

ADDRESS: 1031 SHACKAMAXON ST

Name of Resource: Joseph Langer Building

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Kathryn Bartolomeo

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1031 Shackamaxon Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the Joseph Langer Building satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J. Under Criterion C, the nomination argues that the building fronting Day Street reflects the environment in an era characterized by vernacular, half-gambrel “flounders” of frame construction. Under Criterion J, the nomination contends that the property represents the historical heritage of the neighborhood’s early period of development, as well as the cultural, economic, industrial, and social history of the people who founded and formed Fishtown and the larger Kensington community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1031 Shackamaxon Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C 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: **1031 Shackamaxon Street (AKA 1032 Day Street)**

Postal code: **19125-4132** Councilmanic District:

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: **Joseph Langer Building**

Current/Common Name: **NA**

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Occupancy: ☐ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☒ unknown

Current use: Residential

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

Period of Significance (from year to year): **ca.1820-28 to 1852**

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: **ca.1820-28**

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: **Unknown**

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: **Unknown**

Original owner: **Joseph Langer, Manufacturer of Suspenders**

Other significant persons: **NA**

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

9. NOMINATOR: KEEPING SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA

Author: **Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian**

Date: **6 December 2021**

Email: **keeper@keepingphiladelphia.org**

Street Address: **1315 Walnut Street, Suite 320**

Telephone: **717.602.5002**

City, State, and Postal Code: **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107**

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: December 6, 2021

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: December 15, 2021

Date of Notice Issuance: December 17, 2021

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: Kathryn Bartolomeo

Address: 1032 Day Street

City: Philadelphia

State: PA

Postal Code: 19125

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated

☐ Rejected

3/12/18

NOMINATION

FOR THE

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Figure 1. Left: Looking west from the site of I-95 on Day Street, this photograph shows the side (east) and primary (north) elevations of the subject property in 1958. Source: Phillyhistory.org. Figure 2. Right: Looking west at the subject building and the rear el. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2021.

JOSEPH LANGER BUILDING
A WEAVING ESTABLISHMENT
BUILT CA. 1820-28
1031 SHACKAMAXON STREET
ALSO KNOWN AS
1032 DAY STREET
FISHTOWN
KENSINGTON
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19125 - 4132



Figure 3. Left: The proposed designation is limited to the parcel outlined in blue. Figure 4. Right: The proposed designation is limited to the main block of the subject property (delineated in the figure above on right) and is not meant to prevent changes and improvements at the rear, outside the public viewshed. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2021.

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary description for the subject property is as follows:

SITUATE on the northeasterly side of Shackamaxon Street, between Wildey and Richmond Streets, in the Eighteenth Ward of the City of Philadelphia.

IN FRONT OR BREADTH ON THE SAID Shackamaxon Street twenty feet and extending of that width in length or depth northeastwardly one hundred fifty-two feet and two and three quarters inches, on the northeasterly line thereof, and one hundred fifty feet and six and three-quarter inches on the northwesterly line thereof, to a certain sixteen feet wide alley called Day Street.

BEING known as No. 1031 Shackamaxon Street.

The property is known as Parcel No. 017N04-0047, Office of Property Assessment Account No. 181023900.



Figure 5. Center: The primary (north) and side (east) elevations of the subject building. Source: Google, 2021. Figure 6. Left: Looking west at a similar frame “flounder” on Frankford Avenue in Fishtown, long demolished, illustrating the historic appearance of the subject building with wood siding. Source: Jane Campbell Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Figure 7. Right: A drawing of the Minster House, a frame “flounder” that stood next to Commissioner’s Hall in Northern Liberties. Source: Shown in Figure 27, the well-known illustration of Commissioner’s Hall of Northern Liberties, ca. 1852, Library Company of Philadelphia.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Located at the rear of a parcel associated with 1031 Shackamaxon Street in Fishtown, the Joseph Langer Building is a two-and-one-half story timber frame structure that stands at 1032 Day Street. Within the context of frame buildings of Philadelphia, the subject building is a “half-house” or “flounder” type, being a detached building with its half-gambrel gable end facing north on Day Street.¹

The original fenestration of the primary (north) elevation exists at this elevation with a pedestrian door and single window at the ground floor followed by a single, central window at both the second and third floors. The broken pitch, half-gambrel gable end defines the upper floor of this building. The side (east) elevations feature two apertures on the ground floor, including at least one window. Two windows are present with the second floor. The upper floor is defined by the broken-pitch of the gambrel roof. Rising slightly above the roofline inside the side (west) elevation is an early or original chimney. A photograph taken by the Philadelphia Historical Commission in 1958 (Figure 1) shows that a single shed dormer occupied the lower tier of the roof on the side (east) elevation; however, this dormer has since been removed. The rear (south) elevation features a one-story el, above which is a single window per floor. The side (west) elevation is built on the property line and is a three-story blind wooden wall. The building features several siding campaigns throughout

¹ The term “flounder” is used to describe this specific house type in places like Alexandria, Virginia and St. Louis, Missouri, though the building type is found in many cities across the country. Source: James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell. “Colonial Buildings in Alexandria, Virginia,” *Old House Online*, 21 June 2021.; and Betsy H. Bradley. *2015 Thematic Survey of Flounder Houses in St. Louis City Survey Report*. (St. Louis, Missouri: Cultural Resources Office, Planning and Development Agency, City of St. Louis, July 2015). The term “half-house” is one used to describe this type of house by locals in Fishtown.

including form stone, metal siding, and some type of asphalt fabric. The original lapped siding may be beneath the surface as is partly visible in Figure 1. The form of the building is visible from both Day and Shackamaxon Streets.



Figure 8. Top: Looking northwest at the side (east) and rear (south) elevations of the subject building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020. Figure 9. Bottom: Looking north at the rear (south) elevation of the subject building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.



Figure 1 (repeated). The side (east) and primary (north) elevations of the subject property in 1958. Source: Phillyhistory.org.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located at the rear of a lot identified as 1031 Shackamaxon Street (also known as 1032 Day Street), the subject wooden structure identified in this nomination as the Joseph Langer Building is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.² The building satisfies the following Criterion for Designation as per Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

- (c) *Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; and*
- (j) *Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.*

The Period of Significance is from ca.1820-28 when the subject building was constructed by Joseph Langer as a “Weaving establishment” through 1852, during which time the building appears to have been used by weavers and other tradesman in Fishtown.³

² Estate of Joseph Langer, Deceased, Orphans’ Court of Philadelphia, 21 April 1832, Book 33, p. 28. Source: Familysearch.org.

³ Deed: Henry Shreader, et. al. to Joseph Langer, 15 July 1820, Philadelphia Deed Book G.W.R., No. 34, p. 341, City Archives of Philadelphia.; *Desilver’s Philadelphia Directory and Stranger’s Guide, For 1828...* (Philadelphia: Robert Deilver, 1 April 1828), 112.; Deed: Barbara Ann Langer, et. al. to John Grawer, 23 June 1832, Philadelphia Deed Book A.M., No. 23, p. 760, City Archives of Philadelphia.; Deed: John Grawer & wife to Amos Watson, 6 June 1836, Philadelphia Deed Book S.H.F., No. 3, p. 1, City Archives of Philadelphia; Deed: Anna M. Watson, et. al. to Eli Garrison, 26 October 1852, Philadelphia Deed Book T.H., No. 35, p. 489, City Archives of Philadelphia.

