

NOMINATION OF PUBLIC INTERIOR PORTION OF BUILDING OR STRUCTURE

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: 1424-1426 Chestnut Street

Postal code: 19102

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Jacob Reed's Sons' Store, Main Sales Floor

Current/Common Name: _____

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building Interior

☐ Structure Interior

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☒ excellent ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins
Occupancy: ☐ occupied ☒ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown
Current use: _____

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach an interior plan with the boundary marked and written description of the boundary.

6. DESCRIPTION

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

7. INVENTORY OF FEATURES AND FIXTURES

Please attach an inventory of all features including fixtures with their locations within the public interior portion indicated on architectural plans and/or annotated photographs (keyed to the plans).

8. SIGNIFICANCE

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

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1905 to 1983

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1913, 1985, 1995

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: William Lightfoot Price (architect)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: _____

Original owner: Alan H. Reed

Other significant persons: Henry Chapman Mercer (tile maker), Gertrude Monaghan (artist)

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.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

10. NOMINATOR

Organization Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia Date February 7, 2022

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

Street Address 1608 Walnut Street 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: February 7, 2022

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: February 22, 2022

Date of Notice Issuance: February 24, 2022

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Sunny Spring LLC

Address: PO Box 294

City: Fort Washington State: PA Postal Code: 19034

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: April 20, 2022

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: May 13, 2022

Date of Final Action: May 13, 2022. Designated under Criteria C, D, E, F.

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected 12/7/18

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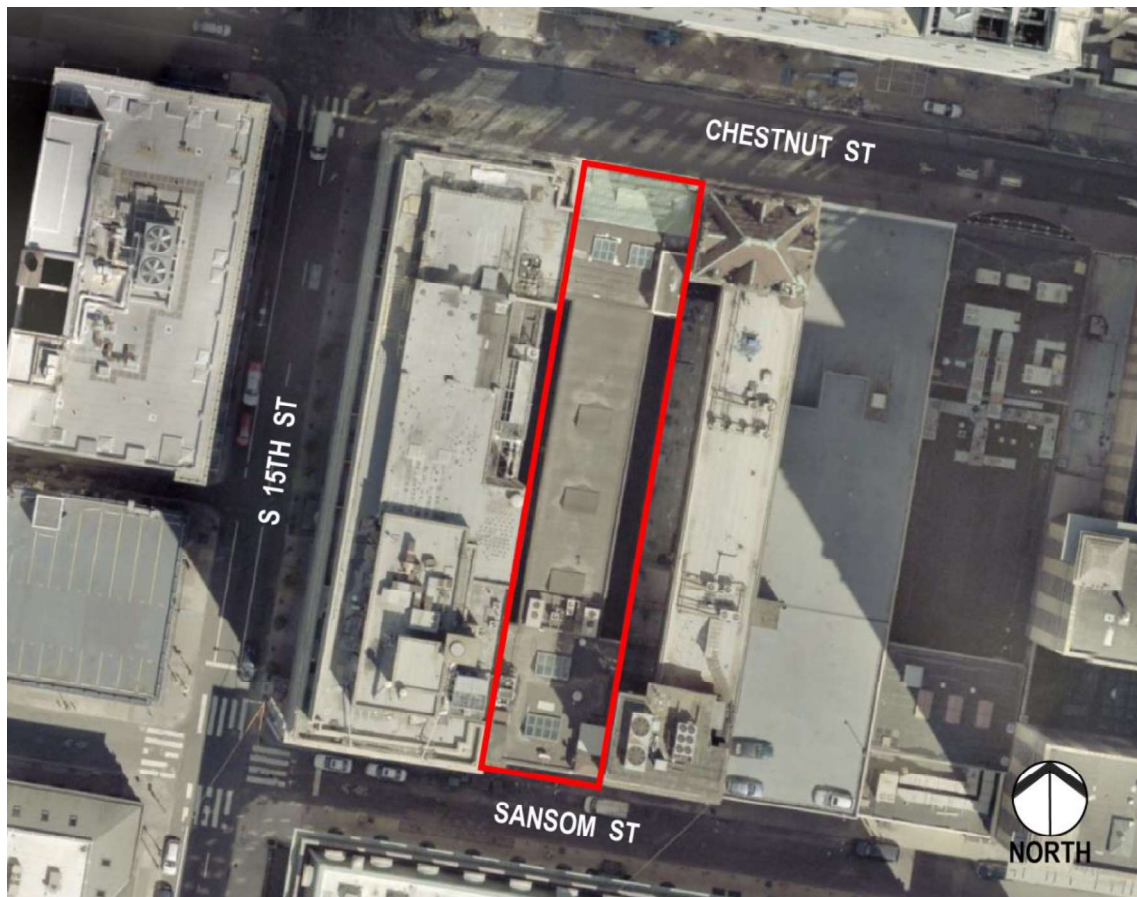
5. Boundary Description

All that lot or piece of ground in the 8th Ward of the City of Philadelphia and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with the buildings and improvements thereon erected.

SITUATE on the South side of Chestnut Street (sixty feet wide) at the distance of seventy-two feet Eastward from the East side of 15th Street.

CONTAINING in front of breadth on the said Chestnut Street, fifty feet and extending in length or depth Southward two hundred and thirty feet to the North side of Sansom Street.

OPA No.: 883422000



Boundary Map showing 1424-26 Chestnut Street (Pictometry, 2020).

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6. Description

The Jacob Reed's Sons' Store, Main Sales Floor, was designed by architect William L. Price and built 1904-05. The space occupies most of the first floor of the building at 1424-26 Chestnut Street. Except where noted on the attached floor plan and where described below, the vast majority of this area has been publicly accessible as a retail space with few interruptions from its opening in 1905 until October 2021, when the most recent tenant, a CVS Pharmacy, closed. Prior to the tenancy of CVS, which began in 1995, the space was operated as a bookstore by Barnes & Noble from 1985 to 1995 and as a men's clothier by Jacob Reed's Sons' from 1905 to 1983. The building was successfully nominated to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1966, protecting the exterior only.



Figure 1 – Overall view of Main Sales Floor, looking south (October 2021). All photos were taken by the author, Kevin McMahon, unless otherwise noted. Refer to the plans in Figure 20 for photo locations.

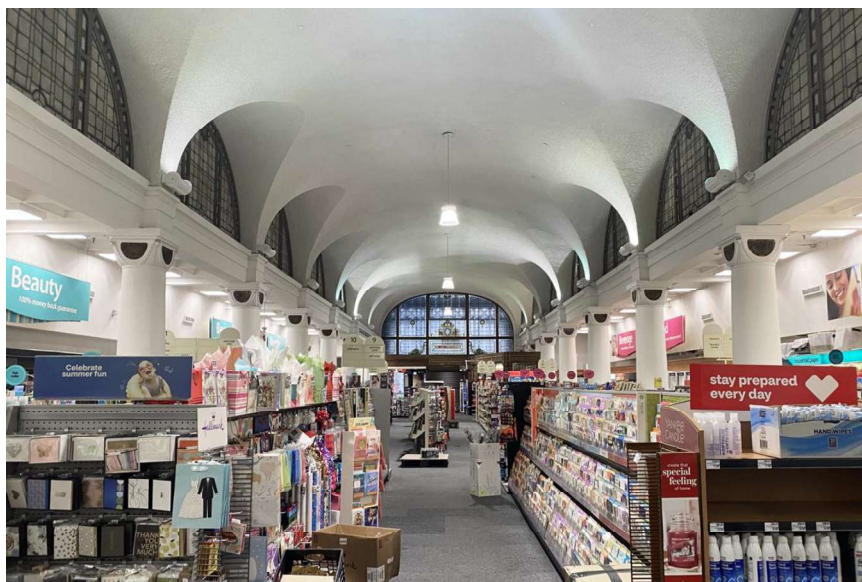


Figure 2 – Overall view of Main Sales Floor, looking north.

