

**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: 1232 Chestnut Street

Postal code: 19107

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: DeLong Building

Current/Common Name: DeLong Building

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Building

Structure

Site

Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition:  excellent  good  fair  poor  ruins

Occupancy:  occupied  vacant  under construction  unknown

Current use: First floor retail; apartments on upper floors

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

*Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.*

**6. DESCRIPTION**

*Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.*

**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

*Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.*

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1900 to 1910

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1900

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Amos W. Barnes

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: \_\_\_\_\_

Original owner: Frank E. and Charles F. DeLong

Other significant persons: \_\_\_\_\_

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*Please attach a bibliography.*

**9. NOMINATOR**

Organization Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia Date November 15, 2021

Name with Title Kevin McMahon, volunteer Email patrick@preservationalliance.com

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

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19103

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 15 November 2021

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 7 December 2021

Date of Notice Issuance: 17 December 2021

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: REALKORE 1232CHESTNUT LLC

Address: 240 CENTRAL PARK SOUTH, 2-D

City: NEW YORK State: NY Postal Code: 10019

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 19 January 2022

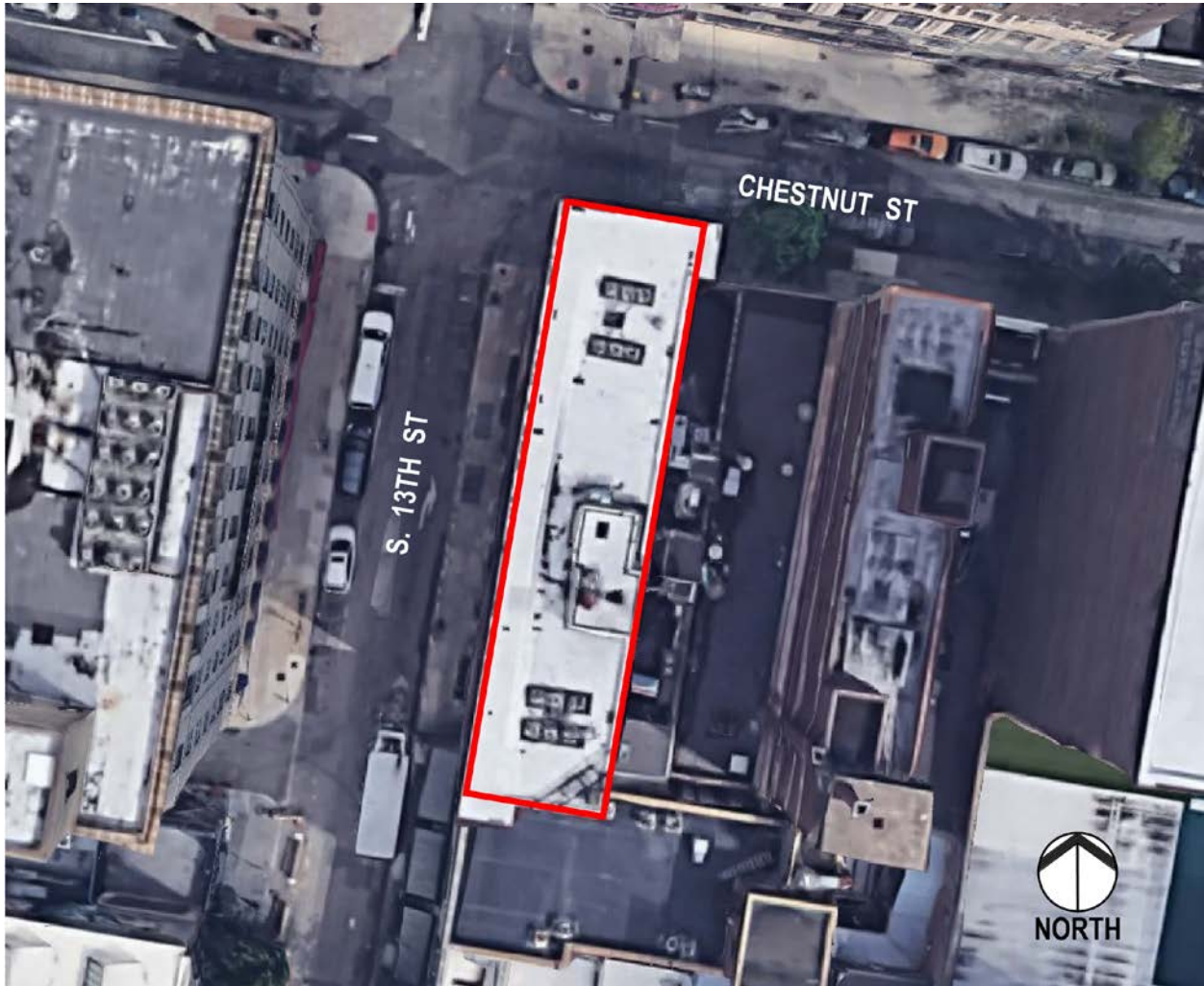
Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 11 February 2022

