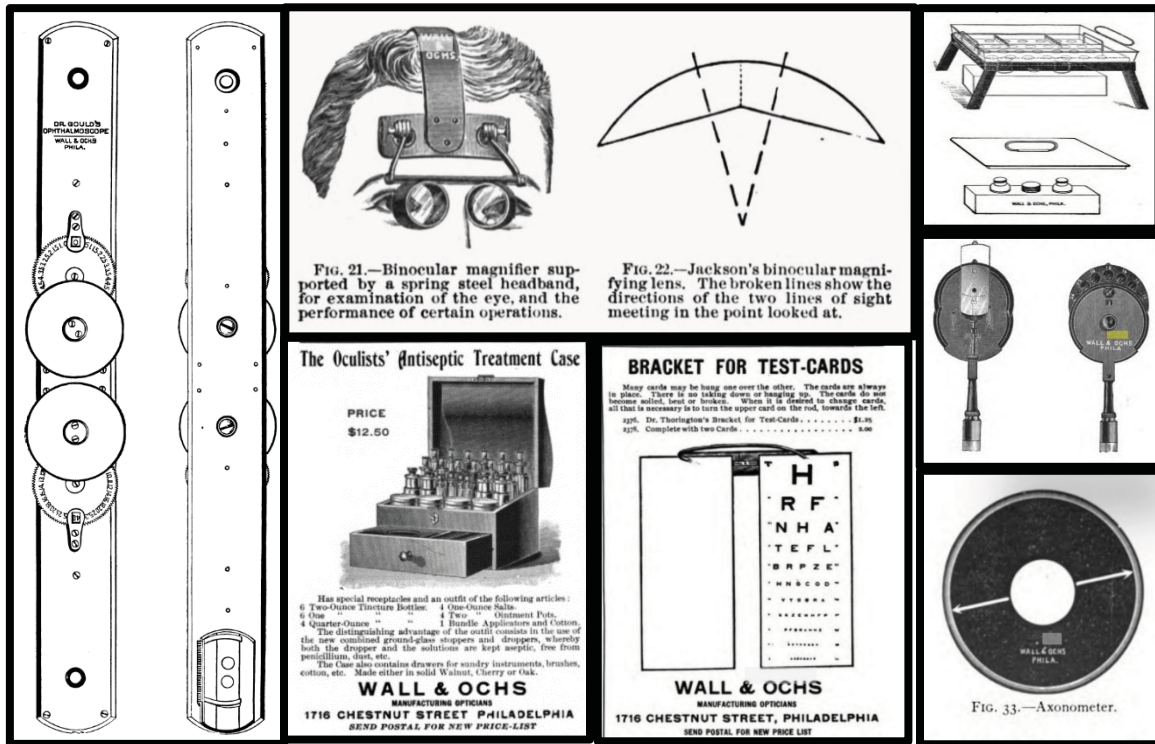


Figure 24. Left: Dr. Gould's Ophthalmoscope manufactured by Wall & Ochs. Source: *New York Medical Journal*. (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1883-1923), 102-03. Figure 25. Top center: A Binocular Magnifier manufactured by Wall & Ochs. Source: Edward Jackson. *A Manual of the Diagnosis and Treatment of the Diseases of the Eye*. (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1900), 69. Figure 26. Bottom center left and right: General optical supplies manufactured by Wall & Ochs. Source: *The Philadelphia Medical Journal*. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Medical Publishing Company, 1898-1903), 344. 1448. Figure 27. Top right: "A New Portable Sterilizer For Eye Instruments" manufactured by Wall & Ochs. Source: Clarence A. Veasey, A.M., M.D. *Ophthalmic Record, A Monthly Review of the Progress of Ophthalmology*. (Chicago: 1900), 81. Figure 28. Middle right: A ophthalmoscope designed by John Welsh Croskey, M.D., attending surgeon to the Wills Hospital, and manufactured by Wall & Ochs. Source: John Welsh Croskey, M.D. *A New Ophthalmoscope*. (Chicago: 1897), 356-57. Figure 29. Bottom right: An Axonometer manufactured by Wall & Ochs. Source: Mark D. Stevenson. *Photocopy*. (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1906), 110.