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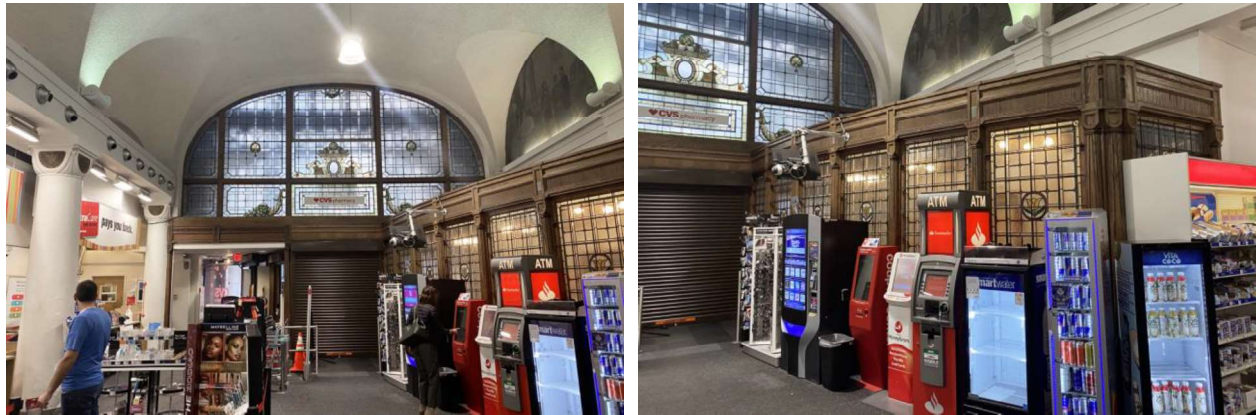


Figure 3— North end of the Main Sales Floor, looking north (October 2021).

Figure 4 – Non-historic wood and stained glass partition installed during the 1980s adjacent to the Main Sales Floor entrance (October 2021).

The Main Sales Floor is entered from the north, off of Chestnut Street. There is a revolving door in the center bay (located behind the roll-down metal door seen in Figure 3). A secondary swinging glass door is located to the west of the revolving door, and during the last few months of the CVS tenancy was the only entrance used. A second swinging glass door is located to the east of the revolving door and provides access to what is now the elevator lobby for the offices on the upper floors. This lobby space, which was not accessible at the time of survey, is separated from the Main Sales floor by a wood and stained glass partition (Figure 4). This partition is not a historic feature and appears to have been added during the 1980s to separate the retail and office functions. Historically, the entire building was occupied by Jacob Reed's Sons, therefore no separation was needed until offices were installed in the upper floors.

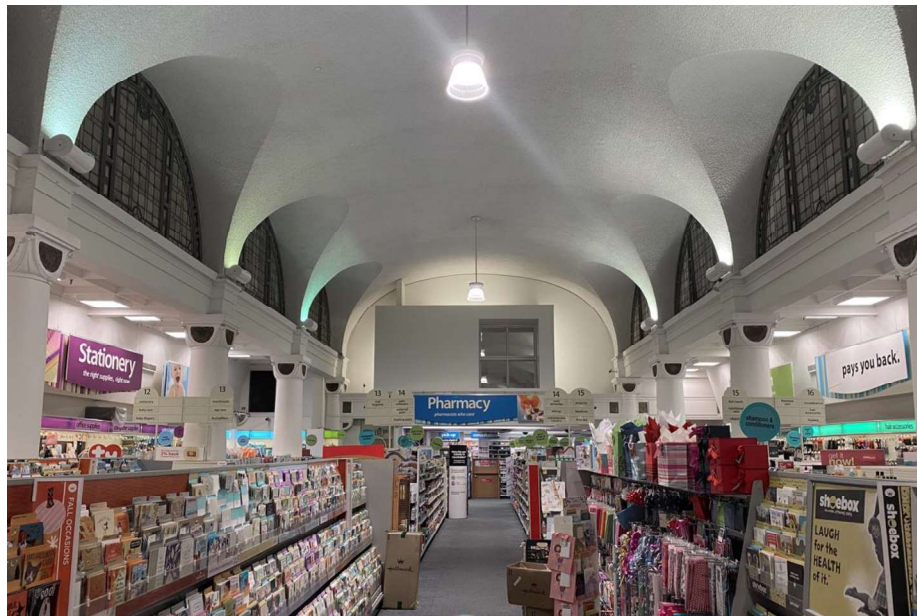


Figure 5 – South end of the Main Sales Floor, looking south to the pharmacy and mezzanine level.

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Historically, the Main Sales Floor extended to the south elevation, where a large arched window in stained glass served as a focal point (see Figures 19 and 27). Although the window remains and is visible from Sansom Street, it is not currently visible within the public interior portion of the building. In the 1990s, the space south of column line 11 was partitioned off to create a pharmacy area for CVS. The space is partially visible from the pharmacy counter, but is not accessible to the public. There is a mezzanine space above the pharmacy that most recently served as an employee breakroom and prior to that as the music section of the Barnes & Noble Bookstore. Built in 1913 and designed by Price to create additional salesroom space, the north face of the mezzanine contained a concrete frieze inlaid with Mercer tile details that is similar to the treatments Price designed in 1903. The mezzanine also contained an iron railing and central stair as shown in original drawings in the collection of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Although the concrete frieze that crosses the space at column line 11 remains, including the Mercer tile details, the iron railing and stair were removed in recent decades. It is unknown whether Barnes & Noble or CVS undertook this work. Above the concrete frieze at column line 11, there is now a solid wall with a window overlooking the Main Sales Floor from what is now the employee breakroom. This wall was likely added in or around 1995, when CVS took over the space.



Figure 5a – South end of the Main Sales floor, looking south to the original mezzanine level, under which the pharmacy was located. The concrete frieze located behind the blue pharmacy sign is the lower edge of the mezzanine that was installed in 1913. The original inlaid Mercer tile details also remain, although the original iron mezzanine railing and the central stair leading up to the mezzanine were removed in recent decades.

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Figures 6 and 7 – Typical column capitals inlaid with Mercer tiles.

The capitals of the columns between the central nave and side aisles are inlaid with polychrome ceramic tiles with floral motifs (Figures 6 and 7) produced by Henry Chapman Mercer's Moravian Pottery in Doylestown, Pennsylvania (Moravian tiles also appear in abundance on the front façade of the building, which has already been designated).

Between column lines 1 and 3, the two lunettes on the east side of the vaulted ceiling contain semi-circular murals painted by Philadelphia-trained and -based artist Gertrude Monaghan (1887-1962) sometime during the late 1910s (Figure 9). The two lunettes opposite (on the west side) are open, but there are two additional semi-circular murals by Monaghan located behind the open lunettes on the party wall (Figure 8). The subject matter of the murals, which appear to be painted on canvas and applied to the wall surface, is the history of American fashion from the Colonial period to the late 1910s. Each mural depicts a grouping of men and women in period appropriate attire representing 1) the Colonial period; 2) the Federal era; 3) the Civil War era; and 4) the present day or late 1910s (Figures 9, 10, 12, 13). The murals appear to be in fair condition and require the attention of an art conservator.

