

NOMINATION OF HISTORIC DISTRICT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES SHOULD BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

1. NAME OF HISTORIC DISTRICT (CURRENT/HISTORIC)

4208-30 Chester Avenue Historic District

2. LOCATION

Please attach a map of Philadelphia locating the historic district.

Councilmanic District(s): ³

3. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a written description and map of the district boundaries.

4. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a written description and photographs of the built and natural environments/ characteristic streetscape of the district.

5. INVENTORY

Please attach an inventory of the district with an entry for every property. All street addresses must coincide with official Office of Property Assessment addresses.

Total number of properties in district: 12

Count buildings with multiple units as one.

Number of properties already on Register/percentage of total: 0 / 0%

Number of significant properties/percentage of total: 0 / 0%

Number of contributing properties/percentage of total: 12 / 100%

Number of non-contributing properties/percentage of total: 0 / 0%

6. SIGNIFICANCE

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

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1870 to 1872

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic district 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.

7. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

8. NOMINATOR

Organization University City Historical Society Date 18 March 2021

Name with Title Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian Email keeper@keepingphiladelphia.org

Street Address 1315 Walnut St. Suite 732 Telephone 717-602-5002

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19107

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 18 March 2021

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 10 January 2022

Date of Preliminary Eligibility: _____

Date of Notice Issuance: 13 January 2022

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 16 March 2022

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

Date of Final Action: 13 May 2022

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

NOMINATION

FOR THE

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Figure 1. Looking southeast at the 4200 block of Chester Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert.

4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
BUILT 1871-72
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

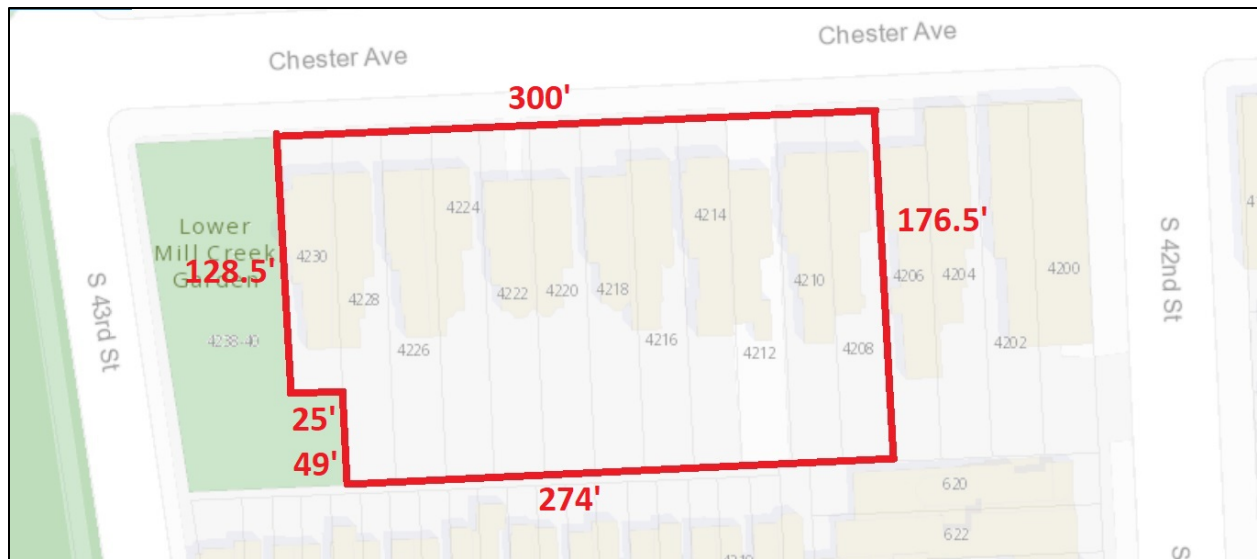


Figure 2. The boundary for the subject historic district is delineated in red.

3. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The proposed 4208-30 Chester Avenue Historic District is bound by Chester Avenue at the north, the easterly property line of 4208 Chester Avenue at the east, the rear property lines of the properties at the south, and the westerly property line of 4230 Chester Avenue at the west. The boundary description of the proposed historic district is as follows:

SITUATE on the south side of Chester Avenue between S. 42nd Street and S. 43rd Street in Philadelphia. Beginning 105 feet westward from the southwest corner of Chester Avenue and S. 42nd Street, then continuing south along the eastern property line of 4208 Chester Avenue 176.5 feet to a point, then continuing west along rear property lines 274 feet to a point, then continuing north 49 feet to a point, then continuing west 25 feet along the rear property line of 4230 Chester Avenue to a point, then continuing 128.5 feet along the westerly property line of 4230 Chester Avenue to a point, then continuing approximately 300 feet east along the southerly side of Chester Avenue to the place of beginning. Including the following twelve properties: 4208, 4210, 4212, 4214, 4216, 4218, 4220, 4222, 4224, 4226, 4228, and 4230 Chester Avenue.



Figure 3. Looking east at the 4200 block of Chester Avenue with 4228-30 in the foreground. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4. DESCRIPTION

Located on the south side of Chester Avenue between South Forty-Second and South Forty-Third Streets, six semi-detached twins, including twelve individual dwellings, comprise the 4208-30 Chester Avenue Historic District in the Spruce Hill neighborhood of West Philadelphia. Adjacent to the east of the former “West Philadelphia Park”—later known as Clark Park, the block embodies a distinctly post-Civil War, suburban character, being that the houses were originally set back from Chester Avenue with twelve individual front yards faced with iron fencing, posts, and gates. A small park across from Clark Park adjoins the row of twins at the west on the southeast corner of Chester Avenue and South 43rd Street. This parcel was vacant at the time of the subject buildings’ construction between (ca.1870-72), but was the site of the Monterey, an apartment house, by 1918. The present use of 4238-40 Chester Avenue as the Lower Mill Creek Garden returns the row to its original, period outlook onto Clark Park at the west, though this parcel is not part of the proposed district.

Generally, these dwellings were built to be precisely alike; hence the term “twin,” being pairs of semi-detached houses with twenty-foot square main blocks with fifteen-foot-wide rear ells that extended thirty-two feet to the south. Some of the houses have been enlarged at the rear. All of the houses featured a front porch, though only some remain. These porches were open, one-story structures supported by wooden posts, replete with brackets. The primary (north) elevations were designed to feature “Trenton Brown Stone” facades that were “laid in a broken range and finished in the best manner.”¹ The brownstone facades survive, though one is painted white.

¹ Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: City Archives of Philadelphia (CAP).

The primary (north) elevations are two-bays in width with three openings at the ground floor and two, symmetrically placed in the levels above. The dormers within the Mansard roof feature gable-front details that are indicative of the Italianate and Second Empire styles. The first floor features a wide pedestrian entry with double wooden doors nearest common party wall of each twin followed by two individual floor-length gable windows. Many of the original double wooden front doors survive, while most of the window fixtures have been replaced. Red exterior brick was employed at the side (east and west) and rear (south) elevations. Almost all of the houses retain these brick elevations, which include largely intact fenestrations in various states of preservation. The upper half-story at the third floor features a fully articulated singular Mansard roof per twin, where the dormers are employed. Extending to the rear ell of each building, the total massing forms a less commonly seen but fully articulated Mansard roof. Bay windows are also present on the side (east and west) and rear (south) elevations of the buildings. Chimney stacks vary in condition, height, and cladding, but are generally found near the center of the side (east and west) elevations of both the main block and the rear ells. All of the houses feature bracketed cornices that delineate the second and third floors. The Mansard roof surfaces were originally featured slate, but many are now clad with asphalt replacement materials. The upper parts of the Mansard roof structures were designed with low slung hipped roofs.



Figure 4. Looking southeast at the 4200 block of Chester Avenue from Clark Park.
Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.



Figure 5. Top: Looking southeast at the 4200 block of Chester Avenue with 4228-30 in the foreground. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020. Figure 6. Bottom: Looking northeast at the rear (south) elevations of 4228-30, 4224-26, and 4220-22 Chester Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.



Figure 7. Top: Looking south at the primary (north) elevations of 4216-18, 4220-22, 4224-26, and 4228-30 Chester Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020. Figure 8. Bottom: Looking southwest at the primary (north) elevations of 4216-18, 4220-22, 4224-26, and 4228-30 Chester Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