Date of Final Action: 11 February 2022

Designated  Rejected

### 5. Boundary Description

All that ground bounded by a line beginning 17 feet south and 17 feet east of the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Streets, thence 100 feet 6 inches south to a point, thence 21 feet east to a point, thence 100 feet 6 inches north to a point, thence 21 feet west along Chestnut street to the beginning.



**Boundary Map** showing 1232 Chestnut Street (Google Maps imagery, 2021).

## 6. Description

The DeLong Building is a seven-story, Commercial Style (or Chicago School) building at the southeast corner of South 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Chestnut Street in Center City Philadelphia. Designed by architect-engineer Amos W. Barnes and built in 1899-1900, the building is characterized by its prominent stacked bay windows, Pompeian brick façade, large cornice, and its highly ornamented iron fire escape on the 13<sup>th</sup> Street side.



**Photo 1** (left) – View of the building looking southeast from 13<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut (Kevin McMahon, November 2021).

**Photo 2** (right) – View of the building looking northeast from 13<sup>th</sup> Street (Kevin McMahon, November 2021).

The ground floor contains a series of modern, aluminum-framed storefront windows punctuated by painted masonry piers on both the Chestnut Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street sides. The storefronts along 13<sup>th</sup> Street currently contain canvas awnings. The center bay on the 13<sup>th</sup> Street side contains the main entrance, consisting of a modern, aluminum-framed glass door with side lights and a single-light arched transom. The entrance is topped by painted stone architrave molding with a keystone at the top of the arch.

On the Chestnut Street side, the second through sixth floors contain a stack of three-sided bay windows clad in painted pressed metal. The bay windows, each of which contains a fixed, single-light window in the center and 1-over-1, double-hung windows on the sides, are framed by terra cotta quoins and capped by a painted metal cornice. Above the bay windows, the seventh floor contains a large, three-part arched window framed by terra cotta voussoirs and topped by a prominent corbel keystone. Flanking the seventh floor window are two circular terra cotta medallions with a shield motif. The top of the building is capped by a large, painted metal cornice.

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places  
DeLong Building, 1232 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA

On the Thirteenth Street side, there are four additional stacks of bay windows, which are identical to the one on the Chestnut Street side. The bay windows alternate with three bays of paired 1-over-1, double-hung windows with terra cotta sills and lintels. As on the Chestnut Street side, the seventh floor contains a large, three-part arched window above the bay windows. The other three bays on the seventh floor contain pairs of 1-over-1, double-hung windows with arched heads rather than the rectangular heads on the lower floors. The cornice from the Chestnut Street side continues down Thirteenth Street.

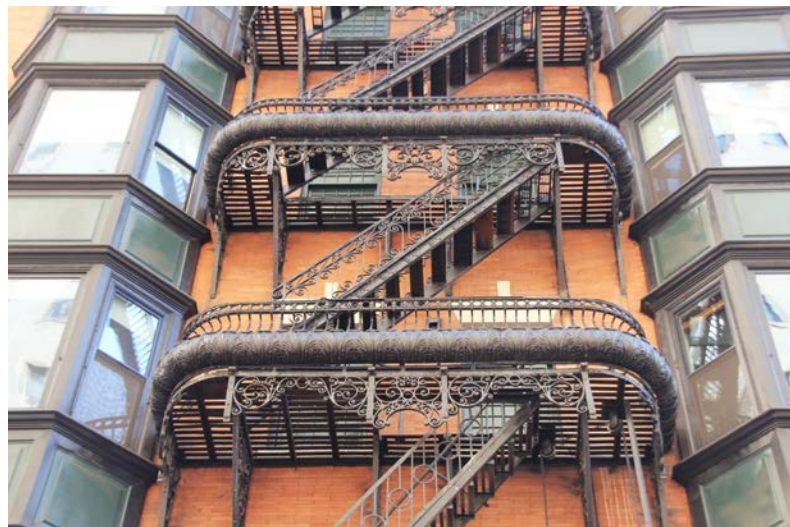


**Photo 3** – Close-up detail of the cornice, windows and ornamentation at the northwest corner of the sixth and seventh floors, looking southeast from 13<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut (Kevin McMahon, November 2021).