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Figure 8 – View of west wall, columns 1-3 (right to left) showing the location of Murals 1 and 2.



Figure 9 – Mural 1: Colonial Era.



Figure 10 – Mural 2: Federal Era.

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Figure 11 – View of east wall, columns 1-3 (left to right) showing the location of Murals 3 and 4.



Figure 12 – Mural 3: Civil War Era (October 2021). Gertrude Monaghan's signature appears at the lower lefthand corner of this mural.



Figure 13 – Mural 4: Modern Era (October 2021).

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South of column line 3 (to column line 11, where the pharmacy begins), the lunettes along both sides of the vaulted ceiling contain semi-circular stained glass windows with horizontal-pivoting panels in the center of each window (Figures 14 and 15). The stained glass windows do not receive natural light; rather, they are illuminated from behind by electric lamps located in false lightwells.



Figure 14 – Mural 4: Modern Era (October 2021).



Figure 15 – Mural 4: Modern Era (October 2021).

The false lightwells also historically provided light to the skylights above the side aisles (Figure 16). The skylights are wood-framed and are three panels wide, although drywall bulkheads partially cover the skylights on both sides. The bulkheads were likely installed in the 1980s as a means of concealing utilities such as mechanical, electrical and/or plumbing lines. The glass in the skylight panels that remain visible has been painted, therefore light is no longer transmitted through them.

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Figure 16 – Typical side aisle skylights (October 2021). At far left, a drywall bulkhead conceals a third row of skylight panels, a condition which is mirrored on the opposite side of the space.

The Main Sales Floor survives with a high degree of integrity, having undergone very few major alterations since its completion in 1905. As described above, William L. Price designed a mezzanine at the south end of the space in 1913. The space below the mezzanine was used as a pharmacy by CVS from 1995 until 2021, and the mezzanine itself, which is now enclosed on the north end, served as an employee break room during that time. Due to the fact that the pharmacy area and mezzanine have not been publicly accessible for decades, they are excluded from the nomination. If in the future it is discovered that these areas also exist largely intact, this nomination could be amended to include them. Other than the mezzanine modifications, the only other notable change has been the installation of the elevator lobby partition adjacent to the main entrance in the 1980s; this partition, built of wood and featuring stained glass, was compatibly designed to fit the aesthetic of the space. Otherwise, only cosmetic and reversible changes, including the installation of carpeting, store fixtures, and lighting, have taken place.

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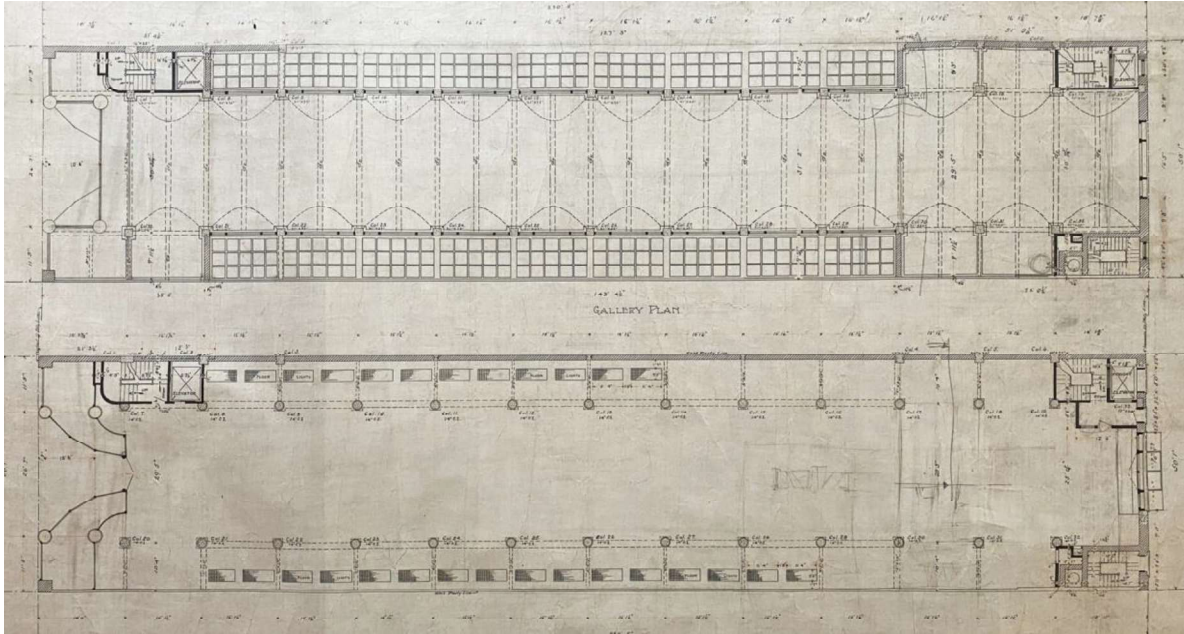


Figure 17 – Floor plan (bottom) and reflected ceiling plan (top) by William L. Price, 1904 (Athenaeum of Philadelphia). See Figure 20 for enlarged plans redrawn by the author for this nomination.

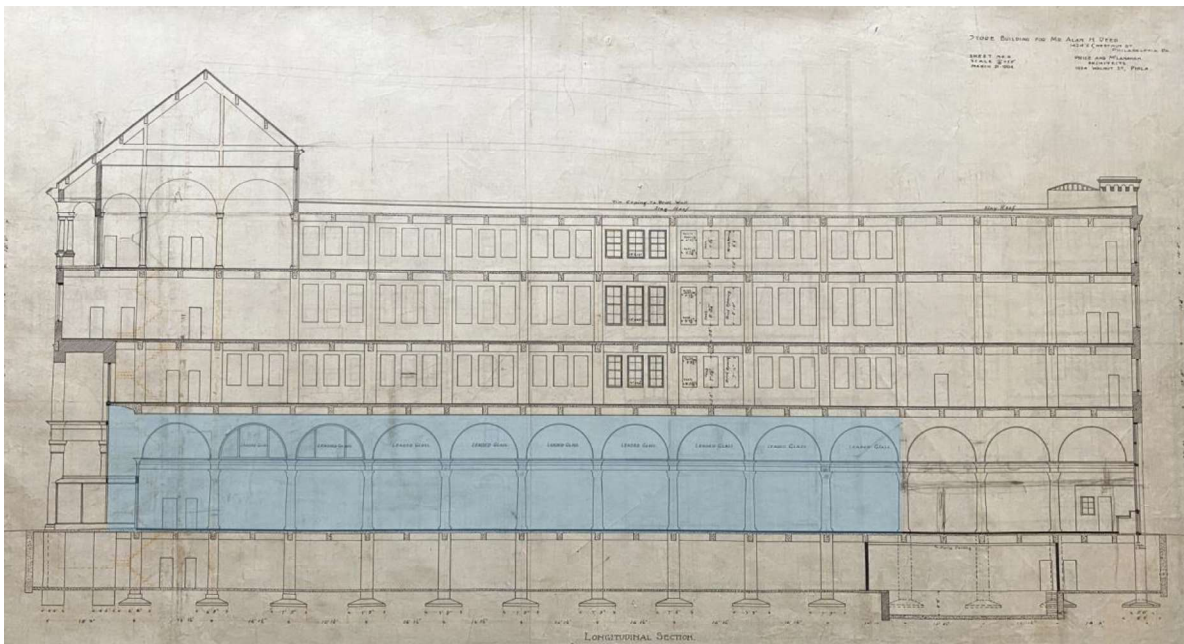


Figure 18 – Section, looking east, by William L. Price, 1904 (Athenaeum of Philadelphia). The volume of the publicly accessible portion of the Main Sales Floor is highlighted in blue.