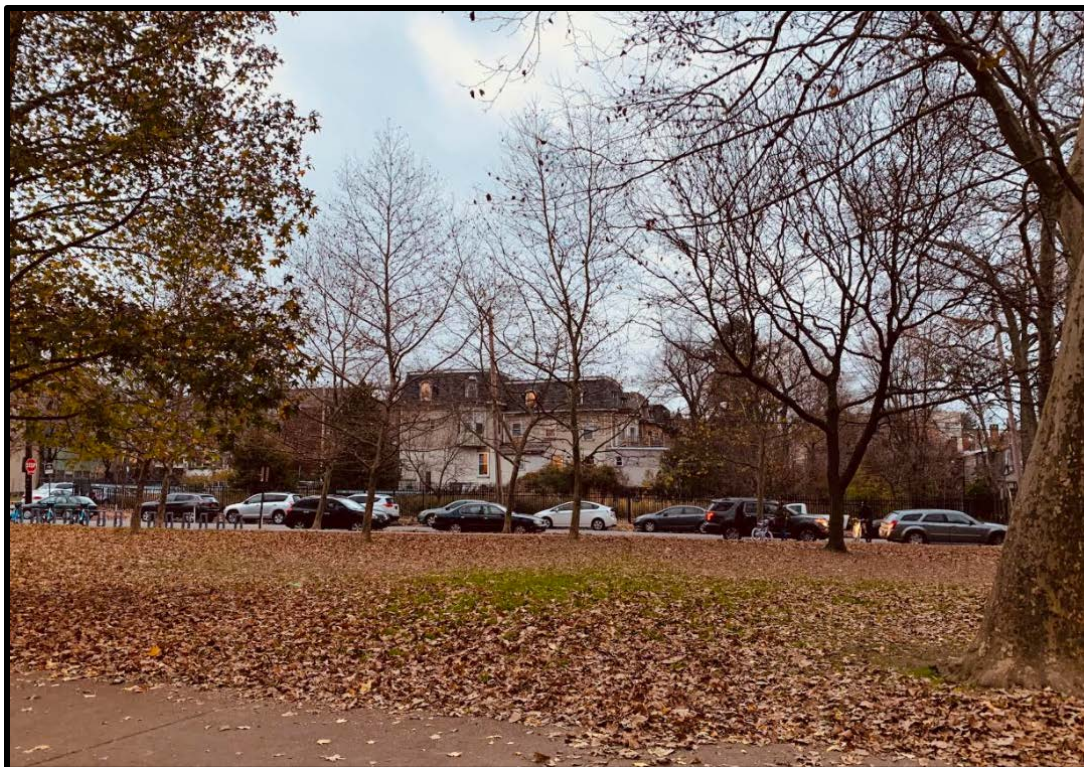


Figure 9. Top: Looking northwest at the rear (south) elevations of 4208-10, 4212-14, and 4216-18 Chester Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020. Figure 10. Bottom: Looking east from Clark Park at 4230 Chester Avenue at center. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

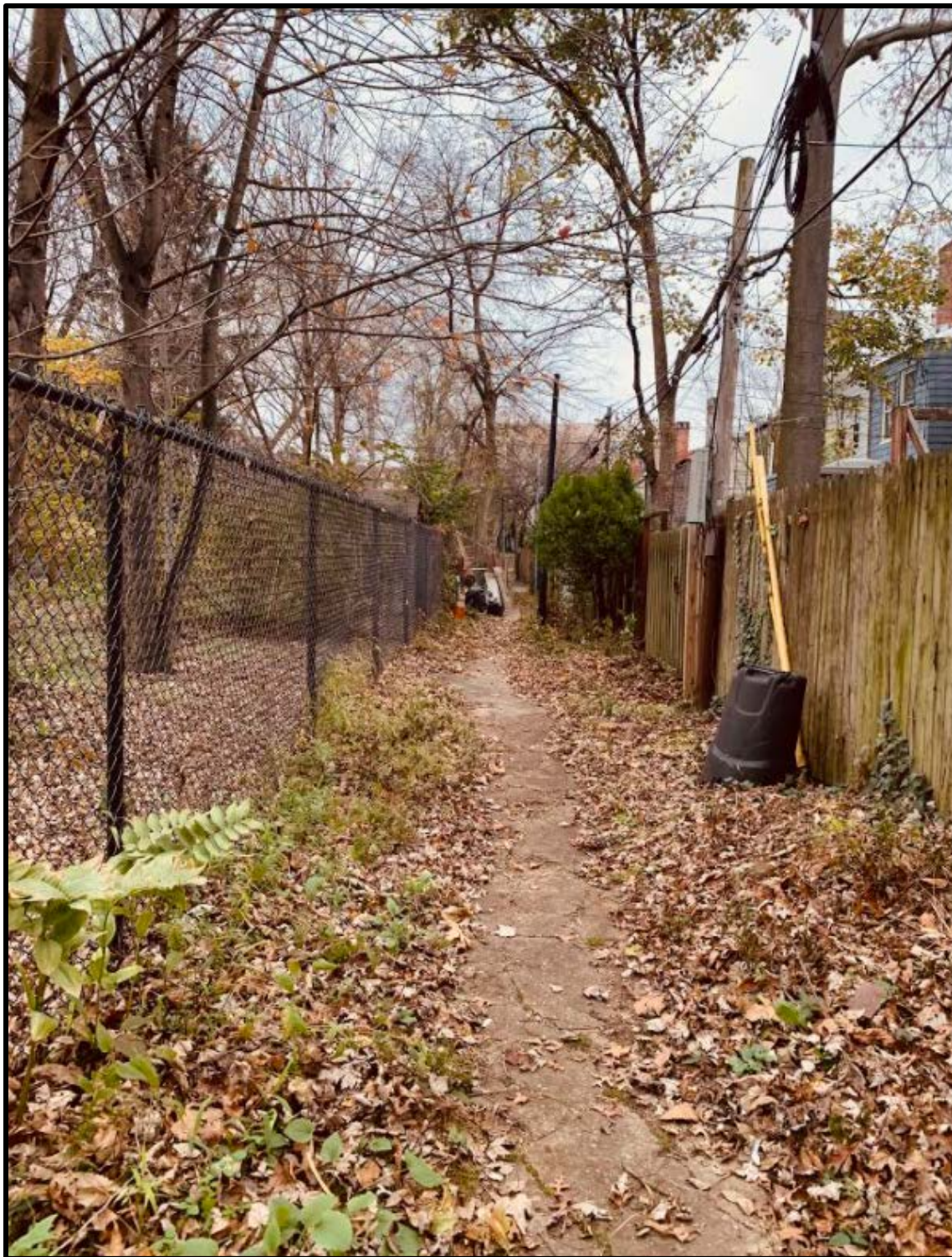


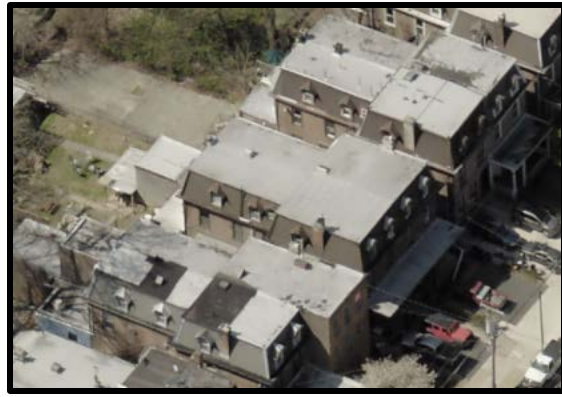
Figure 11. Looking east from South Forty-Third Street at the rear pedestrian alley serving the 4200 block of Chester Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4208 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 272087600
Historic Name: 4208 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the easterly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width with original first and second floor windows, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (east) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building features a bracketed front porch, which is recessed by a front lawn. The frontage still features iron posts and a gate, though the yard has been replaced by a driveway.

Classification: Contributing
Notes: First for sale in October 1871. For rent in Aug 1891 (*Phila Inquirer*).



Top: Looking west at the side (east) and primary (north) elevations. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.
Middle: The side (east) and primary (north) elevations.
Bottom: The primary (north) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4208 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020



PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4210 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 881616700
Historic Name: 4210 Kingessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the westerly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (west) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building features a bracketed front porch, which is recessed by a driveway in the place of a front yard. Original doors/replacement windows.

Classification: Contributing

Notes: First for sale in October 1871. Small house fire in 1875. For rent in Aug 1891. Source: *Phila Inquirer*.



Top: Looking south at the primary (north) and side (west) elevations. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.
Middle: The primary (north) elevation. Bottom: The primary (north) and side (west) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4210 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020



PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4212 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 881121370
Historic Name: 4212 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the easterly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (east) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building features a driveway in the place of the original bracketed front porch and yard. Original doors/replacement windows.