One of the building's most unique features is the ornate wrought and cast iron fire escape found in the center bay on the Thirteenth Street side. The fire escape, which features an elaborate, florid design, appears to have been added to the building sometime before 1910.



**Photo 4** (left) – View of the fire escape on the west elevation, looking northeast from 13<sup>th</sup> Street (Kevin McMahon, November 2021).



**Photo 5** (right) – Close-up detail of the fire escape, looking east from 13<sup>th</sup> Street (Kevin McMahon, November 2021).

## 7. Significance

The DeLong Building was designed by architect-engineer Amos W. Barnes and built in 1900 as a speculative office venture for inventor and manufacturer Frank E. DeLong. The building is significant under Criteria C and D as an important Philadelphia example of the commercial aesthetic popularized in Chicago by architects such as William Le Baron Jenney, Burnham & Company, Louis Sullivan and others beginning in the 1880s. Popularly known as the Commercial Style, but also referred to as the Chicago School, this form of tall building construction prioritized the honest expression of structure over superficial ornamentation, creating a uniquely American look that rejected slavish imitation of historical styles.

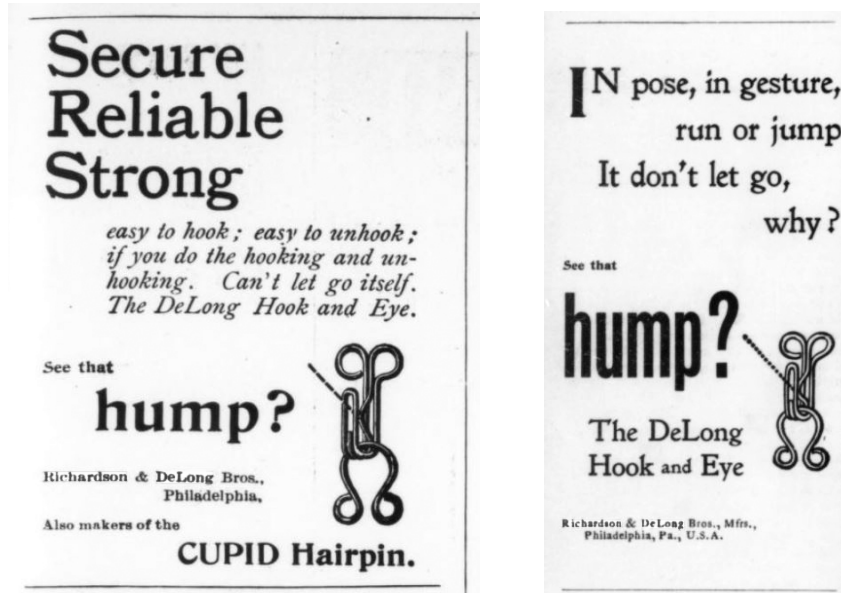
### CRITERION C

Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

### CRITERION D

Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering Specimen.

The DeLong Building was built by inventor and entrepreneur Frank E. DeLong (1864-1939), partner in the manufacturing firm of Richardson & DeLong. In 1890, DeLong invented a new version of the hook-and-eye closure, a simple method of fastening garments that is still in use today (Figs. 1 and 2). Although variations of the hook-and-eye closure had been in use for decades, the DeLongs' addition of a hump in the wire hook prevented the eye from slipping out, making it a much more reliable implement for use in apparel. This simple but effective device, which became popular both in the United States and internationally, brought DeLong and his brother, Charles F. DeLong (1862-1899), great wealth. The DeLongs also developed as many as 75 other types of metal clasps, snaps and hooks for use in apparel, as well as hair pins.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1** (left) – Advertisement for the DeLong Hook and Eye in *Life*, July 23, 1896.

**Figure 2** (right) – Advertisement for the DeLong Hook and Eye in *Vogue*, September 1, 1898.

<sup>1</sup> "Frank E. DeLong Dies While Vacationing at Palm Beach, Florida," *The Danville Morning News*, February 16, 1939.