## CRITERION J

Commissioned in 1898, the Wall & Ochs Building at 1716 Chestnut Street is representative of the economic, social, and historical heritage of optometry in Philadelphia, as the field and industry evolved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to become a recognized health care profession nationwide.<sup>18</sup> Established in 1885, Wall & Ochs were important manufacturing opticians in Philadelphia—the firm would essentially operate as both opticians and optometrists. The decision to commission a purpose-built “optical house” on fashionable Chestnut Street was certainly multi-faceted; however, it rose at a moment when optometry was emerging as a recognized medical specialty rather than as purely industrial and retail. In fact, as Wall & Ochs were making plans for their new five-story edifice, the American Optometry Association (AOA)

<sup>18</sup> Edward E. Arrington. *History of Optometry*. (Chicago: White Printing House, 1929), 75. Optometry is “the health care profession concerned with examination, diagnosis, and treatment of the eyes and related structures, and with determination and correction of vision problems using lenses and other optical aids.” Source: <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/optometry?s=t>

was being established as the first nationwide professional organization for these newly allied professionals. A variety of factors came to a head as optometry became more specialized with the advent of advanced optical instruments that yielded precision in corrective vision.

While the local manufacture and sale of glasses and spectacles dates to the eighteenth century, Wall & Ochs arrived on the scene fortuitously, when they could capitalize on the advancements in the field. The firm was among the leading opticians in late nineteenth- and early twentieth- century Philadelphia. In the same vein as the previous generation, Wall & Ochs manufactured eyewear for retail sales, advancing in the employment of modern methods, instruments, and technology that successfully corrected vision. While other firms were veering away from manufacture, Wall & Ochs took the opportunity to enlarge their business, producing a wide variety of modern, state-of-the-art medical instruments and equipment used in the practice of optometry. Figure 24 through 29 illustrate the type of products manufactured by Wall & Ochs, many of which were produced in the subject building.

Wall & Ochs' expertise in the manufacture of ophthalmoscopes (the instrument used to see the retina) and other advanced optical devices reflects a longstanding attribute of Philadelphia – its high standing since the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the realm of medical science and practice. In fact, from early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ophthalmology figured prominently in Philadelphia's reputation as a "city of medicine." Wills Eye Hospital was founded in 1834 as the Wills Hospital for the Blind and Lamé; eventually it became a major center for care of eye diseases and advanced research, as well as a major site for training.<sup>19</sup> Into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and its hospital emerged as a highly productive center of ophthalmologic training and research.<sup>20</sup> Philadelphia ophthalmologists of the 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with national reputations included George de Schweinitz, William Fisher Norris, Edward O. Shakespeare, George M. Gould (also a prolific writer and editor), and more recently, Burton Chance.<sup>21</sup> Philadelphia was until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the nation's leading site of medical publishing, and the houses issued numerous books by Philadelphia physicians. Among these were the eye physicians, such as George de Schweinitz' popular *Diseases of the Eye*. Figures 27, 28, and 29 show instruments built by Wall and Ochs in conjunction with once well-known Philadelphia ophthalmologists—George M. Gould, John Welsh Croskey, and Clarence A. Veasey.

Given that one of the early schools of optometry flourished in the city, and the medical specialty of ophthalmology, the retail and specialized products and services of Wall and Ochs can be thought of as part of a long history of prominence in the eye-care professions. Recognized in its day in national publications as "a thoroughly modern and fully equipped optical house," the Wall & Ochs Building represents an important aspect of the cultural, economic and social progress of optical health care that had an important place in the history of health care in Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion J.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> For history of Will Eye Hospital, see: Frederick P. Henry, ed., *Founders' Week Memorial Volume* (Philadelphia, 1909), pp.763-770; John Francis Marion, *Philadelphia Medica* (Philadelphia, 1975), pp. 47-50.

<sup>20</sup> D. M. Albert, "A century of ophthalmology at the University of Pennsylvania," *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* (1974):182-215.

<sup>21</sup> Biographies for some of the early Philadelphia ophthalmologists may be found in Howard A Kelly and Walter L Burrage, *Dictionary of American Medical Biography* (Boston: Milford House, 1971; republication of 1928 original edition).

<sup>22</sup> "Methods and Equipment of Well-Known Philadelphia House," *The Optical Review*, November 1908, 41.



Figure 30. Left: McAllister & Son at “No. 46 to No. 52 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania”, circa 1843. Source: Library of Congress. Figure 31. Right: An advertisement for John McAllister & Son from the mid-19th century. Source: Newspapers.com.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN OPTOMETRY**