The subject property is akin to other frame buildings in Fishtown that were previously nominated and determined eligible for listing in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (PRHP) by the Philadelphia Historical Commission's Committee on Historic Designation. The nominations associated with those buildings are listed below:

The Jacob Deal Frame Dwelling, Built ca.1830-38

227 E. Allen Street (determined eligible/demolished)⁴

Source: [227 E Allen St 7-25-16-1.pdf \(keepingphiladelphia.org\)](#)

The Jacob Deal Half-Gambrel Frame House, Built ca. 1808-38

228 Richmond Street, Fishtown (determined eligible/declined to designate)⁵

The Joseph Paxson Frame Store & Dwelling, Built ca.1827-39

1250 E. Palmer Street, Fishtown (designated)⁶

Source: [MergedFile \(keepingphiladelphia.org\)](#)

The Jacob Souder Frame Dwelling, Built 1810-11

1132 Marlborough Street, Fishtown (designated)⁷

[1132-Marlborough-St-nomination.pdf \(phila.gov\)](#)

⁴ Oscar Beisert. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: The Jacob Deal Frame Dwelling, 227 E. Allen Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2016).

⁵ Oscar Beisert. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: The Jacob Deal Half-Gambrel Frame Dwelling, 228 E. Richmond Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2016).

⁶ Oscar Beisert. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: The Joseph Paxson Frame Store & Dwelling, 1250 E. Palmer Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2017).

⁷ Oscar Beisert and J.M. Duffin. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: The Jacob Souder Frame Dwelling, 1132 Marlborough Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2019).

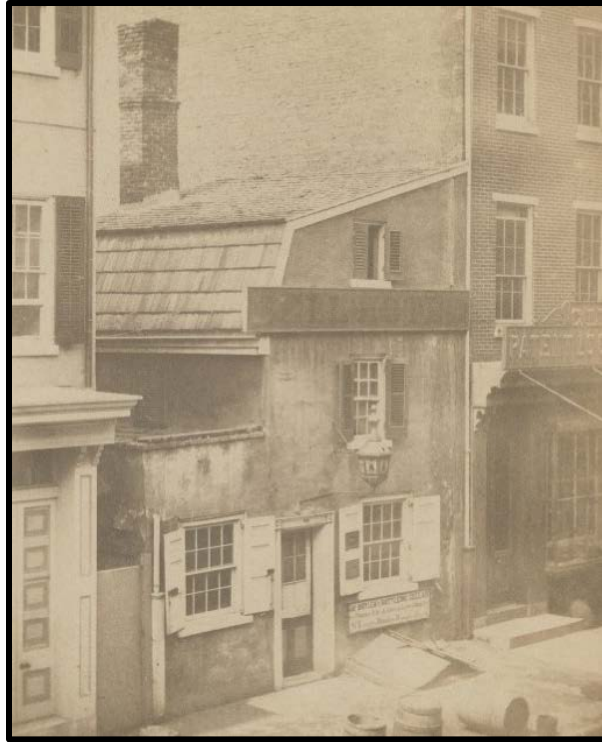


Figure 10. The Bell Tavern was a "flounder," like the subject building, that once stood on the west side of Eighth Street north of Sansom. This "half-house" and its gambrel roof was demolished in 1858. This photograph was taken by Richards in 1857. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.

CRITERIA C & J

Representative of both the historical heritage of the neighborhood's early period of development, as well as the cultural, economic, industrial and social history of the people that founded and formed Fishtown and larger Kensington community, the Joseph Langer Building, essentially a frame dwelling used initially as a manufactory, is an important and rare surviving specimen within a waning body of wooden houses that once defined the local built environment in late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This 200-year old frame building speaks to the formative years of the neighborhood, as it evolved from a sparse settlement at the Delaware River waterfront to an urban village that would be densely constructed like many of the early towns and villages in Philadelphia County.⁸ Despite the common misnomer that William Penn and his followers wielded an at-large prohibition of timber frame construction, the wooden house was a dominant building type in the Quaker City from the time of its settlement until masonry predominated in the second half of the nineteenth century.

⁸ The name Fishtown is used throughout the nomination to refer to the portion of Kensington located near the Delaware River waterfront that is bound at the north by Aramingo Avenue and at the south by Frankford Avenue, extending to the west to Girard Avenue, Frankford Avenue, and Front Street, depending on the location.



Figure 11. Still standing at the southeast corner of S. Fifth and Locust Streets, the building at the corner features a side-gabled roof in a broken pitch, gambrel form. While this brick house is similar to the subject property, its near neighbor, just two doors down (see black arrow), is perhaps identical in material composition and general appearance. Source: Library Company of Philadelphia.

Several factors justify historic designation of the Joseph Langer Building. Perhaps the most compelling aspect of historical significance is that the subject building appears to have served as a “Weaving establishment” after it was constructed ca. 1820-28, making it one of the oldest known buildings used for industrial purposes to survive in the neighborhood.⁹ The origins of the subject building date to July 15, 1820, when Joseph Langer purchased an undeveloped lot from Henry Shroeder, a carter, and his wife Maria Magdalena.¹⁰ Just as it does today, the narrow parcel extended from Shackamaxon Street at the south to Day Street at the north. At the time of purchase, Joseph Langer was an established manufacturer of suspenders, a product not entirely unrelated to the lederhosen of his ancestors, but one that had recently been popularized in American and European fashion of the early nineteenth century. Between ca. 1820 to ca. 1828, it appears that Joseph Langer and Barbara Anne, his wife, commissioned a two-and-one-half-story brick dwelling at Shackamaxon Street and the subject frame building at Day Street.¹¹ While it is likely that the Langers occupied the site soon after its purchase in 1820, the first listing for Joseph Langer as a manufacturer at the subject property occurred in an 1828 city directory, which indicates that the subject building was constructed by that time.¹² Described in 1832 as “a

⁹ *Desilver's Philadelphia Directory and Stranger's Guide, For 1828...* (Philadelphia: Robert Deilver, 1 April 1828), 112.

¹⁰ Deed: Henry Shroeder, et. al. to Joseph Langer, 15 July 1820, Philadelphia Deed Book G.W.R., No. 34, p. 341, City Archives of Philadelphia.

¹¹ Deed: Henry Shroeder, et. al. to Joseph Langer, 15 July 1820, Philadelphia Deed Book G.W.R., No. 34, p. 341, City Archives of Philadelphia.

¹² *Desilver's Philadelphia Directory and Stranger's Guide, For 1828...* (Philadelphia: Robert Deilver, 1 April 1828), 112.

commodious Frame Building, or Weaving establishment,” the situation of the two buildings, one at each end of the narrow lot, allowed Langer to both live and work on the same property. This represents broad patterns of Philadelphia’s heritage as the “Workshop of the World.” After the death of Joseph Langer, the property was subject to a “Public Sale” on a Thursday evening, at 7:30 PM, in June of 1832 at the Merchants’ Coffee House in Philadelphia. This led the recently widowed Barbara Anne Langer to sell the property to John Grawer, a weaver, of Kensington for \$1,834.¹³ John and Catherine Grower occupied the property until it was sold to Amos Watson, a gentleman, of Kensington, in June 1836.¹⁴ Watson appears to have leased the dwelling and the subject frame manufactory during the time of his ownership through 1852.¹⁵

REAL ESTATE
KENSINGTON.

Pursuant to an Order of the Orphans' Court for the City and County of Philadelphia,

WILL BE SOLD
AT PUBLIC SALE,

At the Merchants' Coffee House in the City of Philadelphia,
On Thursday evening, 17th inst. at 7½ o'clock,

The following described Real Estate,

LATE THE PROPERTY OF JOSEPH LANGER, (Manufacturer) Dec'd, viz:

All that certain Two-story Brick Messuage and Lot or piece of Ground, thereunto belonging, marked in the plan of Lots of Jacob Weaver, deceased, No. 17, situate on the Northeastly side of Shakamaxon Street, Kensington, County of Philadelphia: beginning at a stake on the side of said Shakamaxon street, a corner of Lot marked in the aforesaid plan, No. 16, granted to William Conyers; thence Northwardly, by said William Conyers' ground, 152 feet 2½ inches, to a sixteen feet wide alley; thence Northwestwardly, by the said alley, 20 feet, to other ground of John Christopher Seyferheld, being Lot marked in said plan, No. 18; thence Southwestwardly by said Lot, No. 18, 150 feet 6½ inches, to Shakamaxon street aforesaid; thence by said Shakamaxon street, Southeastly 20 feet, to place of beginning. Being the same Lot or piece of ground which Henry Shröder and Maria Magdalena his wife, by Indenture dated the 15th day of July, A. D. 1820, recorded in Deed Book, G. W. R. No. 34, page 341, &c. granted and conveyed unto the said Joseph Langer, in fee with the appurtenances.