Taking advantage of their growing fortune, the DeLong brothers pursued a number of real estate investments beginning in the 1890s. At the end of December 1896, the pair acquired 1232 Chestnut Street, which at that time contained a four-story commercial building that likely dated to the mid-to late-nineteenth century (Fig. 3).<sup>2</sup> Located in what was then the commercial heart of the city – retailers of all types lined Chestnut Street, and large banks were increasingly building new high-rise towers on adjacent South Broad Street – the property presented a prime opportunity for development. Initially, in July 1899, the DeLongs planned simply to expand the existing building by adding stories and to undertake other alterations to convert the building into offices.<sup>3</sup> Just a few months later, however, a brand new six-story building was proposed, and by December of that year, the project was expanded to seven stories.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 3** – 1232 Chestnut Street as it appeared in the *Baxter Panoramic Business Directory*, Baxter & Neff, 1879-1880 (Athenaeum of Philadelphia).

Although the original building permit is not currently available, reporting by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Times* indicated that architect-engineer Amos W. Barnes designed the DeLong Building.<sup>5</sup> Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1867, Amos Warren Barnes was educated in engineering at New York University, graduating in 1885. Barnes initially worked for a civil engineer in Hoboken, New Jersey, and later as an engineer for several railroad and transit companies in Brooklyn and as far west as Chicago. In 1889, he moved back east to the Philadelphia area, briefly working in the Bridge and Construction Department of the Pencoyd Iron Works.

<sup>2</sup> *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide (PRERBG)*, January 6, 1897, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *PRERBG*, July 26, 1899, p. 477.

<sup>4</sup> *PRERBG*, October 11, 1899, p. 652, and November 8, 1899, p. 725. Also "Real Estate News," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 7, 1899.

<sup>5</sup> "Real Estate News," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 1, 1899; "Real Estate News," *The Times*, November 1, 1899. Some sources, including the National Register Nomination for the East Center City Commercial Historic District, have incorrectly identified Horace Trumbauer as the architect of the DeLong Building. Other sources have cited Ballinger & Perrot as the designers. Although Ballinger & Perrot do appear to have performed some later work on the building – a photograph of the building is found in the Ballinger Collection at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia – it does not appear that Ballinger & Perrot were the architects hired by DeLong (the firm was not founded until 1901).

Barnes opened his own engineering practice in 1893, and from 1896 to 1899 served as a structural engineer for the City of Philadelphia's Bureau of Building Inspection.<sup>6</sup>

Barnes resigned from the Bureau of Building Inspection in August 1899, citing the fact that he would earn more money in private practice than as a building inspector.<sup>7</sup> By early September Barnes had opened his new office at 904 Walnut Street. One of Barnes' first commissions were the "extensive alterations, additions and improvements" to the vestry of St. Stevens' Protestant Episcopal Church on Terrace Street in Manayunk.<sup>8</sup> Barnes would go on to design a number of religious, commercial and residential projects in and around Manayunk and Roxborough, where he lived. He also became known as a designer of industrial buildings, reflecting, as Sandra Tatman writes, the dichotomy of his career as both an engineer and architect.<sup>9</sup>

The apparent connections made by Barnes with local builders and property owners during his time as a building inspector served him well, for he quickly won a number of large commissions. Reported on just days before the construction of the DeLong Building was announced, Barnes' work on a new three-story commercial building at 4364 Main Street in Manayunk was announced.<sup>10</sup> At three stories the new building at 4364 Main Street was smaller than the DeLong Building, but it was comparable in its use of Pompeian brick and simplified Classical motifs, making it a first in a line of commissions executed in a similar architectural vocabulary (Fig. 4).



**Figure 4** – 4364 Main Street in Manayunk (Google Maps, 2018).

Up to the time Barnes designed the DeLong Building in 1899, commercial architecture in Philadelphia and other American cities was firmly rooted in historical precedents. Downtown streets in areas like Center City were lined with often highly ornamented fronts in the Gothic, Italianate, Second Empire, and Romanesque Revival styles, among others. As early as the 1880s, however, the look of the American city began to gradually change. With the increasing value of land and the parallel concentration of business interests in the urban core, ever taller buildings were required.

<sup>6</sup> Sandra L. Tatman, entry for Amos W. Barnes in "Philadelphia Architects and Buildings:" [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/22300](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/22300).

<sup>7</sup> "More Money Outside: Engineer Barnes Will Leave Building Bureau on September 10," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 24, 1899.

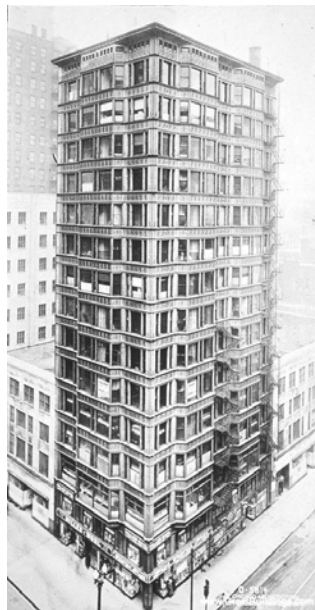
<sup>8</sup> "Real Estate News," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 12, 1899.