The AOA has published a general timeline of just over twenty major epochs of optometry in world history that pre-date its founding in 1898. With origins dating to the Middle Ages in Europe and the eighteenth century in America, the field remained largely unrecognized as a health care profession in the United States until the last years of the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> However, as the field advanced, opticians were performing more complex eye examinations made possible by modern instruments and advanced technology. What had been a slow professional trajectory was polarized in 1895, when Charles F. Prentice (1854-1946), an optician in New York City—later known as the “father of American Optometry,” was nearly arrested for charging a fee to conduct an eye examination.<sup>24</sup> The exchange of currency for this consultation was viewed as an illegal medical practice. Criminalizing his professional endeavors led Prentice to publish the landmark treatise, *Ophthalmic Lenses*, in 1896, in which he defended his actions and outlined an official case for professional recognition. This ultimately galvanized a movement that would succeed in recognizing optometry professionals nationwide as health care practitioners.<sup>25</sup> Public policy and professional standards were required in order for opticians to make headway. Official organizations were established, including the Optical Society of the State of New York in 1896 and the AOA, originally known as the American Association of Opticians, in 1898. Representative state organizations, professional standards and state laws eventually recognized and formalized optometry as a medical specialty.

<sup>23</sup> American Optometric Timeline. Accessed on 12 November 2020. <https://www.aoa.org/archives/>

<sup>24</sup> Charles F. Prentice practiced Optometry with his father, James Prentice (1812-1888), an English-born optician, in the partnership of James Prentice & Son from 1883 to 1897.

<sup>25</sup> Irving Bennett, O.D. “Optometrist Jailed for Charging Exam Fee,” Optometry Cases—The AOA Foundation, 2020. Source: <https://www.aoafoundation.org/ohs/hindsight/optometrist-jailed-for-charging-an-exam-fee/>

While Prentice's efforts earned him a foundational title, he was in no way unique in his professional practice nor the first of his field. Interestingly, both colonial America and the New Republic boasted a small body of oculists, opticians and those conducting "Opticians work," though most of these peculiar practitioners and retail outfits were short-lived. As a center of American medicine for much of its history, it is not surprising that Philadelphia was also very much tied to progress in optical health care, which, included ophthalmology. Another of Philadelphia's medical firsts was the establishment of Wills Eye Hospital by James Wills, Jr. a Quaker merchant. Wills remains the oldest continually operating eye-care facility in the United States. With professional training and medical programs for Ophthalmologists in the nineteenth century, this was one aspect of optical health care that was recognized early on.

With little more than twenty dates prior to the twentieth century, the AOA timeline recognizes Philadelphia as home to two other optical firsts. The most well-known, Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), is credited with inventing the "split bifocal lens for spectacles" in 1784, a discovery of sorts that was greatly improved upon over time.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps akin to the spirit of Franklin, the AOA recognizes Philadelphia was home to some of America's earliest manufacturing opticians, perhaps the most successful of which was John McAllister & Son. Like so many American entrepreneurs, John McAllister, Sr. (1751-1826), a native of Glasgow, Scotland, came to Philadelphia around 1783, where he opened a stand selling wooden canes and, later, whips. By the end of the century, he had expanded his merchandise to include "stock spectacles, glasses, and optical articles."<sup>27</sup> This eventually led the McAllisters to engage in all things related to the lens, which led to their primary business: the manufacture and retail sales of mathematical and optical instruments.<sup>28</sup> While the McAllisters would remain a dominant force in the industry through the early twentieth century, more specialized opticians established businesses and practices in the second half of the nineteenth century. This was also true in other American cities like Boston, New York, among others.

As Prentice and other optical leaders made strides that essentially legitimizing the field, the number of practicing and manufacturing opticians increased, expanding basic optical health care to a wider audience. This transition in the field was led by the advent of more precise instruments and equipment. By 1900, there were nearly 100 opticians practicing in Philadelphia, only a few of which were also contributing to the progress of industrial optometry. Firms like Wall & Ochs manufactured the type of medical instruments and equipment that enabled the optician to conduct eye exams and correct vision with a greater precision than ever before. Wall & Ochs was also commissioned by ophthalmologists and other medical professionals to manufacture instruments for their respective fields.

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<sup>26</sup> Troy E. Fannin and Theodore Grosvenor. *Clinical Optics*. (Elsevier Science, 2013), 234.

<sup>27</sup> John Fanning Watson. *Annals of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: E.L. Carey & A. Hart), 454.

<sup>28</sup> John Fanning Watson. *Annals of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: E.L. Carey & A. Hart), 454.



Examples of other commercial buildings built for and/or occupied by opticians in the nineteenth century on Chestnut Street in Philadelphia. Figure 32. Left: The McAllister family removed to 728 Chestnut Street (formerly 194 Chestnut) in the mid-nineteenth century to a building that was similar in scale to the subject property. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia. Figure 33. Middle: Queen & Co., Inc., Opticians & Instrument Makers & Exporters, 1010 Chestnut Street, also of a similar scale to the subject building. Figure 34. Right: Ferguson & Weston, Opticians, 1437 Chestnut Street at the northeast corner of Fifteenth Street. Source: *The Official Office Building Directory and Architectural Handbook of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: The Commercial Publishing and Directory Co., 1899).