On the rear end of said Lot, is erected a commodious Frame Building, or Weaving establishment. This Property would be desirable to a person wishing to have a residence connected with his business. Sold clear of all incumbrance.—Terms at Sale.

By the Court,

ROBERT ANDREWS, Clerk.
Barbara Anne Langer,
Conrad Kaercher,
John D. Goodwin, Auc'r.

MAY 7, 1832.

Figure 12. A broadside for the sale of the subject property, including the subject building referred to as the “commodious Frame Building” in 1832. Source: Estate of Joseph Langer, Deceased, Orphans’ Court of Philadelphia, 21 April 1832, Book 33, p. 28, via Familysearch.org.

¹³ Estate of Joseph Langer, Deceased, Orphans’ Court of Philadelphia, 21 April 1832, Book 33, p. 28. Source: Familysearch.org.; and Deed: Barbara Ann Langer, et. al. to John Grawer, 23 June 1832, Philadelphia Deed Book A.M., No. 23, p. 760, City Archives of Philadelphia.

¹⁴ Deed: John Grawer & wife to Amos Watson, 6 June 1836, Philadelphia Deed Book S.H.F., No. 3, p. 1, City Archives of Philadelphia.

¹⁵ Deed: Anna M. Watson, et. al. to Eli Garrison, 26 October 1852, Philadelphia Deed Book T.H., No. 35, p. 489, City Archives of Philadelphia

In the early nineteenth century, the Quaker City was home to the greatest population cluster on the North American continent, and it was here that its ever swelling populous engaged in all manner of manufacturing enterprises, many of which originated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With a rise in population from approximately 111,210 in 1810 to 188,797 in 1830, Philadelphia County experienced the emergence of new sectors of employment, as well as the growth of established trades, which included the tremendous expansion of textile manufacture. During this time through the late nineteenth century, Kensington became one of Philadelphia's "...grubby cradles of manufacturing development," rendering the district as one of the great textile centers of the world. This ultimately transformed an agrarian and sparsely developed landscape into a hotbed of factories, warehouses, and workshops, which were the source of all manner of domestic structures, consisting largely of snug urban, row buildings. While large textile firms would ultimately come to dominate the industry in the post-Civil War period, independent artisans and craftshop proprietors also played a major role in the local textile ecosystem between 1800 and 1865.¹⁶ In his in-depth study on the "Proprietary Textile Trades at Philadelphia," historian Philip Scranton illuminates a world wherein small producers played an important role in the industry. In 1820, there were only seven firms that were established partnerships, one of which, the Globe Mill, was the only truly large operation in Kensington. At that time these seven partnerships employed just 300 of the 1,135 textile workers.¹⁷ By 1830 Philadelphia boasted 25,000 industrial laborers. This statistic included 104 warping mills, 4,500 weavers, 4,000 spoolers, 200 bobbin weavers, and 200 dyers, all of which formed a capital of \$1,470,000.¹⁸ Beyond the larger scale factories and their owners, the independent artisan, the craftshop, and those in between played an important role in the industry. Scranton's study unveils that these producers were interdependent in providing specific products that were required to advance the industrial process. This represents cultural, economic and social conditions of industrial Kensington that would shift dramatically as factories took over the textile manufacture in the post-Civil War period.

While larger textile firms such as Craige, Holmes & Co. operated in ever-growing facilities like the Globe Mill, many small producers created their wares in manufactories of a domestic scale. This was a built environment largely synonymous to that of a dense residential neighborhood. Depending on the size of the establishment, they operated workshops that were located within the walls of their own homes or in separate, but small-scale structures on the same premises or nearby within walking distance. No doubt some of these appeared as small shed-like buildings (Figure 18), while others took on the building forms known in local residential architecture like the subject building, where workers were also boarders, being housed onsite or above their workspace.¹⁹ While some extant dwellings may have served such purposes, Joseph Langer Building is one of the few known purpose-built structures that stands in 2021 to represent the advent of "artisanal manufacturing" and the small textile workshop in Kensington during its early period of

¹⁶ Philip Scranton. *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885*. (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 110-20.

¹⁷ *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania*, vol. 4 (1829), p. 168-69.

¹⁸ "Philadelphia," *The Register* (also known as *Hazard's Register*), August 1831, 128.

¹⁹ Philip Scranton. *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture at Philadelphia, 1800-1885*. (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 110-20.

development as one of the great textile centers of the industrial age. Owned briefly by two textile artisans, and later by an established landlord, the subject building represents the struggles and triumphs of working people during the second quarter of the nineteenth century in Kensington.

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Figure 13. Left: A frame “flounder” in South Philadelphia, which, like the subject property, features a roof form defined by a broken pitch. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia. Figure 14. Right: A wooden house with a gambrel roof at Wylie and 19th Streets in the Francisville section of Philadelphia. Source: Perkins Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

While used as a “Weaving establishment” in its early years, the subject building representing a dwelling form and style that was well-known in the city’s eighteenth and early-nineteenth century-built environment. The subject building exemplifies an important historic context of frame buildings, specifically those of a domestic scale, that once dominated the neighborhood, only a fraction of which survive to-date. Within the realm of local wooden house architecture, this specific frame building is the physical embodiment of a coterie of so-called “flounders” or “half houses” that were once part and parcel of the Philadelphia’s built vernacular language. Usually constructed of wood—occasionally masonry, the “flounder” or “half-house” form has a striking, old-world appearance that is often diminished by modern buildings materials. These buildings appear half-built or as half of a whole structure, this specific house gaining additional visual import due to the broken pitch of its “half-gambrel” roof. Evidenced in Figures 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, and 29, this nomination illustrates that the subject building reflects the environment in an era characterized by vernacular, half-gambrel “flounders” of frame construction, which was a distinctive architectural type and style. Other examples of “flounders” with different roof types are illustrated in Figures 15, 16, and 18.

While the gambrel variety is perhaps the most visually evocative in terms of the related historic structural forms, these dwellings also featured single pitch, shed, flat and other roof forms. The crude and quirky volume of the subject building is important precisely because

of its quaint, ramshackle appearance, a reputation disproven by its survival for roughly 200 years. Through its manufacturing and residential history, the Joseph Langer Building stands as a testament to its past working-class occupants, expressing the cultural, economic and social heritage of the community through a once ubiquitous vernacular structure that has largely been lost to time and progress.