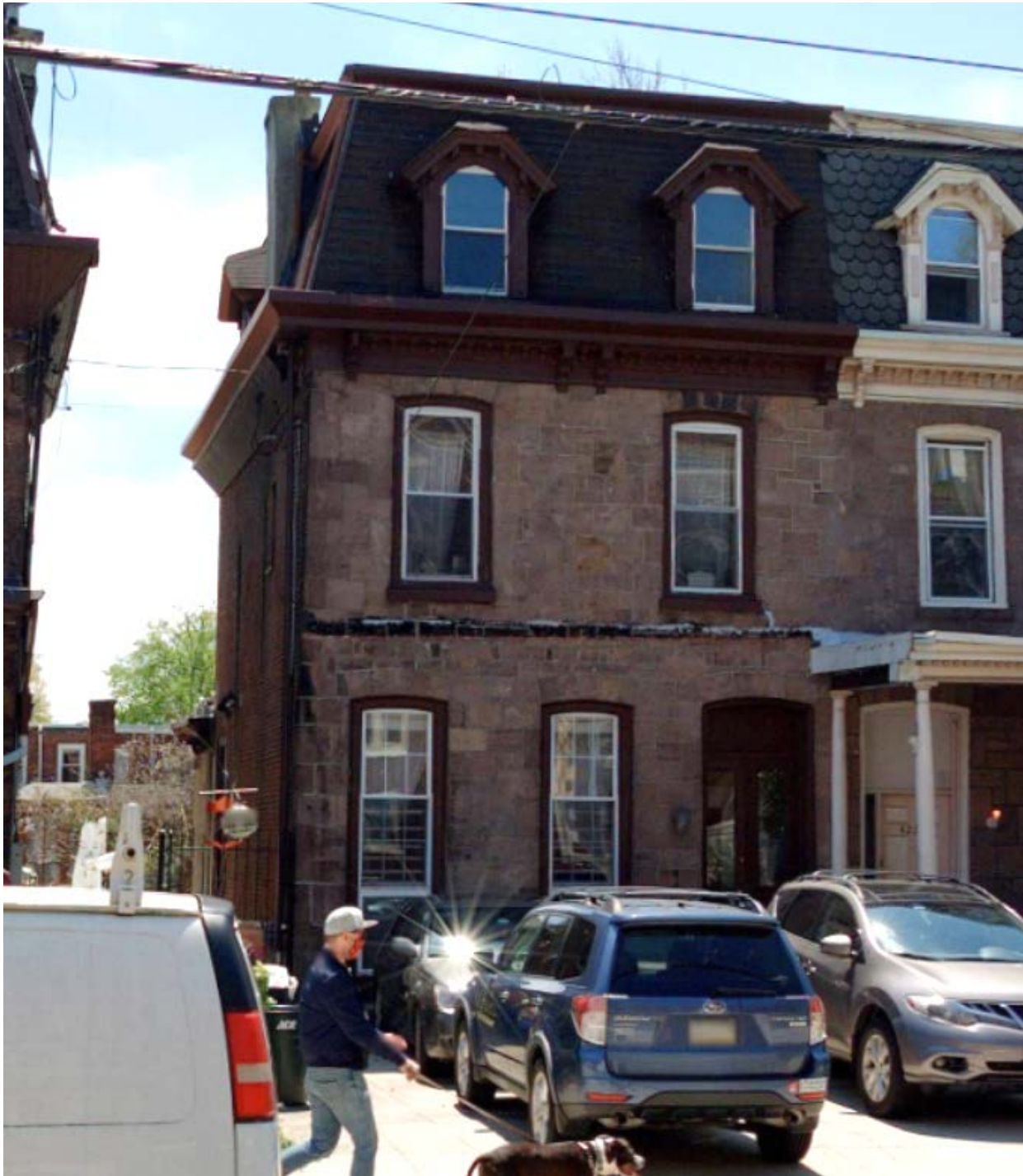
Classification: Contributing

Notes: The subject property was listed for sale in June 1871. Source: *Phila Inquirer*.



Top: Looking west at the side (east) and primary (north) elevations. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.
Middle: The side (east) and primary (north) elevations.
Bottom: The primary (north) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4212 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020



PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4214 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 272087900
Historic Name: 4214 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

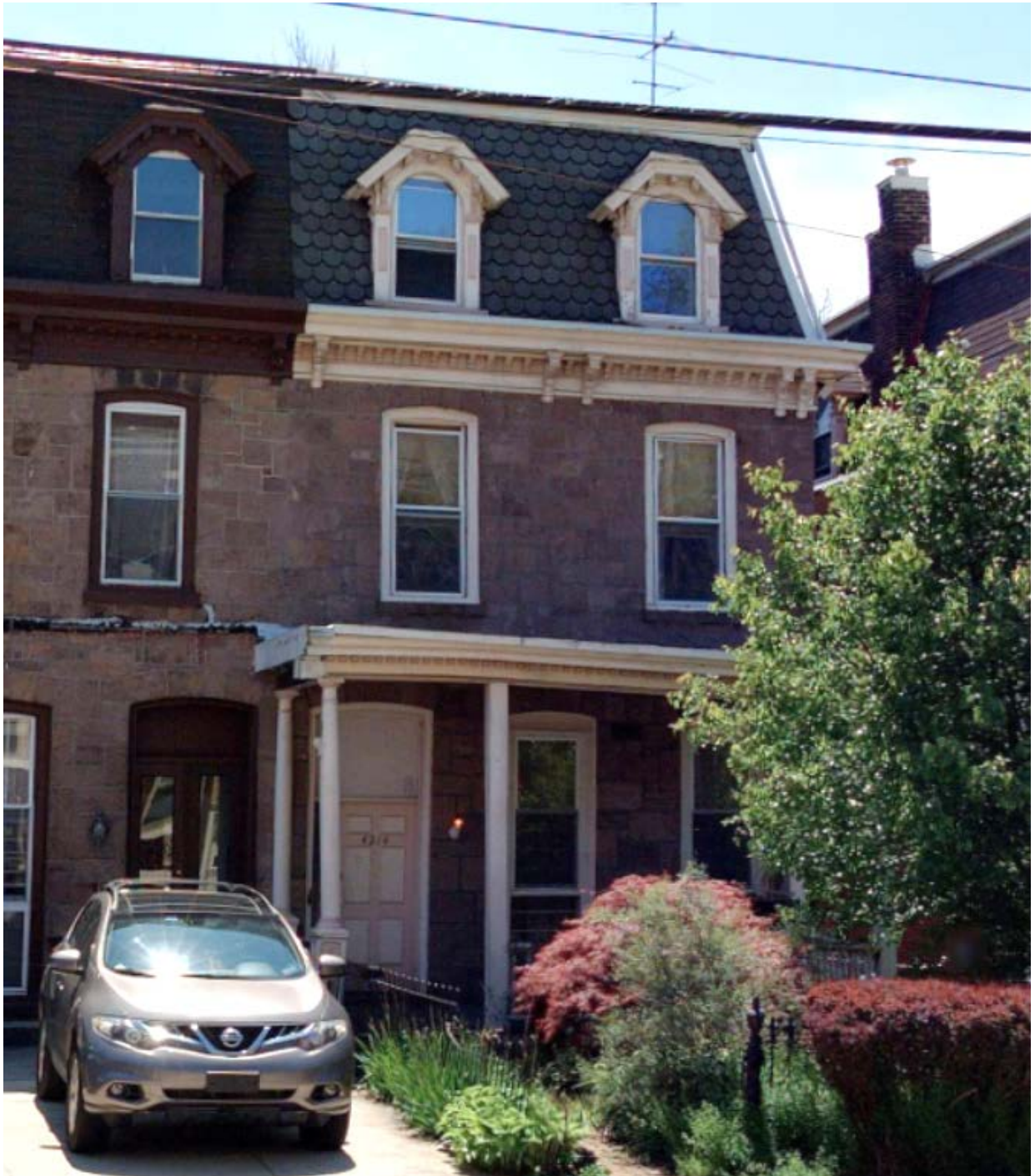
Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half/Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the westerly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (west) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building features a bracketed front porch, which is recessed by a front lawn and the original iron post and fencing. Replacement doors/windows.

Classification: Contributing



Top: Looking south at the primary (north) and side (west) elevations. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.
Middle: The primary (north) elevation. Bottom: The primary (north) and side (west) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4214 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020



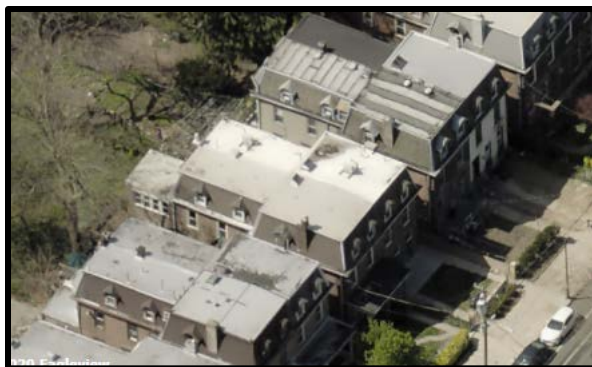
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4216 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 272088000
Historic Name: 4216 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the easterly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (east) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building features a bracketed front porch, which is recessed by a front lawn with original iron posts and fencing. Original doors/replacement windows.

Classification: Contributing

Notes: First for sale in 1872. Source: *Phila Inquirer*.



Top: Looking west at the side (east) and primary (north) elevations. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Middle: The primary (north) elevation. Bottom: The primary (north) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4216 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020

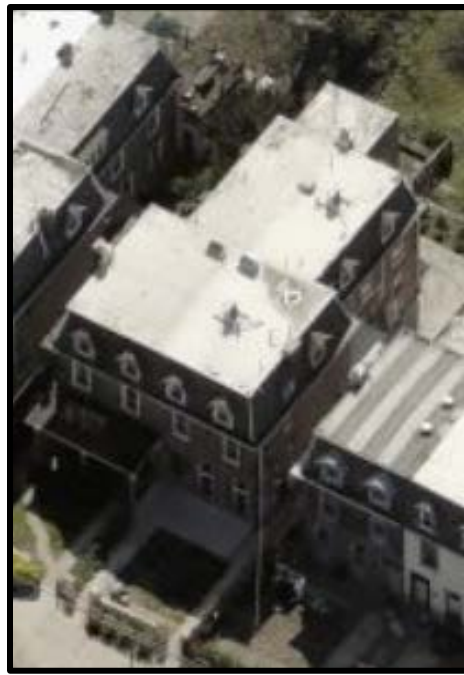


PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4218 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 88161680
Historic Name: 4218 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the westerly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (west) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building is recessed by a front lawn. Replacement doors/windows.

Classification: Contributing
Notes: First for sale in 1872. Source: *Phila Inquirer*.



Top: Looking south at the primary (north) elevation. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Middle: The primary (north) elevation. Bottom: The primary (north) and side (west) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4218 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020

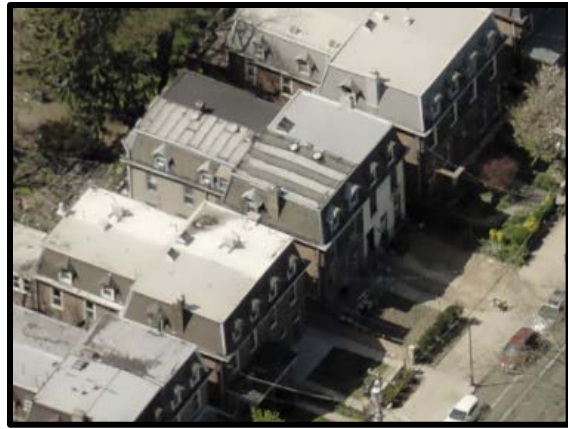


PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4220 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 272088200
Historic Name: 4220 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the easterly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (east) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, clad in slate and featuring dormers at every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building is recessed by a front lawn, and the front porch has been removed. Replacement doors/windows.