The most prominent of these optical houses were quartered in Philadelphia along Chestnut Street. By the second quarter of the twentieth century, the leading opticians remained on Chestnut Street, specifically between Sixteenth and Twentieth Streets. Eventually the Guild Opticians of Philadelphia was founded. Of their twenty-six members, fourteen of these establishments were in close proximity to the subject property. Recognized for many years as one of the country's oldest retail dispensing opticians,<sup>29</sup> Wall & Ochs was so well-known that they became one of just a few local optical houses to franchise their business, several of which will be listed later in the nomination. They were one of eight with more than one location, and one of four with more than three locations, being among the leading optical establishments of the Guild Opticians as late as 1956.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> "Wall and Ochs Opens Local Branch Office," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, 26 August 1941, 16.

<sup>30</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 October 1956, 99.

11. Gov. Roy E. Furrow. (Catholic Church, 20th st. and history). DR. H. W. SHOR

**"1716" becomes "1900"**

An epochal event in the optical world takes place this Monday. Following fifty years at our historic 1716 Chestnut Street address—

**Wall & Ochs Moves to 1900 Chestnut Street**

Our famous oval trademark has been a Chestnut Street landmark for half a century. Its tradition carries on. Naturally our removal to "1900" represents a vast advancement in capacity and facilities—and an opportunity for betterment in service. Now, in the heart of the "Eye Physician" section, you are offered easier accessibility, too.

**WALL & OCHS**  
EST. 1885  
OPTICIANS  
INCORPORATED

You are cordially invited to inspect our new main store at 1900 Chestnut Street.

Branches—Suburban Station Street Floor  
Frankford, 1531 Harrison Street  
Germantown, 5344 Greene Street  
Ardmore, 43 Coulter Avenue  
Jenkintown, Avenue of Shops, York Road

**WALL & OCHS**  
INCORPORATED  
Guild Opticians  
MAIN STORE 1900 CHESTNUT STREET

Figure 35. An advertisement for Wall & Ochs' new location at 1900 Chestnut Street in 1957. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1 December 1957, 57.

		Owner	Charles F Wall (G. Watson & Co. Builders)	
		Building	Stone & Office Building.	
		Location	1716 Chestnut St Phila	
		Scale		
1898	Feb 18	1	Plans & Section	1/8" = 1.0
	"	2	3/4" detail elevation	3/4" = 1.0
	"	3	" General Details	" "
	Mar 11	4	Terra Cotta detail + Key stone 2 <sup>nd</sup> Storey window	7-8. Tar P.
	"	5	Pediment heads 3 <sup>rd</sup> storey window	" "
	"	6	Belt Course Caps + Bases, Architrave + Key 4 <sup>th</sup> Storey.	" "
	"	7	Main Cornice	" "
	"	8	Ballustrade	" "
	" 14	9	Column & Pilasters 1 <sup>st</sup> Storey	" "
	"	10	Archivolts and Spandril	" "
	"	11	Cornice at 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor level	" "
	" 16	12	Show window & Entrance doors	7.5 & 1/2"
	"	13	Show window & Vestibule ceiling + main rooming	7.5 & 3/4"

*Original to G. Watson & Co. 11-98*  
*Original to G. Watson & Co. 11-98*  
*Original to G. Watson & Co. 11-98*

Figure 36. The ledger of the architectural firm and works of Addison Hutton, showing the subject property in 1898. Source: Addison Hutton. Ledger of the Architectural Firm of Addison Hutton, Architect. (Philadelphia: 1892), 33. Via the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

### CRITERION E

The Wall & Ochs Building at 1716 Chestnut Street is a five-story commercial building designed by the architectural firm of Addison Hutton, a designer that greatly influenced the City of Philadelphia and the larger region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When the subject building was commissioned in 1898, Hutton was one of the city's premier architects. Remembered in local memory through extant institutional and residential work, his bravado in commercial design has been largely forgotten due to the fact that most of these buildings have been demolished. In fact, many of the city's elaborate commercial buildings of the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century were designed by Hutton. His was an oeuvre of commercial architecture defined by an eclectic range of styles that were popular during the late Victorian era. The specimen shown below feature aesthetics that represent the Classical, Colonial, Italian Renaissance, Queen Anne, and Romanesque Revival styles. While every product was perhaps not a master work, his buildings were the work of a master architect who exhibited skill in nearly all of the popular styles of the era. This is recognized in much of his extant work, but also existed in the commercial realm. With a façade of Roman brick, stone and terra cotta articulated in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, the subject building stands as an important and rare surviving example of Hutton's eclectic commercial product of late nineteenth century Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion E.