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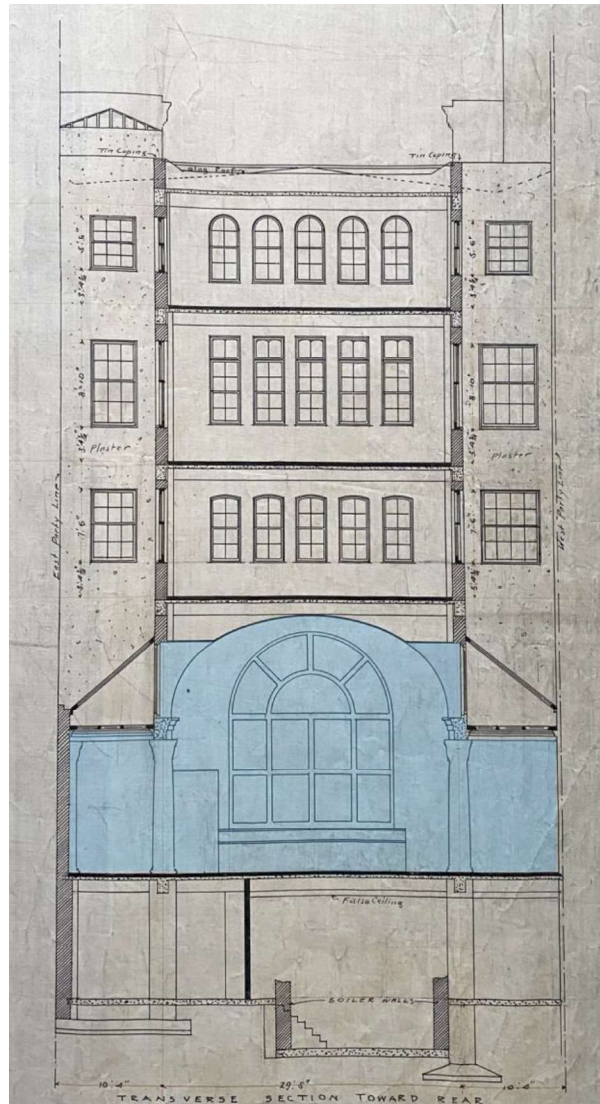


Figure 19 – Section, looking south, by William L. Price, 1904 (Athenaeum of Philadelphia). The volume of the publicly accessible portion of the Main Sales Floor is highlighted in blue.

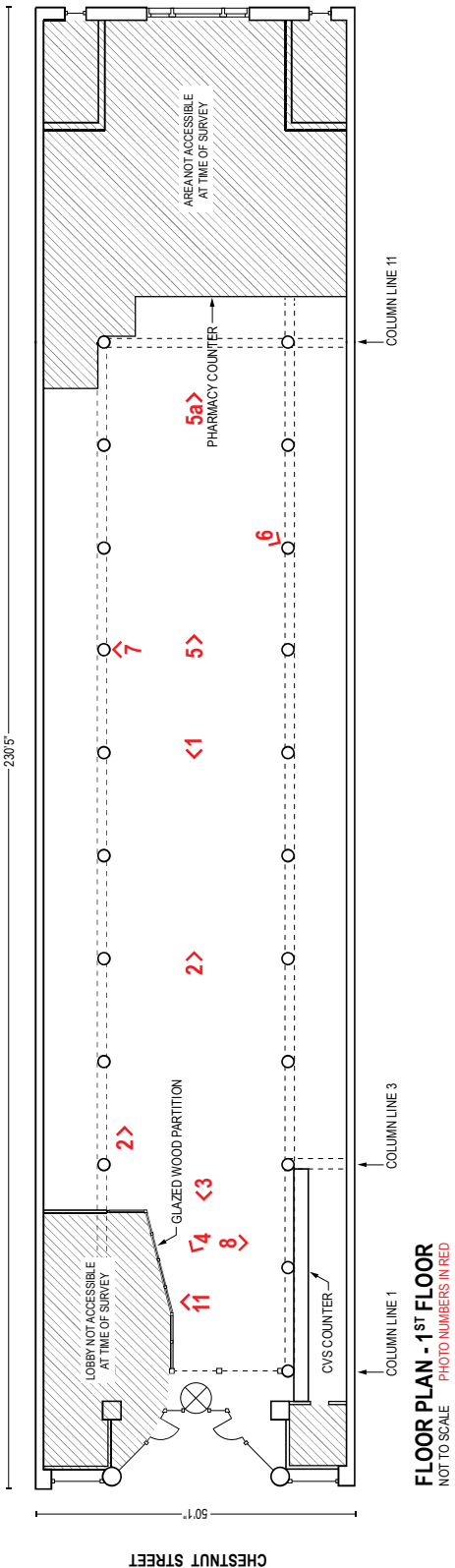
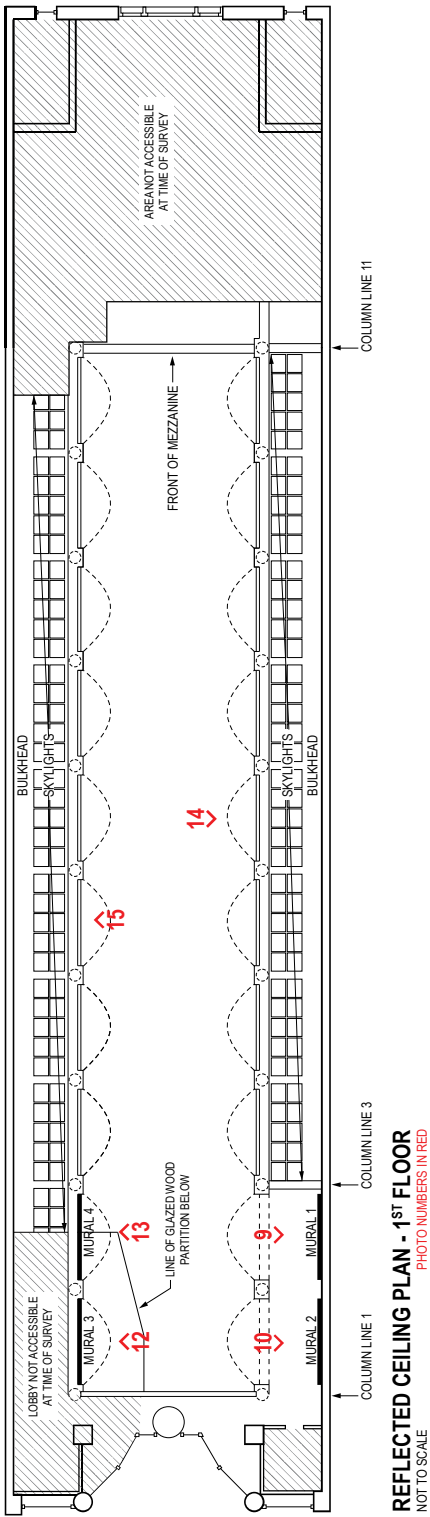


Figure 20

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7. Inventory of Features and Finishes

Contributing

1. Concrete vaulted ceiling
2. Concrete columns
3. Stained glass window above the main entrance (except the panel with the CVS logo)
4. Mercer tiles embedded in column capitals
5. Murals (four semi-circular murals on canvas by Gertrude Monaghan)
6. Stained glass lunette windows
7. Skylights in side aisle ceilings