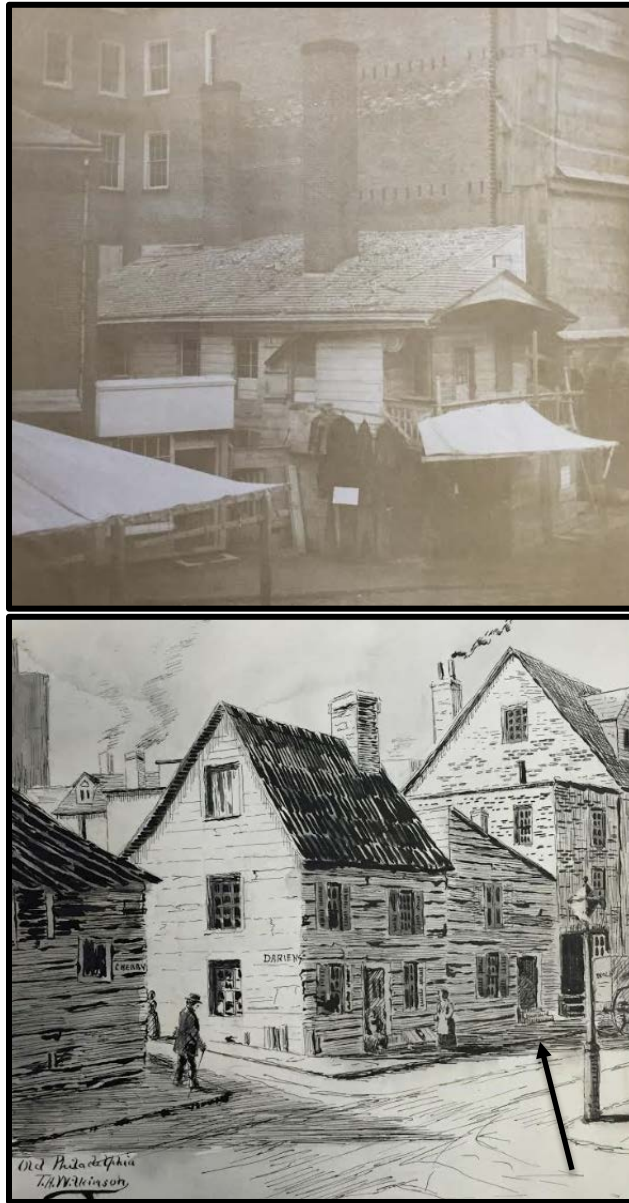


Figure 15. Top: The Loxley House, one of the most famous of the early wooden houses of Philadelphia. Notice that the house is essentially like a half house front gable disguised by a projecting gable-front porch roof. Figure 16. Bottom: This illustration shows a wooden house at the northeast corner of Cherry and Darien Streets in Center City, which includes a frame “flounder” standing next door. This drawing is by T.H. Wilkinson. Source: Castner Scrapbooks, Free Library of Philadelphia.

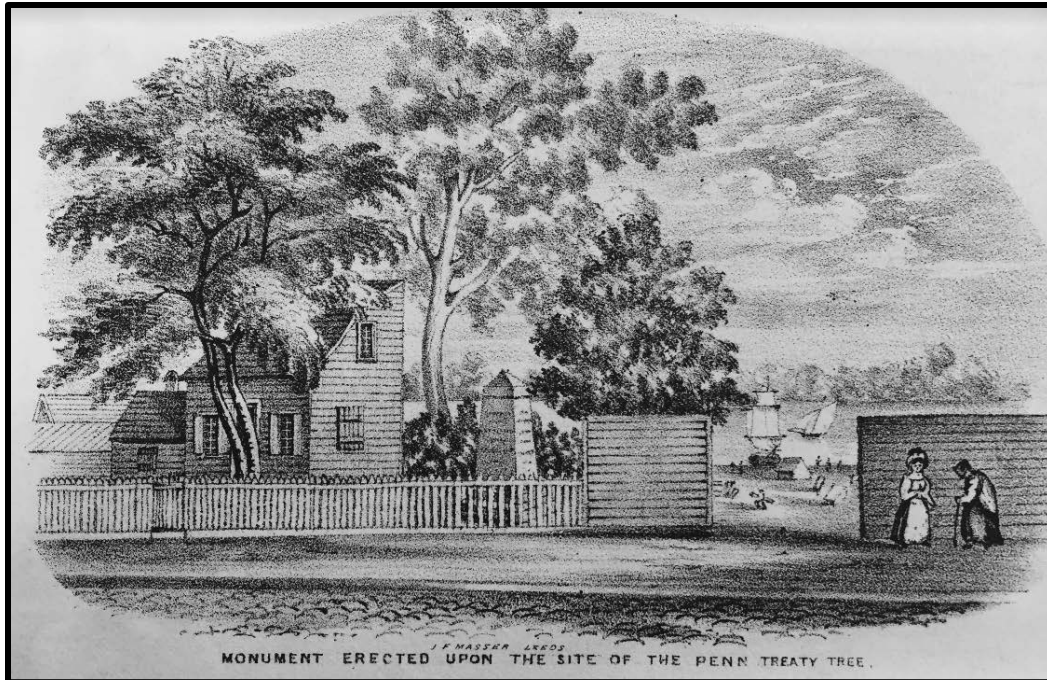


Figure 17. An illustration of the “Monument Erected Upon The Site Of The Penn Treat Tree,” this illustration shows a small, one-story frame “flounder” with a side gable roof featuring a broken pitch. Whether or not this scene was exactly as it is shown is unknown, but the presence of the wooden house tells the story of the type of houses found in Fishtown and the larger Kensington neighborhood. Source: Castner Scrapbook on the Delaware River, Free Library of Philadelphia.

Historic Context: Fishtown Section of Kensington, Philadelphia²⁰

Fishtown originated as a quaint fishing village at what was historically known as Shackamaxon—“the place where the chiefs meet.” Located along the west bank of the Delaware River above the Cohocksink Creek (now Canal Street), the settlement’s greatest claim to fame is associated with Penn Treaty Park, the former site of the Elm tree that shaded the Lenni Lenape and William Penn signing of the “great treaty” in 1682. While the event may ultimately amount to folklore that was eventually inscribed upon the pages of Philadelphia’s history books, the name Shackamaxon is one that derived from “Kackamensi,” and was a place of Lenape occupation as early as the seventeenth century. Eventually came the settlers of New Sweden, and it was the Cock, Nilsson, Salung, and Rambo families who chose this locality for their agricultural endeavors.

As an urban development in both name and plan, the neighborhood we know today traces its origins to the 1730s when Anthony Palmer (1675-1749), a merchant and the Pennsylvania provincial councilor, decided to carve up his 191½-acre Delaware River front property. Palmer laid out streets and sold lots in the area that now compasses East Columbia Avenue (late Hanover Street), the Delaware River, Norris Street and Frankford Avenue. He called this new community Kensington. Palmer’s immediate neighbor to the southwest, Benjamin Fairman, followed Palmer’s lead by laying out streets on his river-front property

²⁰ This historic context was originally part of *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: The Jacob Souder Frame Dwelling, 1132 Marlborough Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2019).

that extended Kensington from East Columbia Avenue to roughly Frankford Avenue. In spite of the development plans that Palmer's new streets and lots portended, the pace of settlement in Kensington was slow, but still a maritime fishing village formed in that place. Shipbuilding and other pursuits at the end of the eighteenth century led to a rise in development and construction near the waterfront. Specifically, as the city moved north along the Delaware River, the area underwent its initial period of urban development during the first quarter of the nineteenth century with a major boom in construction during the 1830s.