Figure 37. Left: Built in 1881, J.B. Ellison & Sons at 22, 24, and 26 South Sixth Street (Demolished) was designed by Hutton. Figure 38. Right: Built in 1883-84, the Forrest Building at 119 South Fourth Street (Demolished) in Philadelphia, was also designed by Hutton. Source: *The Official Office Building Directory and Architectural Handbook of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: The Commercial Publishing and Directory Co., 1899), 10.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE COMMERCIAL OEUVRE OF ADDISON HUTTON**

Among Hutton’s unique commercial oeuvre, he designed many purpose-built structures and new facades for existing buildings—a lesser known aspect of his work as a Quaker architect. The subject building was commissioned during the culmination of Hutton’s career.<sup>31</sup> This began in the late 1880s and early 1890s, when his urban work on commercial, institutional, and office buildings nearly outnumbered his residential commissions. In the 1887 Hutton designed the Girard Life Insurance, Annuity and Trust Company’s building at Broad and Chestnut Streets, and, in 1894, he was commissioned to enlarge the skyscraper with three additional stories. This was one of his largest urban commissions, being a decidedly Romanesque Revival style affair with a one-and-one-half-story tower at the corner. While this is entirely alien in form and style to the subject building, it is another important example that has long since been demolished. Hutton also designed façade improvements and interior renovations to the commercial building of Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc., Quaker “Importers and Dealers in Fine Groceries, at Twelfth and Chestnut Streets, as well as their suburban location at Germantown in 1898.<sup>32</sup> He was also engaged by the prominent Quaker pharmacist George Evans to improve his buildings at 1106 Chestnut Street and at 801 Arch Street (Figures 39, 40, and 41/Demolished).

<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall. *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect, 1834-1916*. (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1974), 60-63.

<sup>32</sup> Oscar Beisert and J.M. Duffin. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc., 5708 Germantown Avenue*. (Philadelphia: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2020), 15.

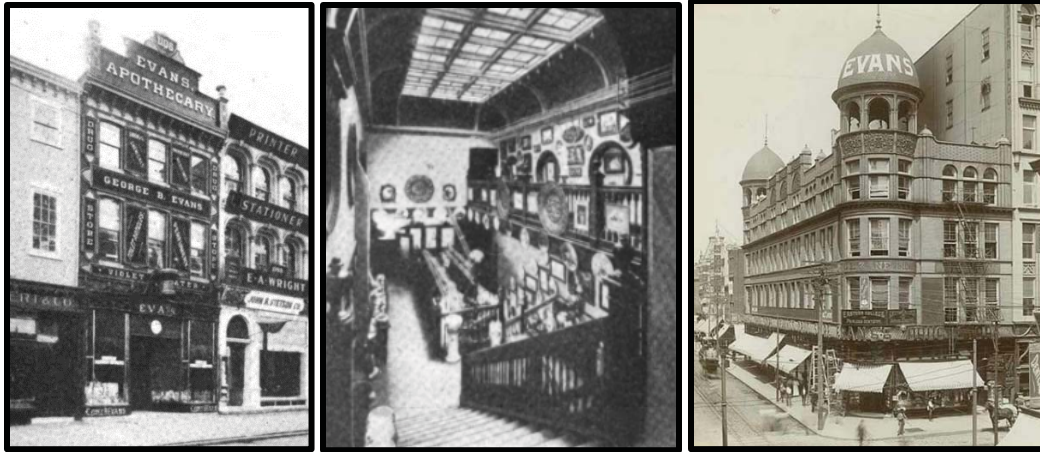


Figure 39. Left: George Evans' Apothecary at 1106 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, with improvements by Hutton. Figure 40. Middle: The interior improvements to George Evans' Apothecary at 1106 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, likely completed by Hutton. Source: phillyandstuff.blogspot.com. Figure 41. Right: The corner building of George Evans, Pharmacist, at Eighth and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, designed by Addison Hutton. Source: Old Images of Philadelphia, Facebook.