Classification: Contributing
Notes: For sale in 1874. Source: *Phila Inquirer*.



Top: Looking west at the side (east) and primary (north) elevations. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.
Middle: The side (east) and primary (north) elevations.
Bottom: The primary (north) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4220 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020

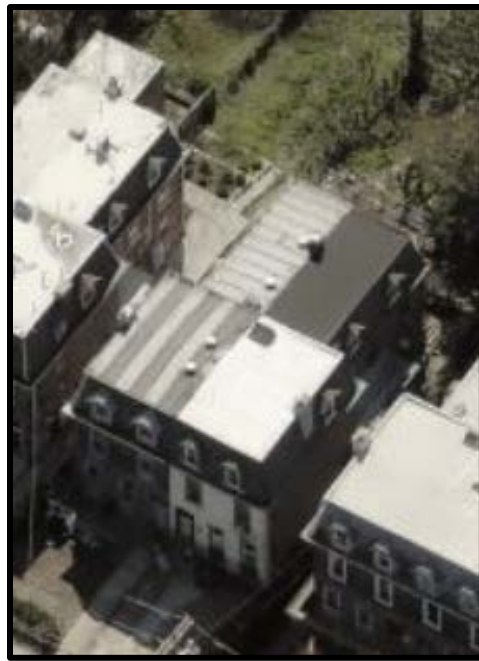


PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4222 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 272088300
Historic Name: 4222 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the westerly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (west) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building is recessed by a driveway, replacing both the front porch and the yard. Replacement doors/windows.

Classification: Contributing
Notes: First for sale in 1872. Dr. Simeon Dillingham early resident in 1881. Source: *Phila Inquirer*.



Top: Looking south at the primary (north) elevation. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Middle: The primary (north) elevation. Bottom: The primary (north) and side (west) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4222 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020



PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4224 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 881616900
Historic Name: 4224 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the easterly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (east) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation, as well a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building features a bracketed front porch without a roof, which is recessed by a front lawn with original iron posts and fencing. Original doors/replacement windows.

Classification: Contributing

Notes: First for sale in 1872. Edward Payson Chamberlin was an early resident in 1881. Source: *Phila Inquirer*.



Top: Looking west at the side (east) and primary (north) elevations. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.
Top middle: The primary (north) and side (east) elevations.
Bottom middle: The primary (north) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.
Bottom: Looking north at the rear (south) elevation. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

4224 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020



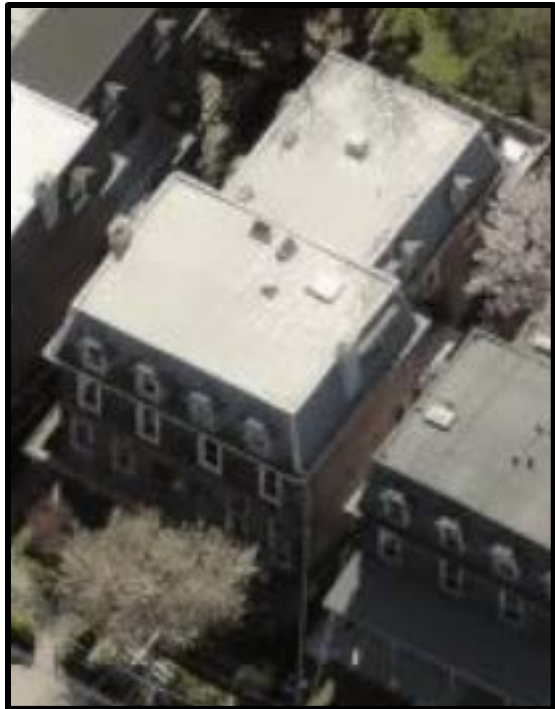
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4226 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 272088500
Historic Name: 4226 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the westerly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (west) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The building features a bracketed front porch without its roof, which is recessed by a front lawn with original iron posts and fencing. Original doors/replacement windows.

Classification: Contributing

Notes: First for sale in 1872. Source: *Phila Inquirer*.



Top: Looking south. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Middle: The primary (north) elevation. Bottom The primary (north) and side (west) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4226 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020

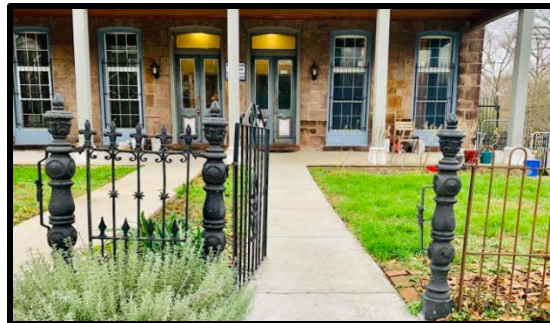


PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4228 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 272088610
Historic Name: 4228 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the easterly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and brick walls at the side (east) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building features a front porch, which is recessed by a front lawn with original iron posts and fencing. Original doors/replacement windows.

Classification: Contributing



Top: Looking west. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Top middle: The side (east) and primary (north) elevations. Bottom middle: The primary (north) elevation. Bottom: Original iron fencing and posts. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4228 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020

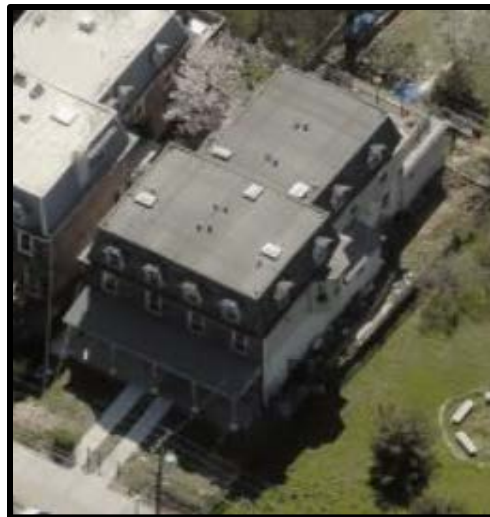


PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
4208-30 CHESTER AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
INVENTORY FORM

Address: 4230 Chester Avenue
OPA #: 272088710
Historic Name: 4230 Kingsessing Avenue
Year Built: 1869-71
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Thomas Clark
Financier: William Jenks Fell
Cost: \$2,500
Source: Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP. Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

Alteration: NA
Date: Unknown
Architect[s]: Unknown
Source[s]: Current Condition
Stories/Bays: Two-and-One-Half /Two
Roof: Flat/Mansard
Façade: Brownstone
Style: Second Empire (Dwelling)
PRHP Status: Not Listed
NRHP Status: Listed/Contributing
Description: The subject building is the westerly half of a twin dwelling with a brownstone façade, two bays in width, at the primary (north) elevation and stucco-clad brick walls at the side (west) and rear (south) elevations. Two full floors in height, the third, half-story is articulated in the form of a Mansard roof, featuring dormers at every elevation, as well as a continuous bracketed cornice. The rear el is set slightly lower than the main block, but is two-and-one-half-stories with a Mansard roof. The building features a front porch, which is recessed by a front lawn with original iron posts and fencing. Original doors/replacement windows.

Classification: Contributing



Top: Looking south. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Top middle: The primary (north) elevation. Bottom middle: The primary (north) and side (west) elevations. Bottom: The side (west) and rear (south) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

4230 Chester Avenue
Source: CycloMedia, April 28, 2020



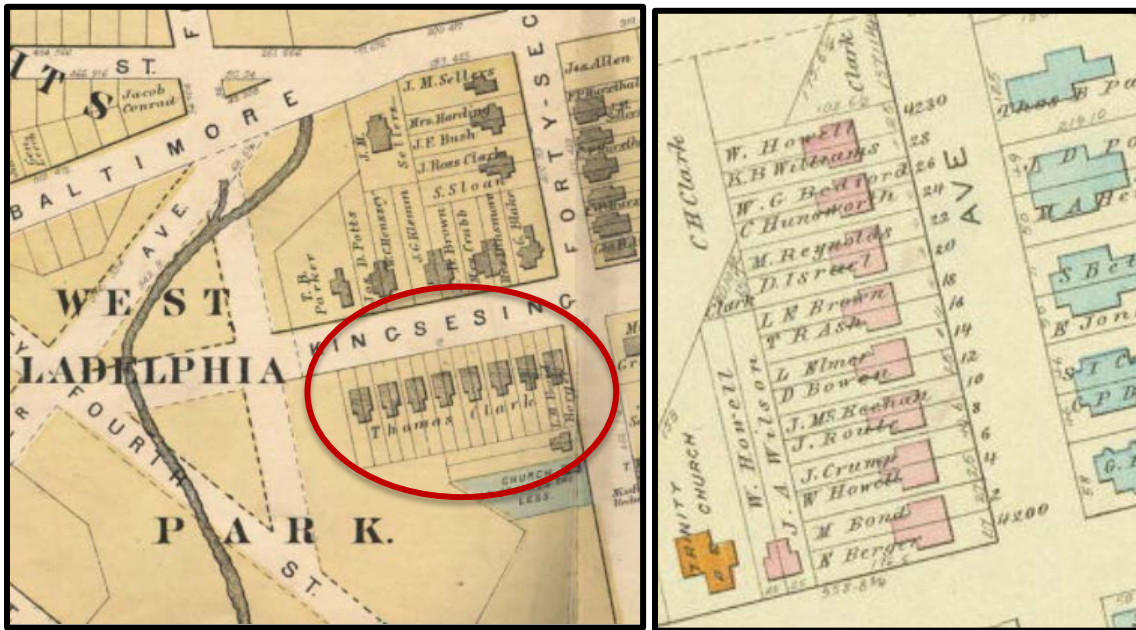


Figure 12. Left: The 4200 block of Chester Avenue (formerly Kingsessing Avenue) in the Atlas of the 24th and 27th Wards, West Philadelphia, by Hopkins. Figure 13. Right: The 4200 block of Chester Avenue in the Atlas of the 24th and 27th Wards, West Philadelphia, by Baist (1878). Source: West Philadelphia Community History Center.

6. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 4208-30 Chester Avenue Historic District, comprised of the twelve houses or six twins at Nos. 4208 and 4210, 4212 and 4214, 4216 and 4218, 4220 and 4222, 4224 and 4226, and 4228 and 4230 Chester Avenue (4208-30 Chester Avenue), comprise a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The proposed historic district satisfies the following Criteria for Designation as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

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

The period of significance dates from the time of initial construction in 1870 to the completion of the buildings in 1872.



Figure 14. Showing the subject site, this illustration is of Satterlee Heights, Satterlee Hospital Grounds, 27th Ward, West Philadelphia, ca. 1870. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.

CRITERIA A AND J

Constructed between 1870 and 1872, the subject block of eight Second Empire style twins, of which six twins are included in the Historic District, has significant character, interest, and value as part of the development of the neighborhood, being among the earliest block development projects of its kind for middle class residents in the emerging suburb of West Philadelphia during the post-Civil War period.² Several factors played into the development of the block and the larger neighborhood, including the following:

1. The Ground Rent Estate and Bonus Building
2. Public Transit
3. Architectural and Suburban Character and Style

The development of the south side of the 4200 block of Chester Avenue is a direct result, and representative of the Ground Rent Estate and the role it played in creating an informal financial system for real estate development known as “Bonus Building.” In the colonial period and through the first half of the nineteenth century, Philadelphia’s ground rent estate created an informal financial system that enabled the widespread development of individual homes and small residential projects. As the local population surged in the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century, laws related to the ground rents were democratized to some level as the system became more and more obsolete and derivative methods of financing emerged. With its roots planted in the Ground Rent Estate, entrepreneurs and small producers secured financing through “Bonus Building,” a system

² Deed: William Jenks Fell to Thomas Clark, 31 May 1869, PBD J.A.H., No. 69, p. 361. Source: CAP.

regulated by "Agreement" documents filed with the Recorder of Deeds, which is explained in an enclosed historic context. This system operated under the current of Philadelphia's real estate development between 1855 and 1881, beginning and end dates dictated by the legislature.

In this case, Thomas Clark, a local builder, purchased the original development parcel on May 31, 1869 from William Jenks Fell, a banker and real estate speculator, for \$64,800, which was a considerable sum in those days. However, the nexus of the deal is found in an "Agreement" between Clark and Fell that was executed on August 27, 1870, which detailed every aspect of the project (Figures 15, 16, 17).³

A detailed history on the subject the Ground Rent Estate, Bonus Building, and associated real estate endeavors was previously tendered to the Philadelphia Historical Commission in the nomination for 3612-28 Lancaster Avenue on April 29, 2015, sponsored by the Powelton Village Civic Association and authored by Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist. Please find that historic context in Appendix A, The Ground-Rent Estate and Its Role in the Residential Development of Philadelphia.⁴

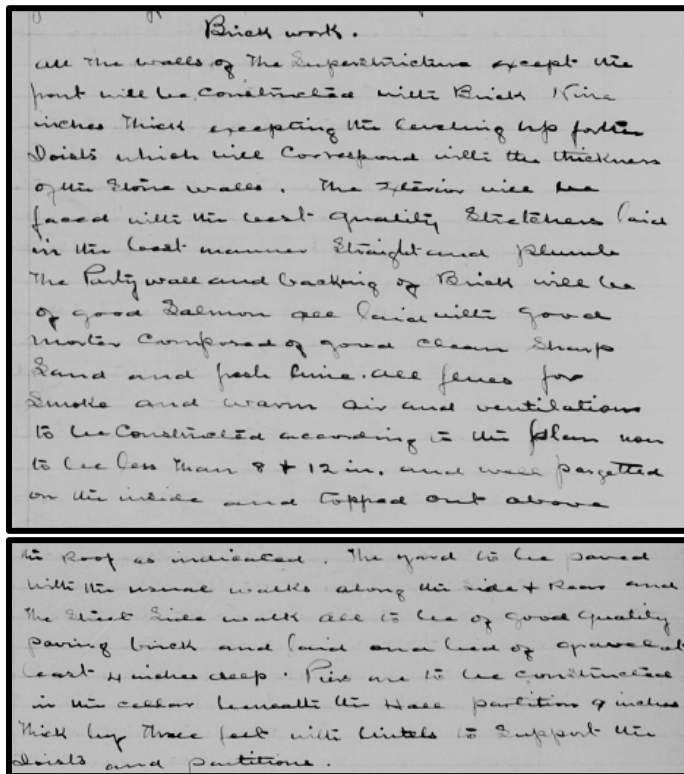


Figure 15. An excerpt from the Agreement for the subject historic district. Source: Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP

³ Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

⁴ Oscar Beisert. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: 3612-28 Lancaster Avenue, West Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: Powelton Village Civic Association, 29 April 2015).

same square of ground.

General Dimensions.

The main Building will be Twenty (20) feet front by thirty (30) feet deep including the walls and three stories high or two stories with an attic within an mansard roof.

The First Story will be Twelve (12) feet and the Second Story (10) feet each from floor to floor and the attic or third floor will be eight feet in the clear.

The Back Building will be fifteen (15) feet wide by 32 feet deep (width) and two stories with attic as in front.

The First Story will be Ten (10) feet and the Second Eleven feet four (4) in. Each from floor to floor and the attic or third will be 8 feet in the clear.

For the divisions and general arrangement reference is to be had to the plans upon which are the dimensions are figured.

Masonry.

All the walls within the cellar will be constructed with good quarry Building Stone to be 1 ft 4 in. thick. The Party wall will be raised up to the level of the first and the others to the intended level for the spaces of the grounds. The front wall will be faced with Fair amount (quarry) gray or Franklin Brown Stone pointed off and laid broken range, in the best manner with well selected Stone the window and door sills to be fine dressed and of the color to match the fronts.

The mortar for the masonry must be composed of good clean gravel and fresh lime properly proportioned. All the inside facings to be thoroughly dashed with the same mortar. to be white washed at the completion of the Building the front will be painted with the first coat suitable for the Stone adopted. The cellar bottom will be coated with mortar not less than three inches deep and finished off to a smooth surface.

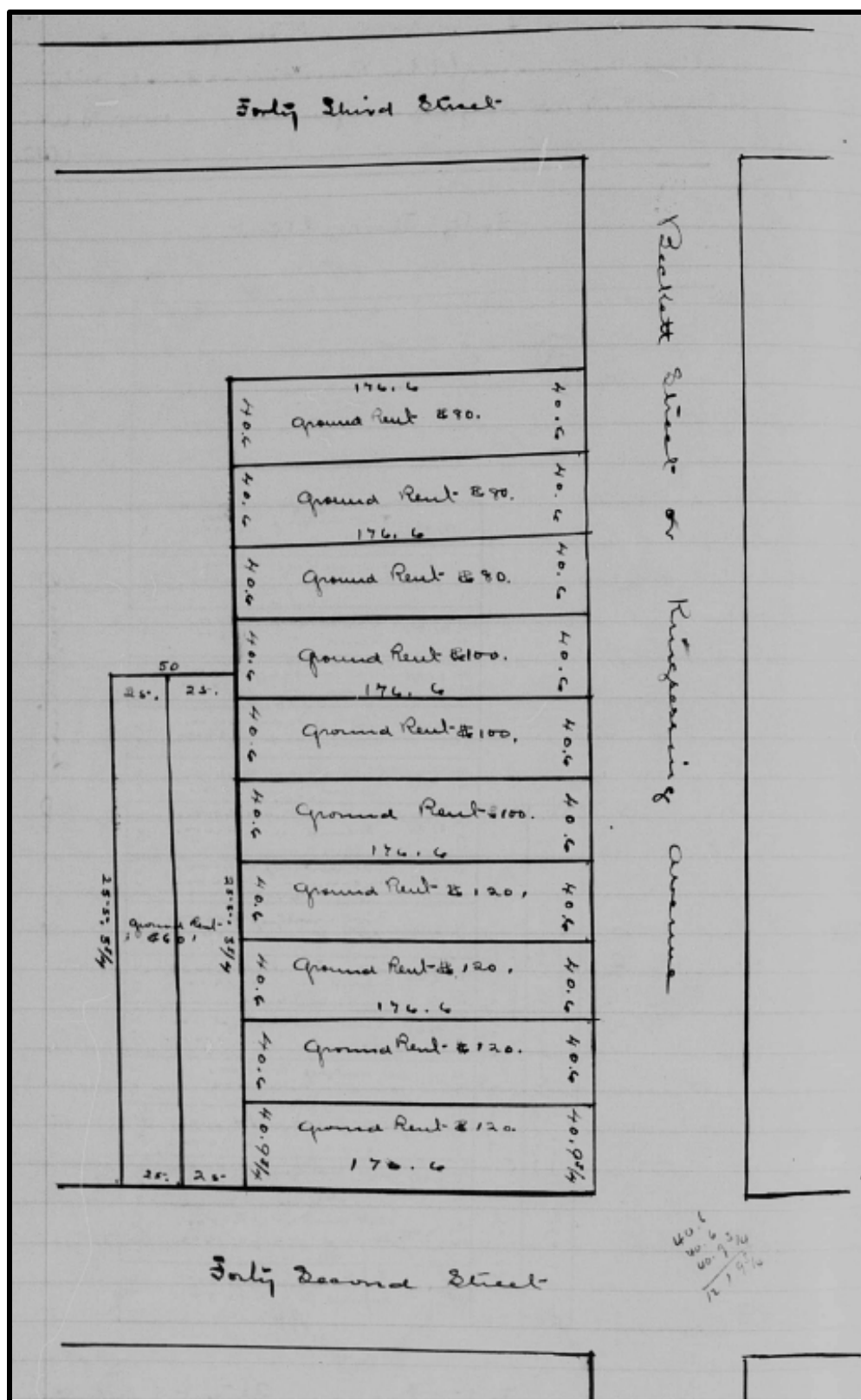




Figure 18. This photograph shows a horse drawn streetcar in 1876 at 66th Street and Haverford Avenue in West Philadelphia. Source: The Free Library of Philadelphia.