Non-contributing

- a. Wood and stained glass lobby partition
- b. Mezzanine level (except for the concrete frieze with Mercer tiles)
- c. Carpeting
- d. All retail-related display fixtures and signage
- e. All light fixtures

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8. Significance

The Jacob Reed's Sons' Store, Main Sales Floor, is the primary public interior space in this landmark building designed by William L. Price for Alan H. Reed, successor to one of the most prominent menswear merchants of the nineteenth century in Philadelphia. Completed between 1904 and 1905, the store was the first commercial building in Philadelphia constructed of reinforced concrete, a structural system which is most evidently expressed not by the building's façade, but by the public interior space of the Main Sales Floor. The Main Sales Floor is also the only major Arts and Crafts-style commercial interior in Philadelphia, serving as a significant early example of Price's widely influential ideas on the appropriate expression of materials, structure, and labor. The space features expert craftsmanship and artistry in the form of tilework from Henry Chapman Mercer's Moravian Pottery and murals by local artist Gertrude Monaghan, which reflect and reinforce Price's thinking on architecture and its relationship with ornamentation.

The Main Sales Floor is an architecturally significant public interior space which merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places by satisfying the following criteria as established in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance §14-1004 (1):

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.

CRITERION 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

CRITERION F

Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.

Merchant Jacob Reed founded his "wholesale clothing establishment" in Philadelphia in 1824. First located at 246 Market Street, which was then between 7th and 8th Streets using pre-1857 address numbering, the store specialized in men's custom tailoring. By mid-century, however, the store had pivoted, becoming "well known to Philadelphians" for its "large stock of ready-to-wear clothing" for men, which was "kept on hand to supply the ever-increasing demand for this class of goods." Reed also became a major supplier of uniforms to the Army, Navy, and military schools and colleges located in and around Philadelphia. Earning a reputation for high quality and individualized care, but also fairness and transparency in pricing, Reed's store became one of the favored specialty menswear suppliers to middle-class and wealthy Philadelphians, experiencing rapid growth throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Reflecting its growing prosperity, Jacob Reed moved the store several times to ever larger quarters. In 1877, Reed passed the business on to his three sons, Edward, Alan, and George, at which point it became known as Jacob Reed's Sons' Store. Toward the end of the century, as the city's fashionable retail district

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was shifting westward, the sons finally made the jump west of Broad Street, relocating in 1896 to a large, four-story building at 1412-14 Chestnut Street. In 1903, as the volume of business continued to grow, Alan H. Reed, the only surviving brother, acquired the property at 1424-26 Chestnut Street and started to plan the building that we know today.¹

To design the new Jacob Reed's Sons' Store, Alan H. Reed hired Philadelphia architect William Lightfoot Price of the firm of Price & McLanahan. Born in 1861 and educated at the Quaker Westtown School in Chester County, Price began his architectural career in 1878 when he entered the firm of Addison Hutton, later working briefly for Furness & Evans. In 1881, Price and his brother, Frank Price, opened their own office, which became well-known for its residential work for real estate developers Wendell & Smith in suburban Wayne, Pennsylvania, and in Overbrook Farms. The brothers' partnership lasted until the mid-1890s, although William L. Price continued to design large houses along the Main Line, including Alan H. Reed's own house, known as Car-Alan in Wayne in 1898-99. In 1903 William L. Price joined up with M. Hawley McLanahan (1865-1929) to found the office of Price & McLanahan.²

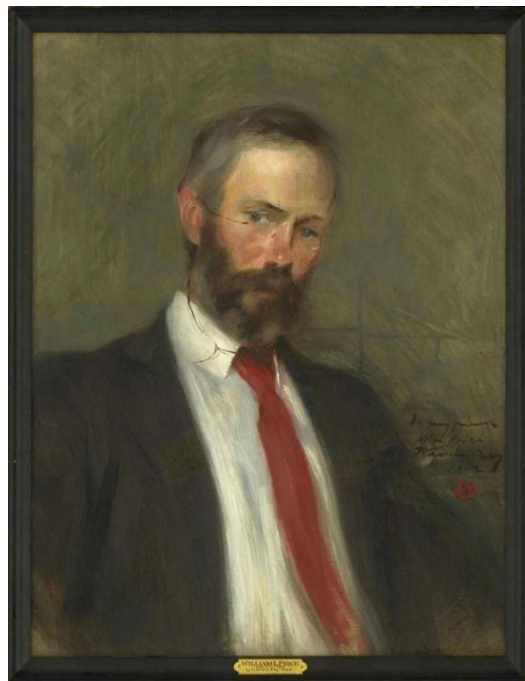


Figure 21 – Portrait of William L. Price, painted in 1902 by Francis Day (on loan to the Athenaeum of Philadelphia by Eleanor Morris Potter and Felicia Janney Mather).

Although most of Price's nineteenth-century residential work was firmly rooted in the architectural sources of the past – his design for Reed's own home in Wayne is a quintessential Jacobean Revival-style work – after the turn of the century he began to formulate new ideas about the relationship between structure, function, and form. Price sought an appropriate architectural expression of relatively new building materials, especially concrete, and of the uses a particular building was meant to contain. In the words of architectural historian George E. Thomas, an expert on Price who

¹ "One Hundred Years Ago: Jacob Reed's Sons, Founded 1824," (Philadelphia: Jacob Reed's Sons, Inc., 1924).

² Sandra L. Tatman, entry for William Lightfoot Price in "Philadelphia Architects and Buildings:"
https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/26265

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has written extensively on his work and ideas, Price's "approach to the form of a building [was] as a manifestation of the various activities that took place within, modified and articulated by the underlying skeleton and decorated with materials related to the construction process."³ These ideas would lead to the development of a uniquely American architecture that was largely free of historical associations. In Thomas's view it was an architecture made possible only in the industrial milieu of Philadelphia, where rational thought dominated and innovation was prized.⁴

Price's new ideas were strongly influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement, which Price experienced firsthand during a trip to England in 1896. Concerned with the detrimental effects that mechanization had wrought on the decorative arts, reformers, chief among them John Ruskin and William Morris, sought a return to traditional handcrafts and artistry. To Price, the preindustrial villages of rural England that he encountered during his 1896 trip were a perfect embodiment of the Arts and Crafts philosophy of architecture. The "charming" and "beautiful" white cottages that Price saw in such places represented a more honest, egalitarian, and regional approach to building that had been lost when mass production began to dominate architecture and the decorative arts during the nineteenth century.⁵ This was a type of architecture influenced by its surroundings and locally available materials rather than academic historical styles understood only by the educated elite.⁶

In the years following his return to Philadelphia, Price sought to create a southeastern Pennsylvanian version of this craft-based approach to design and construction in Rose Valley, Pennsylvania, where in 1901 he founded the Rose Valley Association. Located on 80 acres outside Media, Price led an effort there to develop a utopian artists' village based on the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement.

From 1901 until about 1910, when the Rose Valley Association failed as a business venture, Price and others designed numerous cottages and houses in this new community. These modest buildings typically had fieldstone foundations and stucco walls with broad surfaces and simplified details, and in their basic forms were evocative of vernacular building traditions (Figure 22). Employing common, locally sourced materials was key to Price's vision for Rose Valley and for architecture more broadly.⁷ In the words of Price himself, "You will find where local material was used, there is the architecture that is significant, that has some real character," or in other words an architecture that is an honest expression of the environment and surroundings in which it is based.⁸ With the Rose Valley houses, and in other residential projects completed after 1900, Price took the first steps toward creating, in the words of Thomas, "an inclusive contemporary architecture, one that gave pleasure even to those who lacked the classical learning required by the historical revival styles."⁹

³ George E. Thomas, entry for Jacob Reed's Sons in *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976).