As stated, the subject property was commissioned in 1898. In that year alone, Hutton was working on designs for George B. Evans's new commercial building at Eighth and Arch Streets (Figure 41/Demolished); Strawbridge & Clothier's at 817-19-21-23 Market Street (Figure 49/Demolished); "a pressed brick dormitory building" for the House of Refuge at Twenty-Second and Poplar Streets (Demolished); "a Morocco factory" for Henry F. Mitchell at the southeast corner of Eighth and Kimball Streets (Demolished); the Ayres Memorial Laboratory at the Pennsylvania Hospital, Eighth and Spruce Streets (Demolished); "a new laboratory building for the Woman's Medical College on the south side of Seybert Street west of Twentieth (Demolished); and "an office and business building" for Herman E. Bouscher at 1533 Chestnut Street.<sup>33</sup> Aside from some portions of Strawbridge & Clothier's, only the Bouscher Building appears to survive of these non-residential commissions of 1898 in Philadelphia.

Nevertheless, Hutton's urban work begins in the late 1860s, when between 1868 and 1869, he is working with Samuel Sloan (1815-1884), the eminent Philadelphia architect, on the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society (PSFS) at the southwest corner of Walnut Street and Washington Square. This low-slung building is decidedly Italianate with its granite façade appearing very much like a palazzo. However, it was during the 1870s, that Hutton really began working on commercial and office buildings.<sup>34</sup> Shortly after the PSFS's Washington Square building was completed, Hutton designed the Ridgway Library at Broad and Christian Streets, but this fully detached Greek Revival temple surrounded by grounds was not exactly executed in Philadelphia's typical urban, row building formula.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 5 January 1898, 1.; *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 30 March 1898, 193.; *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 20 April 1898, 243.; *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 20 July 1898, 461.; *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 5 January 1898, 509.; *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 5 January 1898, 637.

<sup>34</sup> Bill Double. *Philadelphia's Washington Square*. (Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 37 and 45.

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall. *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect, 1834-1916*. (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1974), 47.

The Wright Building, once located at 305-05 Walnut Street (Figure 42/Demolished) was one of Hutton's early and impressive Victorian piles. A triple-wide, five story structure, dating to 1872 with at least one later addition, it was a profusion of round and segmental arches, heavily fenestrated, yet still Victorian, with balustrades, brackets, corbels, dentils and keystones.<sup>36</sup> That same year he also designed a market house at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and a town hall in Doylestown. The eclectic and semi-detached catalyst to the Ridgway Library stood at the southeast corner of Fifteenth and Chestnut Streets in Hutton's Y.M.C.A. building, which was designed in 1873. That same year he also completed a five-story commercial building for James Spear & Company at 1014-16 Market Street (Figure 43/Demolished), which further advanced his palazzo craze in the form of a cast-iron façade, the likes of which is more commonly known and surviving in Lower Manhattan.<sup>37</sup> Among his urban commissions, he also completed numerous townhouse designs in the 1870s and 1880s.



Figure 42. Left: The Wright Building, designed by Hutton, in 1872 at 305-07 Walnut Street (Demolished). Source: *The Official Office Building Directory and Architectural Handbook of Philadelphia*, The Commercial Publishing and Directory Co., Philadelphia, 1899, p. 660. Figure 43. Center: James Spear & Co., 1014-16 Market Street (Demolished), a cast-iron front commercial building, designed by Hutton in 1873. Source: Frank H. Taylor, Photographer, Free Library of Philadelphia. Figure 44. Right: The Market Central Office Building for the Bell Telephone Company at 406 Market Street (Demolished) was designed by Hutton in the Romanesque style in 1889. Source: Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall. *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect, 1834-1916*. (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1974), 71.

Hutton opened the 1880s with plans for a six-story office at 404 Chestnut Street (Figure 45/Demolished) commissioned by R.D. Wood, a Quaker merchant. The impressive commercial structure featured a heavily fenestrated façade not unlike the taller, Chicago style buildings that were forthcoming in the Midwest. The façade of the Wood Building was articulated in the Venetian and Romanesque Revival styles. While Hutton's biographer, Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall, describes

<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall. *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect, 1834-1916*. (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1974), 60-63.

<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall. *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect, 1834-1916*. (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1974), 12.