Another critical impetus for the trajectory of residential development was the development of transportation infrastructure via privately owned passenger railway companies in the form of horse drawn cars and omnibuses. Emerging forms of public transit propelled the feasibility of a suburban domicile for solidly middle to upper middle-class Philadelphians. Clark's development of the 4200 block of Chester Avenue was at least partly justified by the nearby presence of the ever-improving Philadelphia & Darby Passenger Railway Company (established 1857), later to be known as the Philadelphia City Railway Company, which operated along Woodland Avenue (formerly Darby Road). Located just one "square" from Woodland Avenue, Clark's project was just close enough to provide easy access to transportation, but also far enough away to escape its associated nuisances.

<p>WEST PHILADELPHIA. The new, very handsome and convenient BROWN STONE RESIDENCES,</p> <p>With Mansard roof, Nos. 4208, 4210 and 4212 Kingsessing avenue, situated among the most costly improvements of this beautiful suburb; horse cars pass each way within one square; each house contains all modern improvements, bath, hot and cold water, stationary washstand, bell calls, range, two furnaces, bay window, &c., and is built upon a</p> <p>LARGE LOT, More than 175 feet deep. The rear of the houses has an unobstructed outlook upon the WEST PHILADELPHIA PARK.</p> <p>JOSEPH B. BARRY, No. 429 WALNUT Street.</p>	<p>WEST PHILADELPHIA. The New, Very Handsome and Convenient BROWN STONE RESIDENCES,</p> <p>With Mansard roof, Nos. 4212, 4216, 4218, Kingsessing avenue, situated among the most costly improvements of this beautiful suburb; horse cars pass each way within one square; each house contains all modern improvements, bath, hot and cold water, stationary washstand, bell-calls, range, two furnaces, bay window, &c., and is built upon a</p> <p>LARGE LOT, More than 175 feet deep. The rear of the houses has an unobstructed outlook upon the WEST PHILADELPHIA PARK.</p> <p>Apply to ABRAHAM RITTER, No. 625 WALNUT Street.</p>
--	--

Advertisements in 1871 and 1872 for the sale of the twins that are part of the subject property. Figure 19. Top left: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 October 1871, 5. Figure 20. Top right: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 May 1872, 8.

Fashion was also a serious consideration in the development and success of a residential suburb in nineteenth century Philadelphia. Clark's project featured "new, very handsome and convenient Brown-Stone Residences...With Mansard roof," being attractive to those

inclined towards trends in domestic architecture. The agreement between Fell and Clark laid out every detail of the houses, including stipulations that ultimately produced the Second Empire style appearance with facades in Trenton Brownstone.⁵ The houses were also advertised as each being situated on a “LARGE LOT, “more than 175 feet deep.” And, among these advantages, the houses had what was described as “an unobstructed outlook upon the WEST PHILADELPHIA PARK.”⁶ Located across from larger houses, attributed to Architect Samuel Sloan, the subject block was developed when this West Philadelphia suburb was evolving to include the middle to upper-middle class in its broader development patterns.

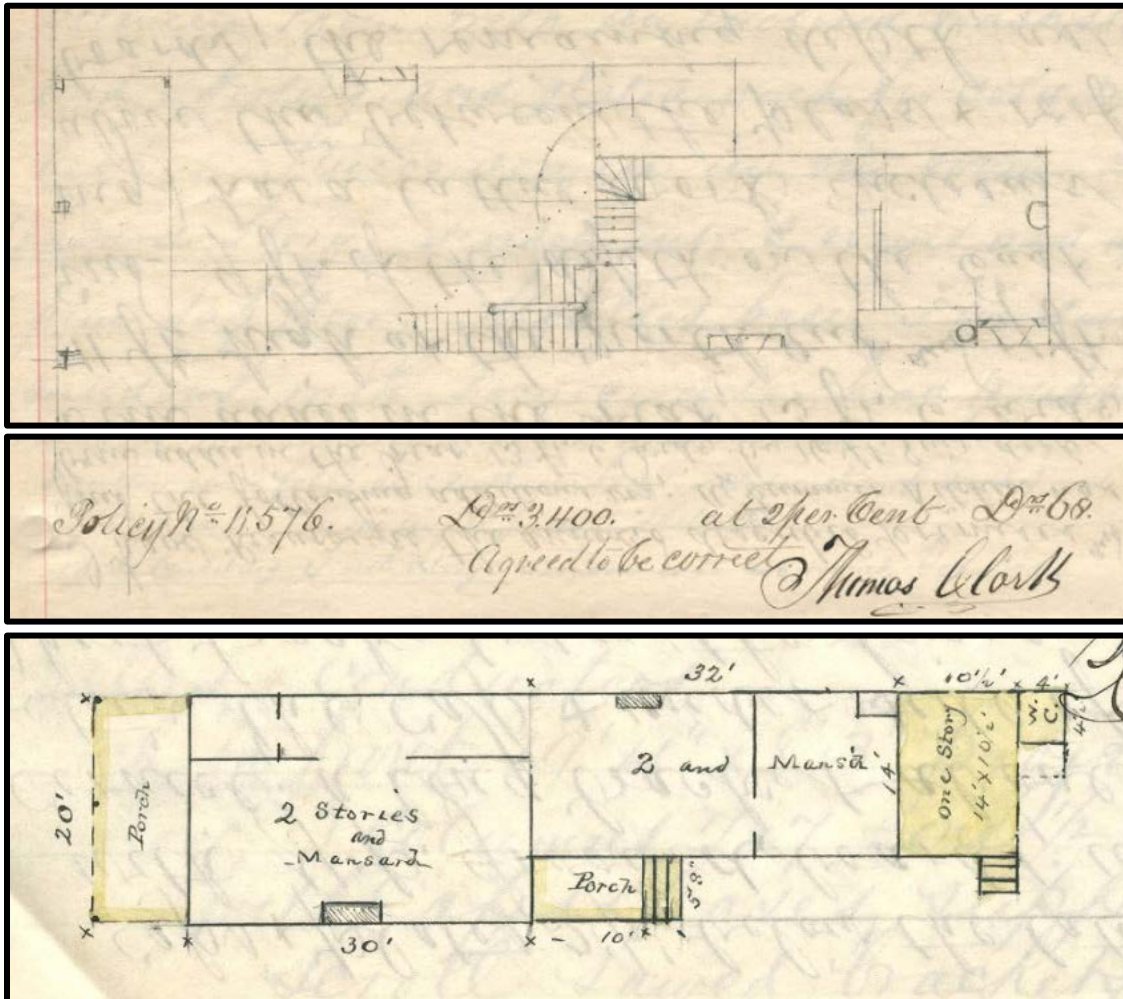


Figure 21. Top and Middle: Insurance Survey S11576, Thomas Clark, 4204 Chester Avenue, West Philadelphia. (The Philadelphia Contributionship, 1872). Source: [The Philadelphia Contributionship Digital Archives -- Image Display \(philadelphiabuildings.org\)](https://philadelphiabuildings.org/). Figure 22. Bottom: Insurance Survey S14017, Alexander Harding, 4202 Chester Avenue, West Philadelphia. (The Philadelphia Contributionship, 1893-1901). Source: [The Philadelphia Contributionship Digital Archives \(philadelphiabuildings.org\)](https://philadelphiabuildings.org/).

⁵ Agreement: William Jenks Fell and Thomas Clark, 27 August 1870, PDB J.A.H., No. 69, 305. Source: CAP.

⁶ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 May 1872, 8.

CHESTER AVENUE.	
(Formerly Kingsessing Avenue.)	
4201 Mr. & Mrs. Chas. B. Wilkinson	4134 Mr. & Mrs. Saml. White & drs
4203 Mr. & Mrs. E. B. Twaddell	4202 Mr. & Mrs. George W. Day
4205 Capt. & Mrs. John M. Walton	4204 Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Montgomery
4209 Mr. & Mrs. Wm. L. Moore	4206 Mr. & Mrs. J. S. Hinkson
4211 Mr. & Mrs. H. C. Henszey	4210 Mr. & Mrs. T. Esmonde Harpe
4213 Rev. & Mrs. R. N. Thomas	4212 Mr. & Mrs. J. Milton Hagy
4215 Mrs. Helen Parker & sister	4214 Mr. & Mrs. L. P. Dubois & dr
4603 Mr. & Mrs. Wm. G. Bailey	4216 Mr. & Mrs. James Murphy
4617 Mr. & Mrs. Eugene T. Leonard	4218 Mrs. Horace F. Bunn & drs
4619 Mr. & Mrs. J. H. Detrich & dr	4218 Mr. & Mrs. B. F. Van Dyke
4619 Walter W. Detrich	4224 Morgan Ash
Receiving day Friday	
Cor. 47th	4224 Mrs. K. A. Bankson
Henry Peale	4706 Mr. & Mrs. Frank E. Morgan
4713 Mr. & Mrs. S. E. Dickey	4718 Mr. & Mrs. A. Tompkinson
	4720 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Y. Midlen

An excerpt from *Boyd's Blue Book* showing the 4200 block of Chester Avenue in 1889. Source: *Boyd's Blue Book: A Directory from Selected Streets of Philadelphia and Surroundings*. (Philadelphia: C.E. Howe Company, 1889), 219.