⁴ George E. Thomas, *William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to Modern Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), 9-10.

⁵ William L. Price, "A Philadelphia Architect's Views on Architecture," *The American Architect and Building News* (October 24, 1903), 27-28.

⁶ Elizabeth Tighe Sippel, "The Improvement Company Houses, Rose Valley, PA: The Democratic Vision of William L. Price," M.S. thesis (University of Pennsylvania, 1995), 18.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ William L. Price, "Modern Architecture," *The Artsman* (April 1907), 266.

⁹ Thomas, *William L. Price*, 11.

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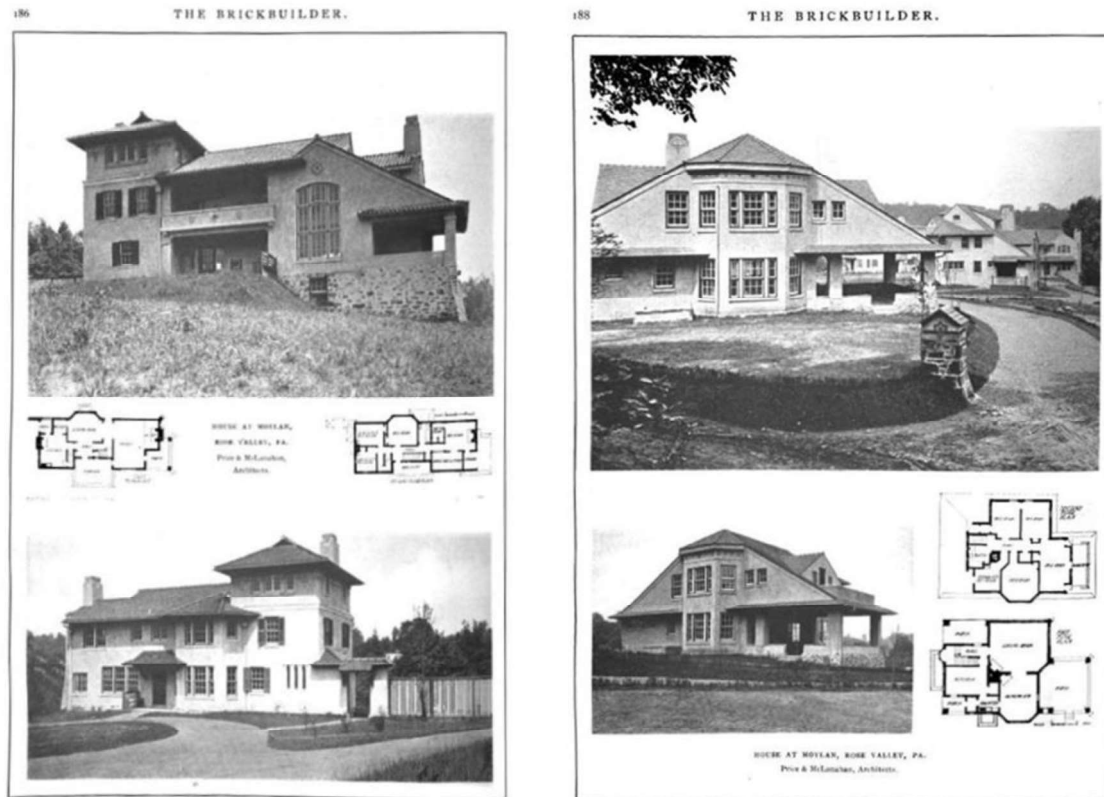


Figure 22 – Rose Valley houses designed by Price & McLanahan, as illustrated in the September 1911 edition of *The Brickbuilder*.

Applying his new ideas about craft and honesty of structure to relatively small houses was one thing, but for Price to adapt them to a major commercial building like Jacob Reed's Sons' Store was an altogether different challenge. For one, materials like fieldstone and stucco did not translate to a large building in a downtown environment. In later and much larger projects, including the Blenheim Hotel (1905-06) and Traymore Hotel (1906/1914-15), both in Atlantic City, as well as the Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Terminal (1914-18) in Chicago, Price would successfully adapt his concepts to the emerging technology of reinforced concrete (Figures 23 and 24). By employing a universally available building material, Price eventually was able to broadcast his vision more widely across the United States. In the Atlantic City and Chicago projects, Price approached concrete the same way he approached stucco in his residential work, emphasizing mass and the sculptural qualities of the material while limiting additive detail. In these three iconic works, among others completed across the eastern half of the United States during the 1900s and 1910s, Price “evoked the character of the modern age in forms that became the basis of modern American style before 1930,” or in other words the Art Deco style.¹⁰ Although the Reed store was, too, constructed of reinforced concrete – it was the first non-industrial building in Philadelphia to employ the material – this fact was not as obvious from an exterior perspective as it would be in Price's later projects.

¹⁰ Thomas, *William L. Price*, 29.

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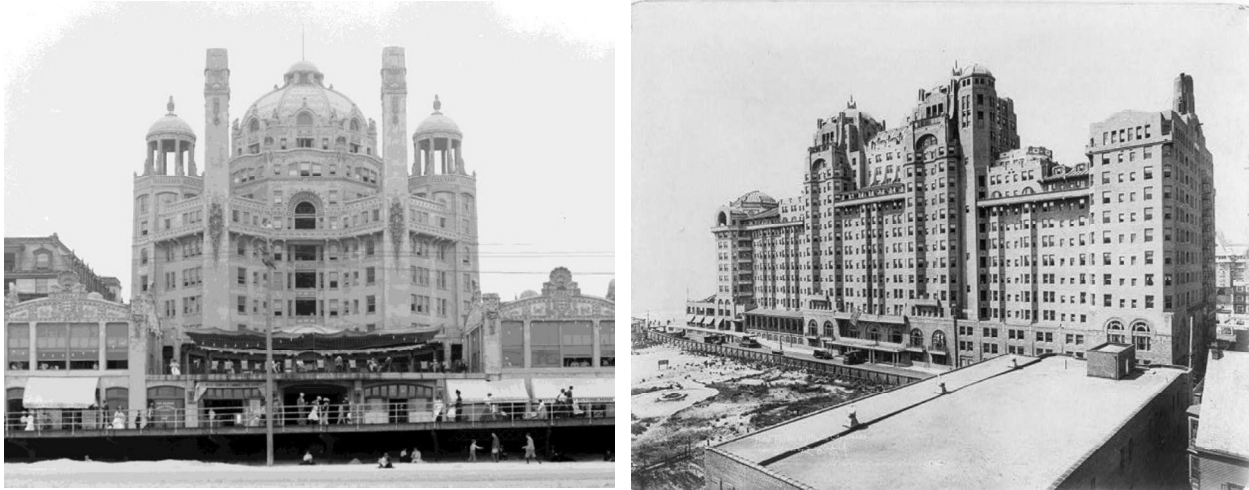


Figure 23 – The Blenheim and Traymore hotels, Atlantic City, New Jersey in the early twentieth century (Library of Congress).



Figure 24 – Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Terminal, Chicago, Illinois, pictured in the 1920s (Art Institute of Chicago).