the building as “among his least successful commissions,” one takes this opinion with all that encompassed a Philadelphian’s world view of eclectic Victorianism in commercial architecture during the 1960s and 1970s. Like many similar buildings in New York City and other large American metropolises, the Wood Building speaks to Hutton’s ability to vary his architectural products.<sup>38</sup> Between 1880 and 1881, Strawbridge & Clothier commissioned Hutton to design a large Italian Renaissance Revival style commercial building for their department store at the northwest corner of Market and Eighth Streets (Figure 47/Demolished). Yarnall tacitly dismisses this commercial structure as well, describing it as being of an unremarkable quality, an assessment consistent with her seemingly limited viewpoint on urban design of the Victorian era. However, she does rightly recognize that the building articulates the conservatism of its Quaker owners. More restrained than many of his other works; the palazzo of Strawbridge & Clothier emanated “staid respectability,” while also being fashionable enough to attract traditional shoppers in Philadelphia. The building served the local retail giant for several decades before it too was demolished for the larger structure that now occupies the site.<sup>39</sup> His work for Strawbridge would continue over the years for both company and personal commissions, as he undertook a large renovation of what became Torworth at School House Lane and Wissahickon Avenue in Germantown. In 1881, Hutton executed designs for a five-story commercial building for J.B. Ellison & Sons at 22, 24, and 26 South Sixth Street (Figure 37/Demolished). The building featured an eclectic façade with Queen Anne, Second Empire, and other revivalist details. It was ultimately demolished in 1961.<sup>40</sup> Another among his more eclectic works, was an office building for the Forrest Estate, completed between 1883 and 1884, at 119 South Fourth Street (Figure 38/Demolished).<sup>41</sup> This building featured a stone façade that comprised an exuberant rendition of the Romanesque Revival style. It too has been eradicated from the urban landscape. Among his most attractive commercial works, Hutton designed the Pennsylvania Company for Insuring Lives and Granting Annuities (Figure 48/Demolished) in 1889, a commission that produced a magnificent five-story Romanesque Revival style edifice that faced Independence Hall in a manner befitting the magisterial convergence of the centuries seen along Whitehall Road in Westminster. The building was the last in the 500 block of Chestnut Street to be destroyed for the initial vulgarization of the area now known today as Independence Mall.

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<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall. *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect, 1834-1916*. (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1974), 12.

<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall. *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect, 1834-1916*. (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1974), 12.

<sup>41</sup> *The Official Office Building Directory and Architectural Handbook of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: The Commercial Publishing and Directory Co., 1899), 10.

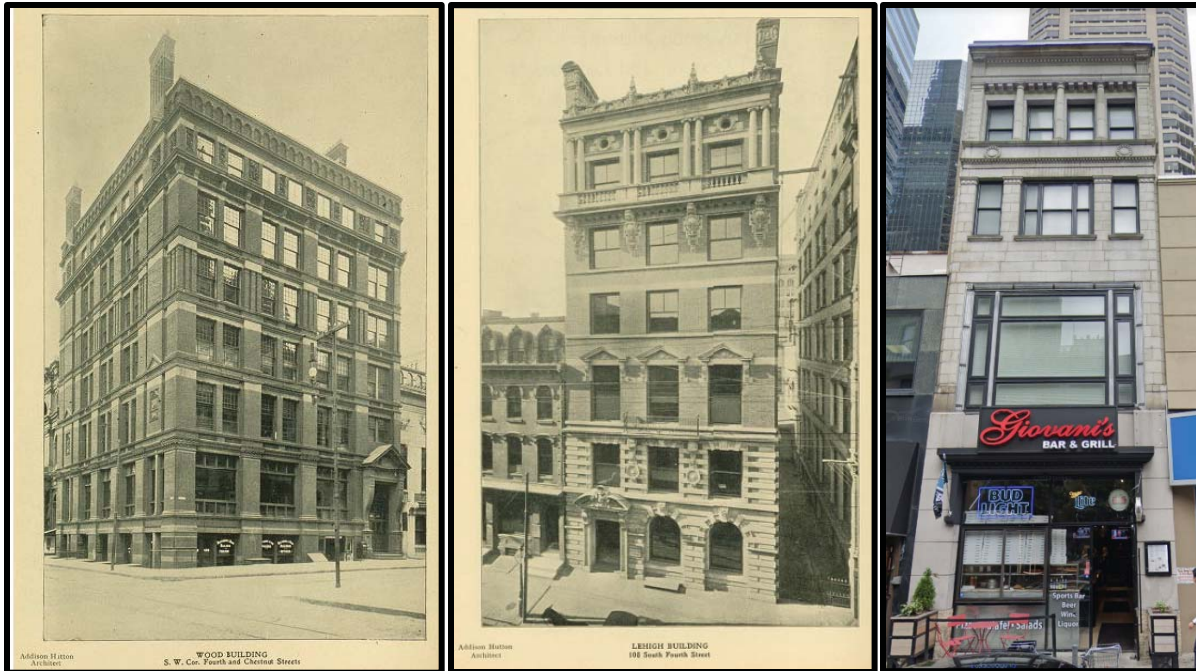


Figure 45. Left: Built in 1893, the R.D. Wood Company at 400-04 Chestnut Street (Demolished) was designed by Hutton. Source: *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 1 March 1893, 125. Figure 46. Middle: Built in 1896, the Lehigh Building at 108 South Fourth Street (Demolished), Philadelphia, another Hutton design. Source: *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 15 January 1896, 41. Figure 47. Right: The Bouscher Building, 1533 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, designed by Hutton in 1898. Source: Google.