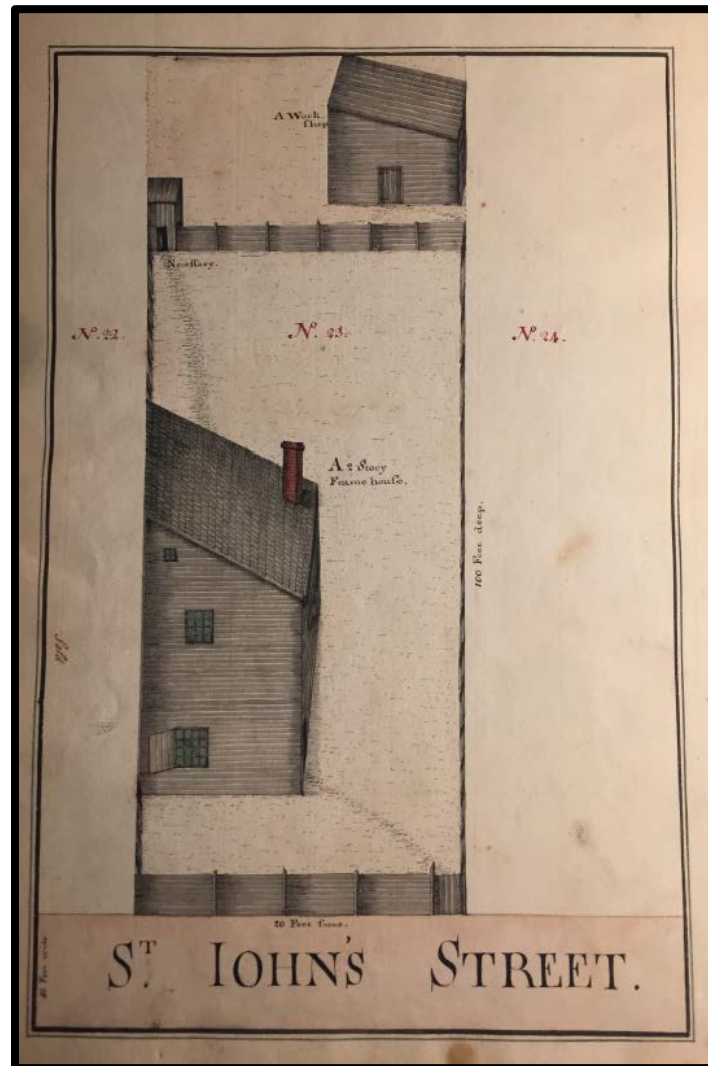


Figure 18. A survey of a wooden house on St. John's Street in Philadelphia. Note that the house is a very simple two-story frame "flounder" with almost no architectural pretense. Source: Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Figure 19. Seen between like wooden houses, the Georgian doorway in the lithograph is what remains of this like-style dwelling. In the background on right is a wooden house with a gambrel roof. This is on a whole a court of wooden houses depicted in *The little homeless one or "no one to kiss me good night."* Lithograph by P.S. Duval, Philadelphia, 1867. Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

THE FRAME DWELLING IN PHILADELPHIA, THE NORTHERN LIBERTIES AND KENSINGTON²¹

When William Penn and the Quakers arrived at Philadelphia in 1683, they encountered a small community of Swedes, which largely consisted of subsistence farmers living in log hewn and timber frame houses. Beyond their own cave dwellings, the first houses built by Quakers likely included small, simple, and perhaps even temporary wooden structures. And while brick soon became the standard in Philadelphia, frame dwellings, dating to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were common throughout the city.²²

In 1749, Swedish Naturalist Peter Kalm noted the following frame dwelling “preserved” in the Philadelphia landscape, which represented the early European settlement of the area:

A wretched old wooden building is preserved, on a hill near the [Delaware] river, located a little north of Wicaco . . . on purpose as a memorial to the poor condition of the place before the town was built on it. It belonged formerly to one of the Svensons. . .²³

Since the local annals of history were first researched, written, and published, professors and teachers alike have perverted the minds of students on certain aspects of the

²¹ This historic context, “The Frame Dwelling in Philadelphia, The Northern Liberties, and Kensington,” was originally written for *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: The Jacob Deal Half-Gambrel Frame House*, 228 Richmond Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (Philadelphia: The Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2016).

²² Samuel Fitch Hotchin. *Penn’s Greene Country Towne*. (Philadelphia: Ferris & Leach, 1903), 67-69.

²³ John Fanning Watson. *Annals of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania in the Olden Time: Being a Collection of Memoirs, Anecdotes, and Incidents of the City and Its Inhabitants, and of the Earliest Settlements of the Inland Part of Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: 1845).

foundational history of the Quaker City's built environment. Their narrative has been that William Penn's Philadelphia was one built entirely of brick, a conclusion made possible by the old wives' tale that early legal prohibitions against timber frame construction governed the city's physical development. Nevertheless, Penn's nascent, but groundbreaking efforts in urban planning were largely limited to his commissioning of Thomas Holme to lay out the City of Philadelphia. Never did he effectively prohibit wooden buildings and/or require that all attached houses be constructed masonry. Some attribute Penn's fervor for brick buildings to a lesson learned in the aftermath of the Great Fire of London in 1666, but, this theory, like the "Greene Country Towne," was a mere idea that never realized historically, whatsoever. The thread of truth in this larger story is that there was an immediate effort to establish brickmaking in Philadelphia. The natural resources of the region led to the use of brick and stone in building construction, a fact that is demonstrated in the extant historic built environment.²⁴ Nevertheless, frame dwellings were both cheap and quick to construct, which made them appealing options to tradespeople, immigrants and landlords. These dwelling types were built in all parts of the city through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and even later.



Figure 20. Left: An early one-and-one-half-story frame "flounder" at 12th and Locust Streets in Center City. Source: Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Figure 21. Right: Old wooden houses, extending southwardly from the corner of Marble Street, on the west side of Tenth Street, to Miss Sally Keene's, late Maj. Lennock's property and residence, built by "Col." Peter L. Berry. N.W. corner of Chestnut and Tenth streets. Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

According to James Mease (1771-1846), local scientist, horticulturist, and physician, there were roughly 6,351 brick houses to 2,523 wooden ones in 1811—a ratio of three to one.²⁵ Interestingly, the general claim, as noted by Historian Carole Shammas, is that houses were constructed at "an average of 228 per year between 1760 and 1800," which had created the 1811 statistic.²⁶ Close inspection of early images and insurance surveys provides insight as to the physical appearance of these buildings. Many of these houses were entirely without pretense or style and others took on the Georgian antecedents of their brick, stone, and wooden primates across the Atlantic in England. North and south of the old municipal

²⁴ *Imagining Philadelphia: Edmund Bacon and the Future of the City*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Inc., 2011), 113.

²⁵ Margaret B. Tinkcom, "Southwark, a River Community: Its Shape and Substance," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 114 (1970), 327-342.

²⁶ Dell Upton. *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Space in the New American Republic* (Cambridge: Yale University Press, 2008), 25-26.

lines, the prevalence of the frame dwelling was greater, and the forms and styles of Philadelphia's wooden houses developed into its own vernacular language. One historian, Dell Upton, provides a more evolved understanding of Philadelphia as a city of brick, stone, and wood:

Many of these were built of wood long after better-off Philadelphians' houses were routinely built of brick. Older-type structures that combined artisans' workshop and living quarters remained scattered throughout the city but were particularly common near the waterfront.²⁷

The reality is that wooden houses were prevalent throughout the city and represent a largely lost component of the early development and built environment of the Quaker City. As a result, historic preservation, as well as, the material construction and common alteration of these buildings, has played into the misnomer that Philadelphia was always a city of masonry construction. An inventory of such buildings, preserved in Philadelphia proper, includes only a handful, while the neighborhood of Queen Village provides a slightly better glimpse of the mixture of building forms, styles and types, though only a few specimens of wooden houses are historically designated by the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

²⁷ Upton, *Another City: Urban Life*, 25.