The subject development attracted prominent residents that appear to have been of an upper middle-class socioeconomic status. Among the original owners, Levi Montgomery Bond, Jr. was in residence at 4202 Chester Avenue by 1874. He was President of Diehl, Bond & Co. at 824 Chestnut Street.⁷ Bond was married to Fanny Hammond Packette, the daughter of John Bainbridge Packette and Lucy Elizabeth Washington.⁸ The developer himself owned the property at 4204 Chester Avenue, which he insured after it was completed in 1872.⁹ Other early residents included Emma Berger and Thomas Ridgway at 4202 and 4204 Chester Avenue, respectively. Originally Kingsessing Avenue, the 4200 block became Chester Avenue by 1889, when the general domicile and many of its residents were listed in *Boyd's Blue Book*, the social directory of Philadelphia.¹⁰ While initially starting out with more prominent residents, the block was a mixture of “respectable” white Philadelphians of a largely Anglo-Saxon background, including solidly middle to upper middle-class residents. J. Milton Hagy of Hagy & Blye, lumber merchants, resided at 4212 Chester Avenue. Mrs. Horace F. Bunn and her daughters were living at 4218 Chester Avenue, their patriarch, a merchant, having died several years earlier. Morgan Ash, an accountant, occupied the house at 4224 Chester Avenue.¹¹ Of those occupants and owners referenced above, the residents were clearly of a professional class. While the period of significance is limited to the time of the development and

⁷ Ancestry.com. *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

⁸ *The Coles family of Virginia, its numerous connections from the emigration to America to the year 1.*

⁹ : Insurance Survey S11576, Thomas Clark, 4204 Chester Avenue, West Philadelphia. (The Philadelphia Contributionship, 1872). Source: [The Philadelphia Contributionship Digital Archives -- Image Display \(philadelphiabuildings.org\)](http://philadelphiabuildings.org).

¹⁰ *Boyd's Blue Book: A Directory from Selected Streets of Philadelphia and Surroundings*. (Philadelphia: C.E. Howe Company, 1889), 219.

¹¹ Ancestry.com. *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

construction, these brief profiles provide insight on the type of residents that occupied these suburban residences, speaking to the economic and social history of these dwellings as they relate to the community that formed in West Philadelphia as a result of suburbanization.

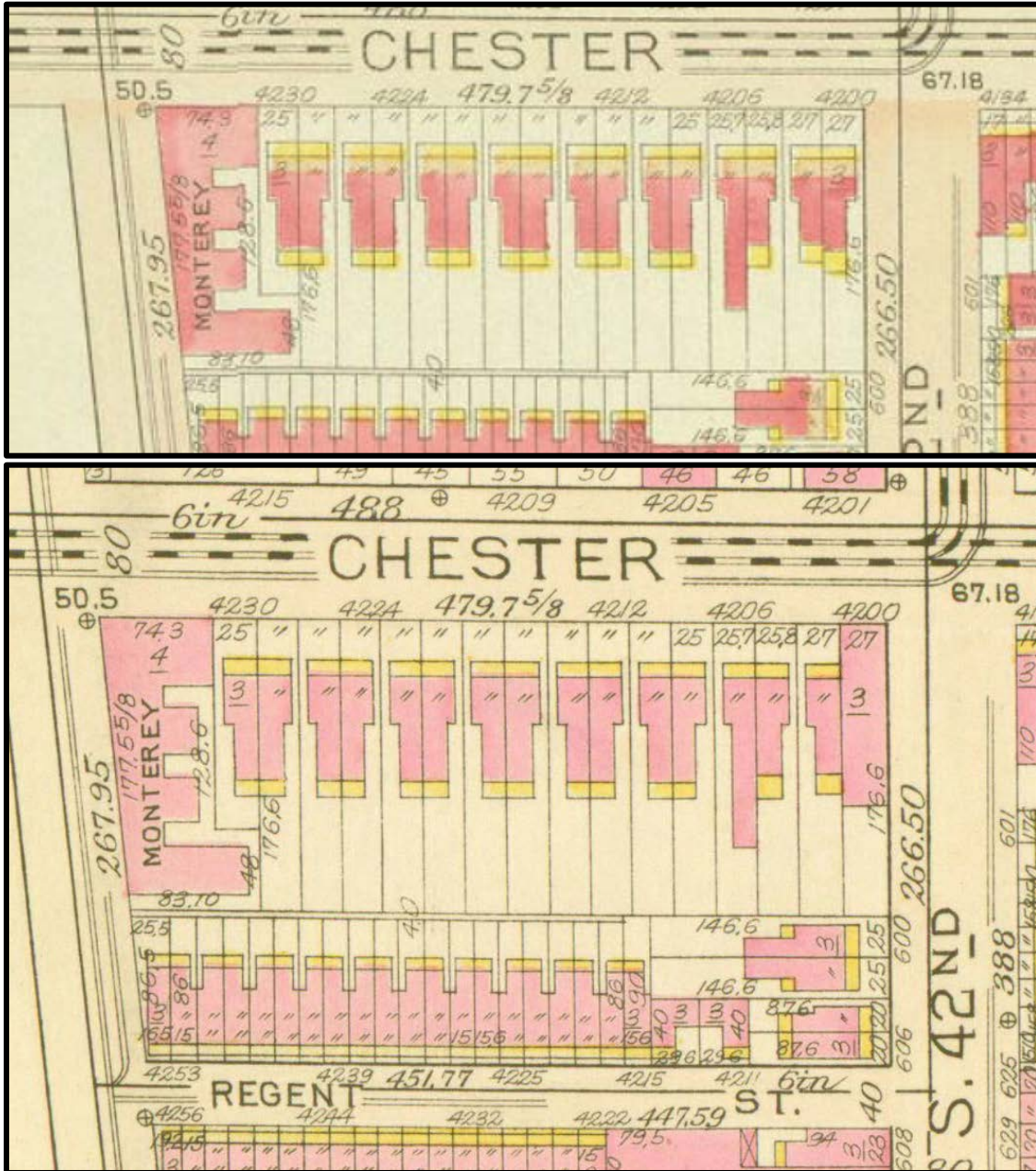


Figure 23. Top: Atlas of the City of Philadelphia (West Philadelphia), 1918 by GW Bromley & Co. Figure 24. Bottom: Atlas of the City of Philadelphia (West Philadelphia), 1927, Plate 22, by G.W. Bromley & Co. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

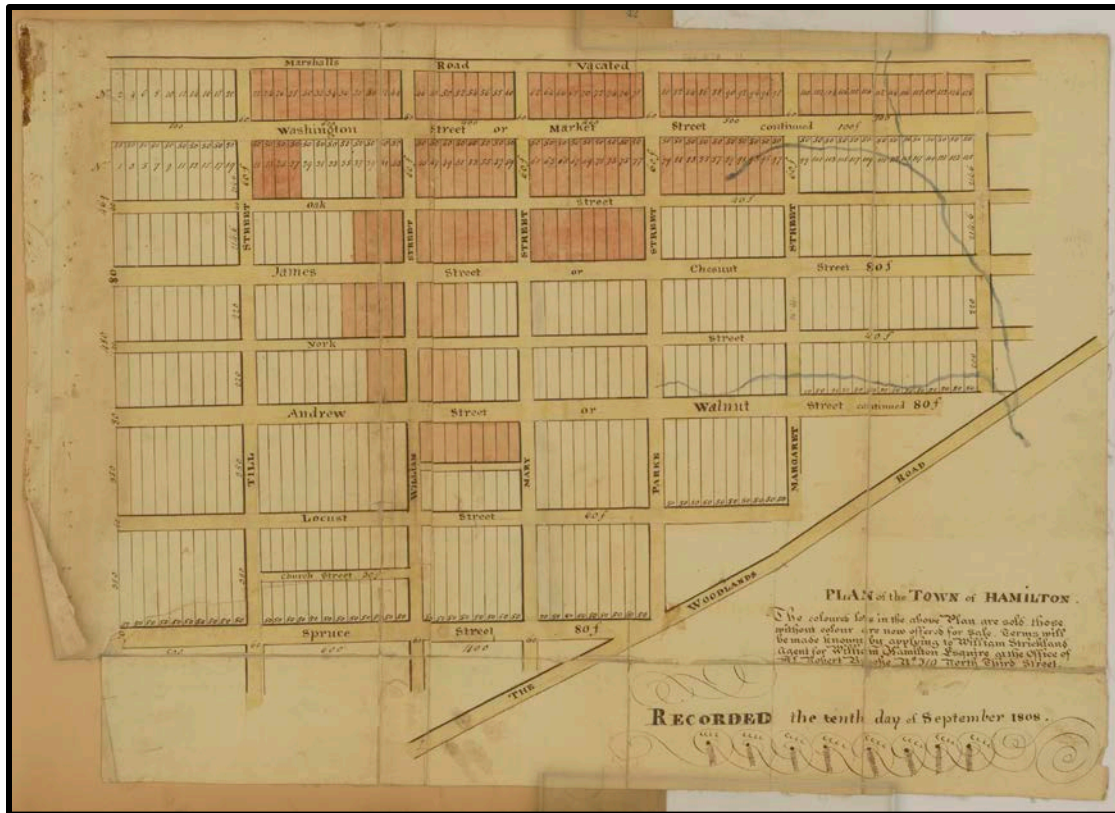


Figure 25. Plan for West Philadelphia Land of William Hamilton, Esq. (1808). Source: West Philadelphia Community History Center.