In the 1890s, it is clear that the Palazzo and Renaissance Revival styles were not only popular in general architecture, but appeared creatively during the culmination of Hutton's commercial products. Varying greatly from his work in the 1880s, Hutton completed the design of a new façade for the Musical Fund Society Hall (Figure 51). Though not a commercial building, this façade, completed by 1893, shares some features with the subject building, including the brick and terra cotta architectural details. In the 1890s, Strawbridge & Clothier again commissioned Hutton to design an eight-story building at 811-14 Filbert Street (Figure 50) in the rear of their Market Street properties. The building was distinctive, being constructed of red brick with a colonnade at the top two floors. This is one of the few buildings designed by Hutton to survive in an area rampant with demolition. The Lehigh Building (Figure 46), completed in 1896, was also designed by Hutton. It too was an office building, meaning that it was without a storefront, and featured a fenestration that was more fully articulated in the Palazzo and Renaissance Revival styles. His commercial work for Mitchell, Fletcher, & Co., Inc. began in 1896, and an addition to the Girard building at South Broad and Chestnut Streets was underway by 1898.

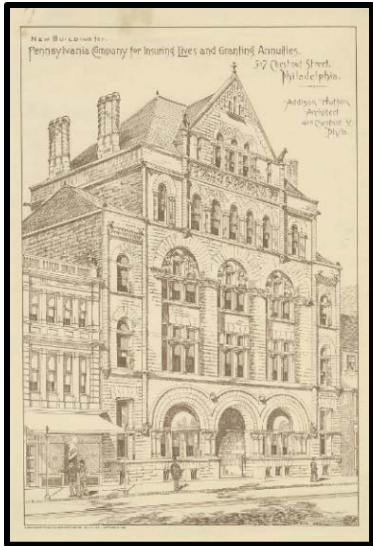


Figure 48. Top left: The Pennsylvania Company for Insuring Lives and Granting Annuities stood directly across from Independence Hall. It was designed by Hutton in 1888 and demolished as part of the creation of Independence Mall. Source: Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Figure 49. Top right: Strawbridge & Clothier (Demolished), at the northwest corner of Market and Eighth Streets, Philadelphia, was designed by Hutton in 1897. Source: King, Moses. *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians*. (New York: Blanchard Press, Isaac H. Blanchard Co., 1901), 46. Figure 50. Bottom left: Strawbridge & Clothier's at 811-14 Filbert Street, designed by Addison Hutton. Source: Google. Figure 51. Bottom right: The Musical Fund Society Hall's primary (north) elevation represents the work of Hutton in 1893. Source: *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 2 August 1893.

Though Hutton's popularity tapered off in the first years of the twentieth century, he remains one of the most distinctive architects of the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century in the Quaker City. While the subject building is smaller in scale than many of his other commercial commissions, the Wall & Ochs Building is significant as an important and rare surviving specimen of Hutton's commercial oeuvre, satisfying Criterion E.



Two variants of the Renaissance Revival style on a small scale in Philadelphia. Figure 52. Left: The Real Estate Title and Trust Co. (Demolished) at 523 Chestnut Street, opposite Independence Hall. Figure 53. Right: Mosebach's Casino and Drawing Room (Demolished) at 1209 North Thirteenth Street.

### **CRITERION D**

The Wall & Ochs Building at 1716 Chestnut Street is a notable example of a Renaissance Revival style commercial building of the turn of the twentieth century. Like many row buildings in Philadelphia, the stylistic grandeur is limited to the principal façade. In this case, the primary (north) elevation is characterized by contrasting materials, which includes a pale, cream-colored stone surround at the storefront and buff face brick for the upper three stories. The lightly colored brick façade of the upper stories is replete with finely crafted and detailed terra cotta ornament, taking the form of agrafes, ancons, consoles, dentils, Grecian fretwork, modillions, modillion bands, and elaborate friezes set within pedimented window heads. All of the described features formed of brick and terra cotta are hallmarks of both the Italian Palazzo and Renaissance Revival styles. This combination of architectural details is evocative of the said styles as applied to commercial buildings of the period, satisfying Criterion D.

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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 Steven J. Peitzman, MD, Medical Historian and Kelly E. Wiles, Architectural Historian. The Keeping Society of Philadelphia is grateful for materials provided by the descendants of Charles F. Wall, including Janet Wall.

The following sites were used to create the nomination:

Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network

Newspapers.com

Proquest Historical Newspapers

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