<sup>9</sup> Tatman.

<sup>10</sup> *PRERBG*, November 1, 1899, p. 699. Today, this address is officially 4356-60 Main Street in the city records.



Taking advantage of concurrent developments in structural steel, a group of Chicago architects began to explore a simpler expression of form not then possible using traditional load-bearing masonry construction. In examples like the Home Insurance Building in Chicago, designed by William Le Baron Jenney and built in 1883; the Reliance Building in Chicago, designed by John Root of Burnham & Root and built 1890-95; and the Guaranty Building in Buffalo, designed by Chicago architect Louis Sullivan and built in 1896, the so-called “Chicago School” of architects began to explore the metal skeleton as a framework for building high-rise towers (Figs. 5-7). Such a skeleton allowed the exterior masonry to “hang” from the side of the steel structure, eliminating the need for heavy, load-bearing walls and dramatically increasing the proportion of glass to masonry. This new technology, in the words of architect and writer Scott Murray, “allowed, even obligated architects to reconsider the essential character of the exterior wall.”<sup>11</sup> Architects like those in Chicago gradually rejected the slavish imitation of historical forms and ornamentation, allowing the look of tall buildings to be defined primarily by the structure within. As seen in Figs. 5-7 and 10-12, the level of exterior ornamentation varied among the works produced by these architects; above all, the new commercial aesthetic, especially in mature examples like the Reliance and Guaranty Buildings, was defined by its emphasis on verticality derived from a simple Classical arrangement of base, shaft, and capital.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 5** (left) – Home Insurance Building around 1900 (University of Illinois Chicago).

**Figure 6** (middle) – Reliance Building around 1900 (University of Illinois Chicago).

**Figure 7** (right) – Guaranty Building shortly after construction (Buffalo and Erie County Public Library).

There are several notable parallels between these developments in Chicago, which Amos Barnes probably viewed firsthand during his time there in the late 1880s, and Barnes’ design for the DeLong Building in Philadelphia. While the DeLong Building features some superficial, Renaissance-inflected ornamentation, primarily in the form of terra cotta quoins and medallions and a prominent cornice, these elements are secondary to a composition that otherwise prioritizes

<sup>11</sup> Scott Murray, *Contemporary Curtain Wall Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), 11.

<sup>12</sup> Leland M. Roth discusses the development of the Chicago School at length in *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003), 267-274.

function, transparency of use, and a more honest expression of structure. Barnes began his career, after all, as an engineer, and a tendency to favor structure over form may have come natural to him. In September 1897, while still a building inspector, Barnes presented a paper entitled “Bracing in High Buildings” to a conference of the International Association of Building Inspectors in Detroit.<sup>13</sup> This paper, which was also published in *Architecture and Building* the following February, provides no guidance on the appearance of tall buildings, but nonetheless demonstrates that Barnes was thinking about their structural possibilities.<sup>14</sup>

The DeLong Building’s large, repetitive bay windows are most indicative of the building’s structural steel skeleton, demonstrating that a significant portion of the building envelope is not masonry (Figs. 8 and 9). By the definition of architectural historian Marcus Whiffen, “the character of [Commercial Style] facades derives from the fenestration, to which any ornament – often there is none – is altogether subordinate.”<sup>15</sup> In fact, the stacked bay windows of the DeLong Building, continuous from the second through sixth floors, help to create a sense of verticality and an undulating surface that are perhaps the building’s most defining characteristics.



**Figure 8** (left) – The DeLong Building as photographed for Moses King’s *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians*, published in 1902. The fire escape has not yet been added in this view.

**Figure 9** (right) – The DeLong Building as it appeared around 1910, from the Ballinger Collection at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. The completed fire escape is visible in this view.

<sup>13</sup> “Took a New Name,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 16, 1897.

<sup>14</sup> Amos W. Barnes, “Bracing in High Buildings,” *Architecture and Building*, February 12, 1898, p. 59-60.

<sup>15</sup> Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, third printing, 1993), 183.