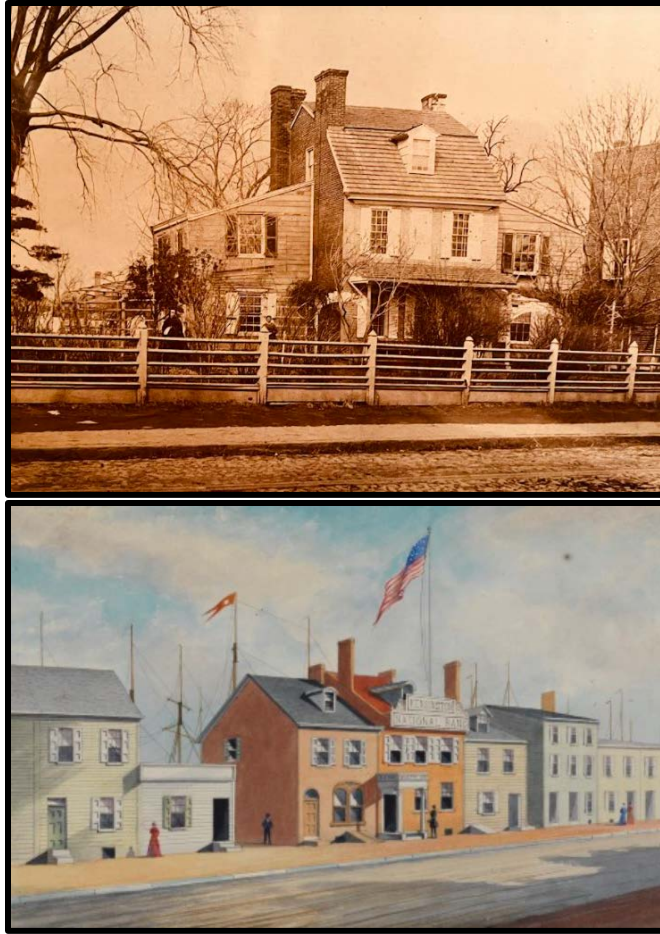


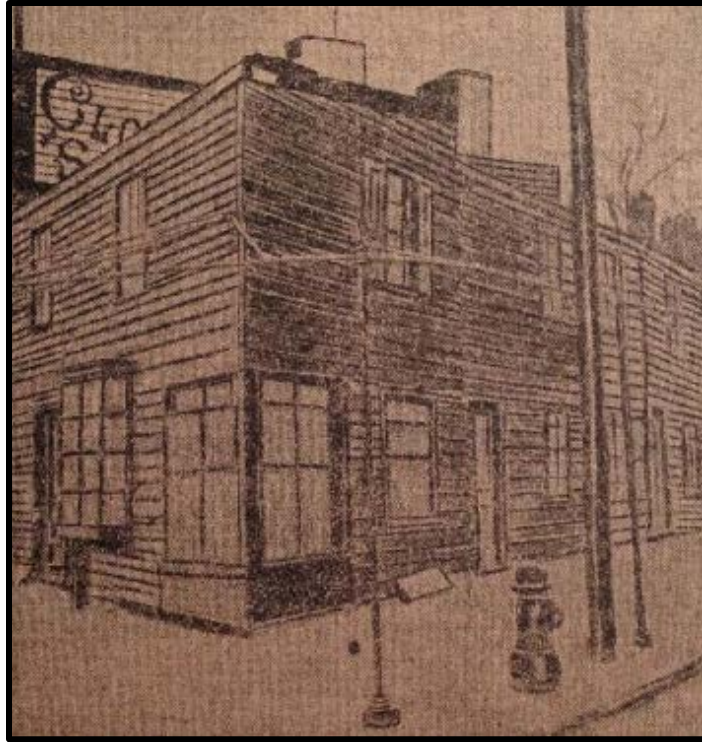
Figure 22. Top: Priestly Lodge, the residence of Mr. John Harrison on Frankford Road above Mud Lane (now Columbia Ave), built ca.1770 with the frame wings in 1820. Demolished in 1887.” Source: Oscar Beisert. Figure 23. Bottom: Showing as many as five frame out of eight buildings along Beach Street at the Delaware River waterfront in the Fishtown section of Kensington, David Johnston Kennedy’s (1816-1898) 1869 drawing depicts the early built environment of the neighborhood. Source: Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Perhaps the most comprehensive and representative ensemble of frame dwellings survives in Kensington. Early high style examples of wooden house architecture appear to be limited to a few important Georgian-inspired dwellings owned by elite Philadelphians, as well as some successful shipwrights along the Delaware River. The Fairman Mansion is the most famous building of the area and represents its agrarian roots. Other houses emerged in brick—the Jehu Eyre House was present near the Fairman Mansion by 1770, but was an urban style, brick building, fronting on Beach Street. The oldest known brick house that survives today, the Frederick J. Rapp house was built in 1786–87 in the 1000 Block of Frankford Avenue. These three brick dwellings tell a representative story of early Kensington, but they do not represent what was historically the primary building type in the area.



Figure 24. Frame dwellings on Warren Street in Fishtown, ca.1880-90, including the early one-and-one-half-story wooden house on left with its fully articulated side-gable, gambrel roof and shed dormer. Source: Castner Scrapbook on Old Houses, Free Library of Philadelphia. Note that the house on right is similar in form and scale to the subject property.

The story of the wooden house in Kensington is not one guided by high style architecture, rather these dwellings were often emulating architectural features, forms, and styles in an evolving and varying vernacular expression. Although there were no doubt more impressive and stylized frame dwellings in the area, these buildings have largely been lost to memory. On what was then known as the Frankford Road (now Frankford Avenue) at Mud Lane (now Columbia Avenue), Priestly Lodge (Figure 22) was built around 1770 and occupied by John Harrison. While the original house was of brick masonry construction, identical frame wings flanked the main block by 1820, both being clad in lapped siding. This building was by no means a high style example of wooden house architecture, but, nevertheless, is an unusual country house example in Kensington that, when enlarged by its owner, mimicked the architecture of the neighborhood in the 1820s. Incredible vernacular examples of frame buildings certainly existed throughout the area, including a one-and-one-half-story frame house in Warren Street with a fully articulated side-gabled, gambrel roof and a shed dormer (Figure 24/demolished). The range of dwellings went from the unique house shown in Figure 24 to rows of frame tenements (Figures 25 and 26), that appeared quite old and decrepit even in nineteenth century photographs.



Two rows of frame tenements at Fishtown, ca.1900. Figure 25. Top: “Old Penn Homestead Will Be Destroyed,” an unusual row of wooden tenements is shown, which was interestingly purported to be “The Penn Homestead,” particularly of Richard and Mary Masters Penn. This wooden “Penn” house was said to date to about 1775 but more likely after 1812 and was located at 951 Frankford Avenue. Just who lived there originally, or the precise age of the building is not known, but buildings of this material were certainly more commonly found to be present in the early built environment of Kensington. Source: Jane Campbell Collection, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Figure 26. Bottom: Frame tenements at East Thompson and Columbia Streets in Fishtown. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.