In fact, at first glance the exterior of the Reed store appears to be based on historical stylistic sources (Figure 25). While the Palladian archway that comprises the lower half of the front facade is dramatically enlarged, drawing attention to the sales floors directly behind and suggesting a transparency of function, it is a historical motif and is not derived from the building's concrete structure. Price's Arts and Crafts inclinations are implied through the use of Mercer tiles in the intrados of the Palladian archway as well as the eaves and soffit, tiles which were specially made to depict garment industry crafts such as weaving and sewing. But the upper half of the building, which features an arcaded loggia, takes on the form of a Italian Renaissance palazzo, not exactly suggestive of the innovative concrete structure that is hidden behind a skin of reddish brown brick. For these reasons Thomas calls the building one of Price's "transitional" works, one that is "only partially successful in integrating formal composition with the expression of structure."¹¹

¹¹ Thomas, *Three Centuries of American Art*.

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Figure 25 – Jacob Reed's Sons' Store, front façade, looking south, from the September 9, 1905 edition of *The American Architect and Building News*.

As Thomas suggests, the real significance of the Reed store lies in the interior space of the Main Sales Floor (Figures 26 and 27).¹² Rather than conceal the building's reinforced concrete structure with superficial detail – such as, for example, a scagliola finish on the columns or decorative plasterwork at the ceiling – the concrete, except for a coat of paint, was left entirely bare. While the spatial arrangement and interior volume are traditional in nature, taking on a Classical form with a basilica-like plan and vaulted ceiling, the frank and honest display of a modern material like concrete was completely innovative. Likewise, the simple design of the columns lining the central space, which, rather than displaying the architect's knowledge of the Classical orders are given abstracted, sculptural capitals, was entirely new. Apart from their simplified shape, the capitals are a major demonstration of Price's thinking on ornamentation, in this case the use of a handcrafted and compatible material embedded into the surface: polychrome clay tiles from Henry Chapman Mercer's Moravian Pottery. As discussed in greater detail below, the tilework embodies Price's effort, widely employed in later projects, to fuse additive detail and surface to create a more unified type of ornamentation.

¹² Thomas, *Three Centuries of American Art*; Thomas, *William L. Price*, 122-125.

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Figure 26 – Interior of the Main Sales Floor as pictured in the June 1905 edition of *Cement Age*.

The Main Sales Floor was devoted to men's clothing, furnishings and hats and, as its architectural treatment suggests, was the principal interior space in Jacob Reed's Sons' Store. The second floor contained the children's department with "tables for full dress and black goods" as well as a shirt factory; the third floor featured the military, livery, custom, and automobile garment departments; and the whole of the fourth floor was devoted to offices and the manufacturing of clothing.¹³ Although the second and third floors also had public spaces, only the Main Sales Floor has been continually accessible by the public (except for brief periods between tenants). It is also by far the most architecturally distinctive space being the only floor with a vaulted ceiling, columns, and murals. For these reasons, and because the upper floors have been used as private offices for several decades, this nomination is limited to the Main Sales Floor on the first level of the building. If in the future it is discovered that these areas also exist largely intact, this nomination could be amended to include them.

¹³ A description of the interior uses is found in "Jacob Reed's Sons," *Men's Wear* (April 7, 1905), 111.

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Figure 27 – Interior of the Main Sales Floor as pictured in the April 1905 edition of *Men's Wear*.

On its completion in 1905, the architectural and decorative achievements of the new Reed store were widely reported by the American architectural press as well as leading concrete and apparel industry publications. In its May 6, 1905 edition, *The American Architect and Building News* published a number of plates with reproductions of the plans, sections, and elevations that Price drew for building, drawings which today are found in the collection of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. In *The Cement Age* the building was hailed for its “real artistic merit” and its “light and graceful interior,” with its Mercer tile mosaics providing a “color effect exceedingly rich and pleasing.”¹⁴ And *Men's Wear* called the interior lighting of the main sales floor a “unique feature” that provides illumination on a dark afternoon with the electric light penetrating the skylights and stained glass clerestory windows “as readily as sunlight.”¹⁵

The significance of the interior space of the Main Sales floor lies primarily in its influence on Price's later projects in Atlantic City and Chicago, as well as other major works for the Pennsylvania Railroad in Indianapolis and Fort Wayne, Indiana, and a large resort hotel in Miami, Florida. While not obvious from the exterior, in the interior space of the Main Sales Floor, Price explored for the first time how his vision for a uniquely American architectural style could be applied toward a large, urban commercial building. The Reed store was also Price's first opportunity to employ reinforced concrete, a material that would define his work for the remainder of his relatively short career, which ended with his death in 1916. Although Price is not as widely known today as contemporaries like Frank Lloyd Wright, his work was highly influential during the early twentieth century and was the basis for the bold forms and simplified ornamentation of the national style that became known as Art Deco.

¹⁴ “The Reed Building,” *Cement Age* (June 1905), 23.

¹⁵ “Jacob Reed's Sons,” *Men's Wear* (April 7, 1905), 111.

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Tilework in the Main Sales Floor

One of the primary decorative features of the Main Sales Floor is the mosaic tilework produced by Henry Chapman Mercer's Moravian Pottery. Founded by archaeologist and collector Henry Chapman Mercer in 1898, the Moravian Pottery grew out of Mercer's deep interest in early American society and his devotion to the Arts and Crafts Movement. Convinced, like William L. Price, that industrialization and mass production had negatively impacted the arts, Mercer apprenticed himself to a Pennsylvania-German potter in Bucks County in the 1890s in an effort to revive an early Pennsylvanian handcraft. With folk-based designs and an essential handmade quality, the tiles produced at the works of the Moravian Pottery outside Doylestown, Pennsylvania became a prized decorative feature in buildings throughout the region by the turn of the twentieth century. The tiles can be found today in many Philadelphia-area buildings, especially on floors and fireplaces in private homes. Mercer directed the tile works until his death in 1930.¹⁶

To William L. Price, Mercer's Arts and Crafts philosophy and commitment to high-quality, handcrafted pottery made the Moravian Pottery an ideal supplier for the mosaic tilework at Jacob Reed's Sons' Store. With designs supplied by Price himself, the Moravian Pottery produced thousands of tiles for the Reed Store between 1904 and 1905, and again in 1913 when the mezzanine level was constructed. In the interior space of the Main Sales Floor, the mosaics are primarily found on the column capitals, where Price designed floral motifs in four basic colors, including blue, red, yellow and green. Mercer tiles are also found in the intrados of the Palladian archway on the front facade, and high up toward the eaves. In both locations, there are mosaic vignettes illustrating traditional garment crafts such as weaving and sewing.

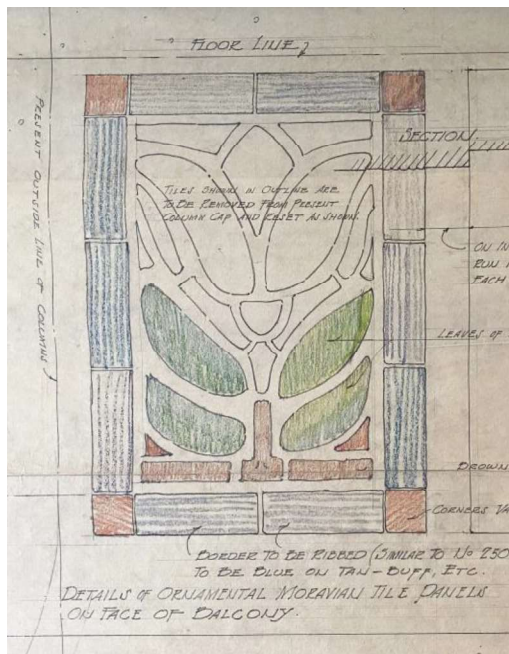


Figure 28 (left) – Sketch of mosaic for the new mezzanine, by William L. Price, 1913 (Athenaeum of Philadelphia).