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places  
DeLong Building, 1232 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA

The use of the stacked bay window as a façade’s primary organizational and visual feature was briefly popular in American cities during the 1890s and early 1900s. The most influential examples in Chicago are the Reliance Building, discussed above, as well as the Tacoma Building, designed by Holabird & Roche and in 1887-89; the Fisher Building, designed by Burnham & Company in 1895-96; and the Chicago Savings Bank Building, designed by Holabird & Roche in 1904 (Figs. 10-12). In Philadelphia, the DeLong Building is one of the few “tall” buildings built in this way. The most prominent Philadelphia example is, of course, the sixteen-story Land Title Building at Broad and Chestnut Streets, designed by Burnham & Company and built 1897-98 (Fig. 13). Horace Trumbauer’s Bellevue Court Building at 1418 Walnut Street, built 1913-14, is another excellent example (Fig. 14).



**Figure 10** (left) – Tacoma Building in c. 1905 (New York Public Library).



**Figure 11** (right) – Fisher Building around 1900 (Art Institute of Chicago).



**Figure 12** – Chicago Savings Bank Building (*Inland Architect and News Record*, July 1905).

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places  
DeLong Building, 1232 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA



**Figure 13** – The Land Title Building in Philadelphia, shortly after its completion (British Library). In 1901, Horace Trumbauer designed a large addition to the south.

**Figure 14** – The Bellevue Court Building, 1418 Walnut Street (Kevin McMahon, July 2021).

The major exception to the DeLong Building's relatively simple treatment is its highly ornate cast and wrought-iron fire escape in the center of the 13<sup>th</sup> Street side. Early photos of the building, which do not show the fire escape, suggest that this was a later, pre-1910 addition that may not have been part of Barnes' original design (Figs. 8 and 9). The intricate, florid design of the fire escape is perhaps more evocative of the lavish Beaux Arts style, which was also popular in the United States around the turn of the twentieth century. Although unusually intricate against the comparatively simple backdrop of the DeLong Building, the fire escape is perhaps the most ornate of its kind remaining in Center City Philadelphia and is, therefore, one of the building's most significant and eye-catching features.

Following the DeLong Building, Barnes won a number of large commissions in Center City. Stylistically and compositionally, the closest comparable to the DeLong Building is located just a half block south, at the northwest corner of 13<sup>th</sup> and Sansom Streets (Fig. 15). In 1904, Barnes designed this six-story retail and office building, which is slightly narrower and shorter than the DeLong Building, and is stripped of all but the most basic ornamental features. In this example, the masonry surfaces are greatly minimized, and the bay window again dominates.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *PRERBG*, November 30, 1904, p. 777.

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places  
DeLong Building, 1232 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA



**Figure 15** – Northwest corner of 13<sup>th</sup> and Sansom Streets (Kevin McMahon, November 2021).

Barnes was also hired to design a six-story apartment house at 22<sup>nd</sup> and Ludlow Streets in 1902 and a 10-story apartment house at Broad and Pine Streets in 1904.<sup>17</sup> Neither was built and the designs for both buildings appear to be lost, so it is not possible to know whether Barnes attempted to further explore in these projects the design principles that characterize the DeLong Building. Most of Barnes' other commissions were more modestly scaled commercial buildings, and in a continued demonstration of his versatility as a designer, he continued to pursue industrial and ecclesiastical work throughout his career. Outliers both in terms of building type and level of ornamentation include two major theatre projects, including the original Forrest Theatre at Broad and Sansom Streets, a project shared with Marshall & Fox of Chicago and completed in 1906; and the Plays and Players Theatre at 1714 Delancey Place, which was built in 1911.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> *PRERBG*, July 2, 1902, p. 423; *PRERBG*, February 2, 1904, p. 115.

<sup>18</sup> *PRERBG*, April 4, 1906, p. 209; June 13, 1906, p. 374; and Joseph P. Barker, "Plays and Players Theatre," National Register Nomination Form, 1972.

## 8. Major Bibliographic References

Barnes, Amos W. "Bracing in High Buildings." *Architecture and Building*, February 12, 1898.

Handlin, David P. *American Architecture*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2004.

Murray, Scott. *Contemporary Curtain Wall Architecture*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009.

Roth, Leland M. *American Architecture: A History*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003.

Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, third printing, 1993.

Newspapers and Periodicals (see footnotes for specific citations):

*The Danville Morning News*

*Detroit Free Press*

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

*Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide (PRERBG)*

*The Times*

**Preparer's Statement:** This nomination was prepared by Kevin McMahon as an individual volunteer for the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia. It is solely the work of Mr. McMahon and was not initiated or sponsored by his employer, Powers & Company, Inc.