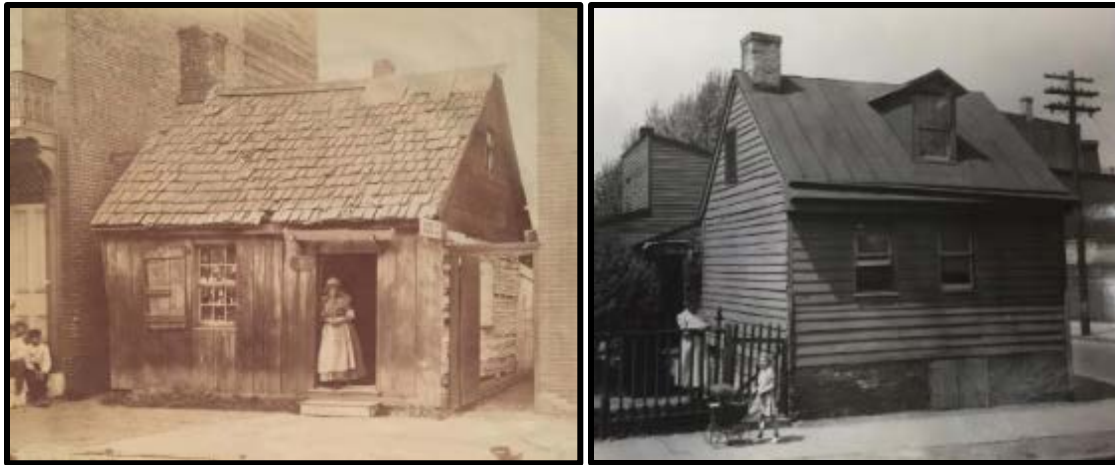


Figure 27. Left: Early Log Dwelling—"One of the oldest houses in Phila.," [late 605] Richmond Street above Beach Street, Kensington. Figure 28. Right: Early Frame Dwelling at Belgrade Street and Montgomery Avenue was owned by Palmer Cemetery. Courtesy Jane Campbell Collection, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Local lore tells us that one of the earliest vernacular wooden houses to survive into the nineteenth century was the tiny log hewn dwelling at what was once 605 Richmond Street (demolished)—now the site of an I-95 on ramp. Shown in Figure 27, a captivating, staunch old lady appears to have used the building as house and home, selling ice, no doubt being very good with a pick, occupying "the oldest house in Philadelphia"—a nickname bestowed upon several ancient-appearing dwellings throughout the city. Almost always clad in lapped siding, and, occasionally vertical board, other houses of this material construction, form, and scale were known in Kensington, including the small house (demolished) shown Figure 28—it was in Belgrade Street at the corner of Palmer Cemetery. The Belgrade Street house features a Georgian style dormer, conforming to the taste of the time in a modest format, while the Beach Street dwelling, that of the ice lady, had absolutely no pretense. These dwellings represent what was likely the oldest house type in the area—a primary feature being that the house was one-story of frame construction, often with a side gable roof.

As previously mentioned, the realization of Anthony Palmer's Kensington development progressed slowly throughout the eighteenth century with the construction of frame dwellings being the most common building forms. Shipwrights were among those in the area prior to the Revolution, operating along the Delaware River, their workers often lived nearby in wooden houses. And, naturally, all the shipyards were associated on water lots extending east from Richmond Street. Fishermen too were often associated with wooden houses, though neither shipbuilding and/or fishing were strictly associated with timber frame construction. Germans arrived in America—specifically in Philadelphia—in the eighteenth century, many of whom migrated from the Rhine Palatinate. It was primarily a group of these immigrants who became the fishermen of Fishtown.²⁸ Germans knew frame dwellings from the old country and fishermen seem to have occupied these dwellings in

²⁸ Kenneth W. Milano. *Remembering Kensington & Fishtown—Philadelphia's Riverward Neighborhoods*. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013).

Kensington, along with all manner of maritime and other trades people. Joseph Langer, who built subject property, was no doubt of those same Germanic origins, perhaps explaining the shed style dormer that once served his building

According to James Robinson and John A. Paxton's survey of 1810, Kensington's built environment consisted of about 615 houses. There were roughly 431 frame dwellings and 184 brick ones. This means that in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the housing stock in Kensington was 70 percent wood. By this time Kensington was distinguished as its own district with the larger area known as Northern Liberties. The same survey shows that Northern Liberties possessed a total of 2,998 dwellings, almost half of which were frame. Timber frame construction was used for other building types in Kensington as well. In 1810, there were nine storehouses in the area, eight of which were frame. With a mere ten manufacturing buildings, it is interesting to note that a higher percentage of these were masonry—a ratio of five to five. Public buildings were wooden as well. In Northern Liberties nine out of nineteen were frame, while in Kensington it was three wooden to one brick. Ninety-four percent of the stables and workshops in both Northern Liberties and Kensington were frame, but that was more common in this building type, as shown in the larger Philadelphia statistic of 66 percent.²⁹ Interestingly, this 1810 analysis of the buildings in Philadelphia, Northern Liberties, Penn Township, Kensington, Southwark, and Moyamensing Township combined to show that wooden buildings made up forty-eight percent of the city's-built environment.

²⁹ James A. Paxton. *The stranger's guide: an alphabetical list of all the wards, streets, roads, lanes, alleys, avenues, courts, wharves, shipyards, public buildings, &c. in the city and suburbs of Philadelphia, with references for finding their situations on an alphabetical plan.* (Philadelphia, 1811), 18–20.



Figure 29. The Commissioner's Hall of Northern Liberties, ca. 1852, showing a pristine "flounder" on right between Commissioner's Hall and a more typical three-story brick house. Source: Library Company of Philadelphia.

The adaptation of older house forms appears to have been normative in the late eighteenth century and through the first quarter of the nineteenth. For example, the "half-house" or "flounder" type, as known elsewhere, was built in greater numbers than one would suspect. At one time the "flounder" was even a known form in Northern Liberties. For example, William Ball sold a small lot to John and Adam Mintser in April 1796, which appears to have been unimproved.³⁰ Two years later, John Mintser was living on the lot in a "two-story" [a two-hand-one-half (2-1/2) story] frame dwelling with the typical measurements of a "half-house."³¹ This is no doubt the same building that is shown in the famous image of Commissioners Hall (Figures 7 and 29). There are a few examples of this house type extant in Kensington—particularly Fishtown, while most have been lost over time.

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, increasing concern related to fire and its relationship to wooden houses, as well as the poor state of maintenance of older frame buildings led to the passage of laws to mitigate such problems. An ordinance of June 6, 1796 declared that no "wooden mansion-house, shope [sic.], warehouse, store, or carriage or stable" should be erected in the City of Philadelphia between the Delaware River and

³⁰ Deed: William Ball and wife to John and Adam Mintser, 1 April 1796, Philadelphia Deed Book E.F., No. 28, p. 216, City Archives of Philadelphia.

³¹ United States Direct Tax of 1798: Tax Lists for the State of Pennsylvania. M372, microfilm, 24 rolls. Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791–2006, Record Group 58. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Sixth Street, Vine to South Streets.³² While the ordinance may have sent the intended message to certain Kensington builders, it likely had minimal effects on the construction of wooden houses outside of its mandated boundaries. Three decades later in 1826, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania gave the City of Philadelphia the power to prohibit the construction of any building of the following description: "...the walls that are not completely composed of incombustible materials..."³³ Finally, the City of Philadelphia passed an ordinance on June 8, 1832 that brought that into effect and extended the ban over the entire city:

From and after the passing of this ordinance, it shall not be lawful to erect or construct within the city of Philadelphia, any wooden, framed, brick-paned, or other building, whereof the walls are not composed wholly of incombustible materials.³⁴

The statistics from 1810 confirm that the initial ordinance of 1796 had little impact on Kensington. It certainly did not deter the construction of wooden houses, but over time this house type diminished as the neighborhood's density intensified. No measures were taken in Kensington in regard to frame dwellings until 1833. This outlawed the importation of wooden houses into the neighborhood, suggesting that many had been moved to the area from other parts of the city.

Advertisements also show the range of house types and customers over time. On April 3, 1789, the *Pennsylvania Packet* advertised wooden houses as a feature of "A Valuable Lot at Kensington," referencing "three new Frame Dwelling Houses."³⁵ These houses were clearly built as rentals for a business owner or landlord. Other advertisements appear to have been geared towards owner-occupants. On April 14, 1819 the *Franklin Gazette* advertised a "Kensington Property" as "The Frame House, Kitchen and lot..." formatted to attract someone to the house itself, leaving out potential rental projections and lot size.³⁶ These are two of numerous examples of the variation of advertisements that further explain that wooden houses were once an important and primary component of Kensington's built environment.

³² John C. Lowber and C.S. Miller. *A Digest of the Ordinances of the Corporation of the City of Philadelphia; and of the Acts of Assembly Relating thereto*. (Philadelphia: R. Desilver, 1822), 255–56.

³³ Frank F. Brightly, *A Digest of Laws and Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia from the Year 1701 to the 21st of June 1887*. (Philadelphia: Kay & Brother, 1887), 168.

³⁴ *A Digest of the Ordinances of the Corporation of the City of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: S. C. Atkinson, 1834), 310–311.

³⁵ *Pennsylvania Packet*, 3 April 1789.