Figure 29 (right) – View of mezzanine tilework (October 2021).

¹⁶ Cleota Reed, *Henry Chapman Mercer and the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987).

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Writing in *Brickbuilder* in 1911, Price decried the way that his contemporaries had applied ornamentation to their buildings. Searching “vainly among the cloying refinements of our large modern buildings for some vestige of self expression, some vital spirit,” Price largely found architects who were “hampered by the traditions and fetters of the renaissance [sic.],” and “are still using the old details and the old motifs of decoration in an utterly inappropriate medium and without a reasonable relation to the life of to-day.”¹⁷ In an effort to create a more relevant, harmonious form of ornamentation expressive of the modern age and a modern material like concrete, Price believed decorative features should be *of the surface*. Writing more specifically of clay tiles, Price posited that:

If a closely allied material which can be reasonably embedded in the wall surface be used in such a way as to seem a part of that surface, there can be no objection to such use of color for enrichment instead of modeled ornament; and burnt clay products which can be fashioned in innumerable forms and colors, glazed and unglazed, when so separated in design as to allow the wall surface to penetrate and tie it to that surface is an almost ideal form of wall decoration.¹⁸

Price had used clay tiles in a small way in earlier residential projects, embedding them in exterior stucco walls, but the Reed store marks his first major application of this decorative feature in a large commercial work. While the Mercer tile mosaics installed on the exterior of the building are significant in their own right – Price designed them to illustrate crafts involved in the garment production process – the interior tiles, which are embedded in the column capitals and the mezzanine, are much more representative of Price’s effort to unify ornamentation and surface. The use of embedded tiles in the concrete walls of later projects, such as the hotels he designed in Atlantic City, became a defining characteristic of Price’s work.

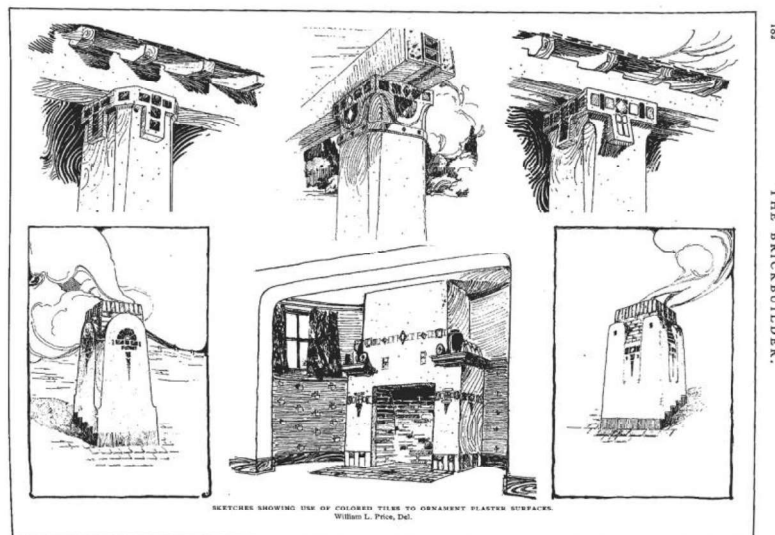


Figure 30 – Sketches of decorative tilework by William L. Price, from the September 1911 edition of *The Brickbuilder*.

¹⁷ William L. Price, “Decorative Treatment of Plaster Walls,” *The Brickbuilder* (September 1911), 181-184.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

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Murals in the Main Sales Floor

The four lunette-shaped murals at the north end of the main sales floor were painted by Philadelphia artist Gertrude Monaghan in 1918-1919. Born in 1887 in West Chester, Pennsylvania and raised as a Quaker, Monaghan, along with her sister, Hanna, devoted their lives from an early age to the very un-Quaker pursuit of art.¹⁹ Later in life, Hanna wrote of herself and her sister in her memoir that "Something happened in this Quaker household. A virus struck under the pseudonym of ART. How it entered this sanctuary and hit two who came from a long line of Quaker martyrs cannot be explained. Thereafter these two victims live for nothing but art."²⁰ These "eccentric" sisters were both educated at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA).²¹



Figure 31 – Gertrude Monaghan in the 1910s (Nantucket Historical Association).

By the early 1910s, Gertrude Monaghan had earned a reputation as an adept muralist, exhibiting works at Philadelphia's T-Square Club in 1910, at the Architectural League in New York City in 1916, and at PAFA from 1916 through 1918.²² It was at the 1918 PAFA exhibition that Monaghan presented the first of the four murals – this one representing the Colonial era – that she had recently completed for the Reed store. Painting in her studio in the Monaghan home at 3309 Baring Street

¹⁹ Angela Mazaris, "Evidence of Things Not Seen: Greater Light as Faith Manifested," *Historic Nantucket* (Nantucket Historical Society, Winter 2001), 5-9.

²⁰ Hanna Darlington Monaghan, *Greater Light on Nantucket* (Hill House, 1973).

²¹ Doug Ewbank, "Poweltonians of the Past: A Quirky Family in a Quirky House," *Powelton Post* (January 2010).

²² *The Sixteenth Annual Architectural Exhibition Philadelphia, 1910* (Philadelphia: T-Square Club, 1910); "The Exhibition of the Architectural League," *New York Times Magazine* (February 6, 1916), 21; *Catalogue of the Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture* (Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1918); *Who's Who in American Art*, vol. 9 (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1953), 431.

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in the Powelton Village neighborhood of Philadelphia, where the family had moved from West Chester around 1910, Gertrude Monaghan was primarily known for landscapes and worked with watercolor, tempera, and oil. The Reed murals, which were done in tempera, were one of Monaghan's first major commissions and "[occupied] her time almost exclusively for many months."²³

The circumstances surrounding Alan H. Reed's commissioning of Gertrude Monaghan to paint the four murals are unknown. As a prominent artist in the Philadelphia Quaker community, she may have been known to fellow Quaker William L. Price, who in turn may have recommended her to Alan H. Reed (Price, however, died in 1916, two years before Monaghan completed the first of the four murals). Whatever the reason, Monaghan's devotion to art and non-historical subject matter would have made her an appropriate choice to decorate the interior of the Reed store. Although Price's writings on decoration generally focused on the use of clay tiles as the ideal form of beautifying stucco, concrete and plaster surfaces, Price himself was a painter and sometimes integrated murals into his projects, such as the Traymore Hotel in Atlantic City. Monaghan's four murals, which depict the evolution of American fashion, also relate well to Price's efforts to create an architecture expressive of the modern age and relevant to the emerging mass culture. With their easily identifiable subject matter, Monaghan's murals would have been understood by virtually any shopper who entered the Reed store.

Following the completion of the Reed murals in 1919, Gertrude Monaghan became primarily associated with the thriving artists' colony of Nantucket where she moved with her sister Hanna in the 1920s at the suggestion of her friend and fellow artist, Violet Oakley. The sisters eventually, in 1929, purchased an old barn on the island, which became their summer home and studio, known as Greater Light, "in reference to the Quaker concept of the spirit that resides within each person, the 'inner light.'"²⁴ Greater Light remains intact today and is owned and operated as a museum by the Nantucket Historical Association.

²³ "The McDowell Colony in Wartime," *The Musical Courier* (September 19, 1918), 14-15.

²⁴ Mazaris, 7.

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