³⁶ *Franklin Gazette*, 14 April 1819.

Frame House and Lot.
On Saturday morning at 10 o'clock, will be sold on the premises,
A NEW two story Frame House, and Lot, on which the same is erected, situate on Brown street in Kensington—the lot is 15 feet front, and about seventy feet deep—the house quite new
Peter Kuhn & son, auc'rs.

Kensington Property.
On Tuesday evening, the 20th April, at half past 7 o'clock, at the Merchant's Coffee House,
 **The Frame House, Kitchen** and lot or piece of ground, situate on the east side of Cherry Street, between Prince and Queen Street, being 253 feet, 6 inches from Prince Street, at Kensington, containing in front or breadth on said Cherry street, twenty feet, and in length or depth running parallel with Prince Street, one hundred and eighty feet.
The house has been newly painted. A pump at the door. Terms at sale.
Taylor & Wagner,
April 12—dts Auctioneers.

Figure 30. Left: Advertisement for a Frame House in Kensington. Published on January 17, 1812 in the *Democratic Press*. Figure 31. Right: Advertisement for a Frame House in Kensington. Published on April 14, 1819 in the *Franklin Gazette*.

Utility and the standards it derived influenced the form, scale, size, and styles used in the construction of wooden houses. By 1830, the ubiquitous red brick two-and-one-half story vernacular Georgian style house with a central dormer was perhaps the most fashionable building type used by developers in Kensington. Yet wooden houses continued to be built. The following description from the Philadelphia newspaper *The North American and Daily Advertiser* shows that by 1845 frame dwellings were still being constructed, though making up a smaller percentage than in earlier years.

Kensington—In this District a large number of buildings have been put up without permits having been taken out; the new buildings erected during the past season will number at least 160 three story brick dwellings and stores, 2 churches and 20 frame dwellings, &c., altogether about 182.³⁷

In 1844, there were 183 buildings constructed in Kensington, but the specific number of wooden buildings was not referenced.³⁸ One can suspect that it was a smaller percentage than in years past, as reflected in the 1845 statistic. After the Civil War, the construction of frame dwellings was not unknown, but, even in Kensington, new houses were likely to be masonry.

³⁷ "Growth of Philadelphia," *The North American and Daily Advertiser*, 8 January 1845, 1.

³⁸ "Philadelphia," *The North American and Daily Advertiser*, 5 October 1844, 1.

CONCLUSION

Representing both the development and the economic, social and historical heritage of Fishtown and the larger Kensington neighborhood, the Joseph Langer Building is one in a small collection of early nineteenth century wooden houses east of Girard Avenue, above Frankford. While fewer and fewer survive, frame houses were once a dominant house type in the neighborhood, and throughout Philadelphia. The house type is also commonly associated with the early development of the city and were home to many of its maritime and working-class citizens. In fact, at one time there were so many wooden houses in the older waterfront neighborhoods that an ordinance was passed prohibiting new frame buildings in 1796. Roughly a century ago there were 436 wooden houses standing east of Girard Avenue; less than 50 survive today, and the subject property appears to be among the oldest in that group.³⁹ Architectural historian Bernard L. Herman, comments on the rarity of surviving wooden houses in an urban context in his book, *Town House, Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780–1830*:

The houses that survive tend overwhelmingly to be of brick construction. Their frame counterparts largely disappeared from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries, when they were pulled down and replaced with larger, less combustible brick residences.⁴⁰

The Joseph Langer Building is representative of the half-gambrel, “flounder” type within the context of frame dwelling that was once prominent in the neighborhood and beyond. The subject property appears to retain its original massing and form; its original fenestration; and original cladding in some places beneath the various siding campaigns. The subject building is an important specimen of its type, satisfying Criterion J.

³⁹ This statistic is based a review of Pictometry with comparisons to the historic atlases of Philadelphia. In the last nomination submitted for a wooden house east of I-95, there were 54 wooden houses standing; now only 48.

⁴⁰ Bernard L. Herman, *Town House, Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780–1830* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 108–109.

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Contributors.

This nomination was submitted by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia. The document was authored by Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist with assistance from J.M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian; Ken Milano, Historian; and Kelly Wiles, Architectural Historian.

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 Historical Society of Pennsylvania,
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APPENDIX A
ESTATE OF JOSEPH LANGER, DECEASED
ORPHAN'S COURT OF PHILADELPHIA
APRIL 21, 1832

To the Honorable the Judges of the Orphan Court
for the City and County of Philadelphia -

The Petition of Barbara Ann Lan-
ger and Conrad Kacrahn, Administrators to
the Estate of Joseph Langer late of Kenting-
ton in said County deceased - Respectfully
represents -

That the said Intestate died
on or about the beginning of March A. D. 1831.
That the Personal property of said intestate is
insufficient for the payment of his debts as by
the account herewith produced appears: And
that the said intestate died living in his
demeure or of part of and in All that Certain
Two story Brick Messuage and Lot or Piece
of Ground ~~situate on the~~ ^{belonging} marked
in the plan of Lots of Jacob Meares deceased
No. 17 Situate on the North Eastwardly Side of
Shackamaxon Street in Kensington in the County
of Philadelphia, beginning at a Stake on the
Side of said Shackamaxon Street a corner of Lot
marked in the aforesaid Plan No. 16. granted
to William Conyer, thence Northwardly by
said Conyer ground One Hundred and fifty
two feet two inches and three quarters of an inch
to a fifteen feet wide Alley thence North
Westwardly by the said Alley twenty feet to
other ground of John Christopher Seyferheld
being Lot marked in said Plan No. 18. thence
South Westwardly by said Lot No. 18 One hun-
dred and fifty feet six inches and three quar-
ters of an inch to Shackamaxon Street aforesaid
and thence by the said Shackamaxon Street South
Eastwardly twenty feet to the place of beginning.
Being the same Lot or Piece of ground which
Henry Shroeder and Maria Magdalena his wife
by Indenture dated the fifteenth day of July
Ann Domini Eighteen hundred and twenty (Recorded
in Deed Book G. W. R. No. 34 page 341 & 2)

Comas Karscher one of the administrators about
nearly being duly sworn says that the account here
is correct, as well as the statement of debts due
by said Indians, so far as they have come to the
knowledge of said defendant, are just and true. As
the rest of his knowledge and belief—
Given me May 14th 1832
Edw. Clapfield
Jus. Peace

Mrs & J. Sargent in form of Natl. Bank	\$500.00
To do do do	200.00
Judgment with interest due to St. Paul	1166.32
Bills due Samuel Ellick	12.50
do - do Ritten & Pilling	47.04
do - Magawell	2.72
do - Elizabeth Bentons	11.20
do - Frederick Mearns	134.37
do - John Weaver	317.83
do - Mr. L. H.	258.92
do - Robt Sherry Boardman	175.18
to Caroline Patterson	6.00
Craig Holmes & Co	149.05
M. New Bremen	4.35
Jas. McKim	9.75
Saml. Hamblett Balance about	100.00
M. Reed Hen	7.18
Abraham Cummings & balance on Aug 4 th	110.00
Mrs. Briggs	20.35
Pavement via State	268.30
Joseph Longm via	231.84
Daniel Williams	7.87
Elizabeth Nunn	3.99
Adriegen	2.88
M. Asplecker	5.10
Alexander Lewis	8.40
Elizabeth Alderman	7.7
James H. Boshorn	10.78
John Kempker	15.00
Quigley	24.77
G. Hall	90.75
Mrs. Gardner	3.13
Maria Kelly	5.17
Mary Goldy	3.74
R. Tramer	12.55
Elizabeth Fritts	13.24
C. Shaw	4.34
The bank tells making all:	
Total	

Balance in hands $\$389\frac{1}{2}$
 Leaving deficit about $\$2012.38$
 $\$1883.62$