THE ROOTS OF SUBURBANIZATION IN WEST PHILADELPHIA: 1804-1849

The earliest impetus for development and expansion of Philadelphia west of the Schuylkill River was the construction of the first permanent bridge at Market Street in 1804-05, which enabled greater use of the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike, established nearly a decade before the bridge.¹² Soon after these advancements, William Hamilton (1745-1813), grandson of the famous Philadelphia lawyer Andrew Hamilton, and heir to his great estate, became the earliest developer in West Philadelphia when he began subdividing parts of his 600-acre estate for the establishment of Hamiltonville (now Hamilton Village) between 1804 and 1809.¹³ Hamilton's development extended the Philadelphia gridiron to his side of the Schuylkill River, and his subdivision was bound by Filbert (late Green) Street at the north to Woodland Avenue at the southeast, and from South Thirty-Second (late Mansion) Street at the west to South Forty-First (late Till) Street. In order to promote his development, Hamilton prepared a map of the proposed development, which included lots measuring roughly one-quarter of an acre fronting major east-west thoroughfares. The map was an early real estate development tool used to entice wealthy Philadelphians to consider moving westward.¹⁴

¹² Joseph Jackson. *Market Street, Philadelphia: The Most Historic Highway in America, Its Merchants and Its Story* (Philadelphia: John Jackson, 1918), 198.

¹³ Roger Miller and Joseph Siry (Miller and Siry), "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History* 47 (1980), 107.; and "A Plan of the Village of Hamilton," 1804, Of 607 1804, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter HSP).

¹⁴ "A Plan of the Village of Hamilton," 1804.

While Hamilton's subdivision did not lead to immediate dense suburbanization, it did attract some of the city's wealthy citizens, who purchased large tracts of the subdivided land for use as their own private estates in the neighborhood of Chestnut and Walnut Streets between South Thirty-Seventh and South Fortieth Streets. Hamilton's labors may not have established the suburban movement in West Philadelphia, but, at this early date, his genteel clientele planted footings in the area, early on making it an upper-class suburb of estates.¹⁵



Figure 26. Survey Map of West Philadelphia by Supplee (1833). Source: West Philadelphia Community History Center.

As population increased and transportation modes expanded in Philadelphia, West Philadelphia saw gradual expansion during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Commercial and industrial development huddled close to the Schuylkill River in the neighborhood of Market Street, extending roughly ten dense blocks from the riverfront. A notorious string of taverns on Market Street supported the early commerce and industry of the river-adjacent area. While the wealthy had certainly planted roots in West Philadelphia between 1804 and 1850, a decided working-class population also formed a community in close proximity to the wealthy residents. A residential section in Hamilton

¹⁵ Miller and Stry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 107-09.

Village in and around Market Street included streets of attached houses that existed for the working-class population. The wealthy Philadelphians were generally drawn to the area because of its high elevation and open space. The working-class presence, however, was circumstantial to the commerce and industry and only later did their desire to remain likely relate to familiarity that came with time.¹⁶

In 1844, the town of Hamiltonville and the villages of Greenville, Powelton and Mantua to the north, were incorporated as the Borough of West Philadelphia. The Borough became the West Philadelphia District in 1851. The decade of organizing local government west of the Schuylkill came to a head in 1854 with the incorporation of all governments within Philadelphia County into one municipal body—the City of Philadelphia. Nevertheless, the need for consolidation became evermore necessary in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, as many communities across the county underwent dramatic growth. The growing population and the subsequent development exceeded the capacities of the small municipalities to provide basic public services. A local police force was essentially non-existent in this early period of increased density. Consolidation was the only way to fix the problem as these areas physically joined due to the tremendous development that had occurred.¹⁷

Antebellum Philadelphia experienced incredible growing pains that exhausted much of the land between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers by the time of the Civil War. Naturally, as the population steadily grew, this intensified development in West Philadelphia in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1850, the Market Street corridor was home to a vibrant population of working-class people who served both the transshipment center and the workshop.¹⁸ Situated at the center of important roads, railroads, and the river, West Philadelphia was a major transshipment area. The aforementioned taverns included at least nine inns and/or hostelries within the ten dense blocks that comprised Market Street and served much of the transient shipping population as well as locals. Among these inns and hostelries was a continuation of Philadelphia's then well-established calling card in domestic architecture—the attached row house, proving housing for the blacksmiths and wheelwrights that overwhelmed the immediate population, but also including boat builders and ship chandlers in lesser quantity than the former trades. Development for this class was much like it was in Philadelphia proper—a

¹⁶ Miller and Siry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 140.

¹⁷ Erica Denhoff and Kim Franklin, "West Philadelphia: The Basic History, Chapter 2: A Streetcar Suburb in the City: West Philadelphia, 1854-1907," West Philadelphia Community History Center, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania, accessed 17 November 2020, <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/wphila/history/history2.html>.

¹⁸ Miller and Siry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 106.

modest, but respectable Federal style that persisted and aged to become familiar and comfortable.¹⁹

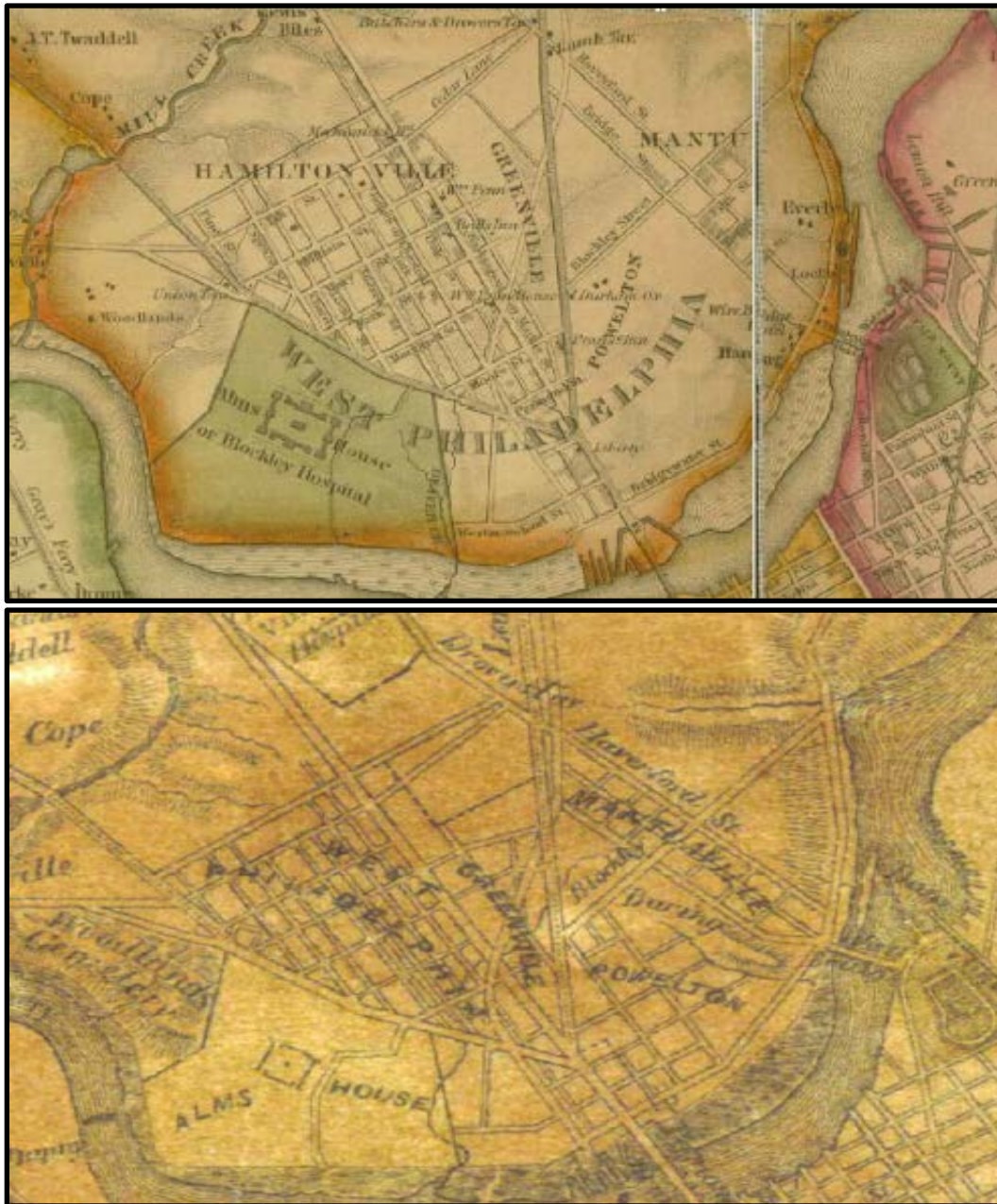


Figure 27. Top: Detail from Charles Ellet, Jr., *A Map of the County of Philadelphia from Actual Survey*, 1843.²⁰ Figure 28. Bottom: Detail from J.C. Sidney, *Map of the Circuit of 10 Miles Around Philadelphia*, 1847.²¹ Source: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁹ Joseph Jackson. *Market Street, Philadelphia: The Most Historic Highway in America, Its Merchants and Its Story*. (Philadelphia: John Wanamaker, 1918), 195.

²⁰ Charles Ellet, Jr., *A Map of the County of Philadelphia from Actual Survey*, 1843.

²¹ J.C. Sidney, *Map of the Circuit of 10 Miles Around Philadelphia*, 1847.

While Philadelphia's population had risen by nearly thirty percent between 1840 and 1850, the gradual incline did not prepare the municipality for the mass influx that was to come in the next decade.²² As the decade opened in 1850 so did the floodgates of immigrants and other resident folk, leaving both old country and outlying farmlands for the promise that came with the industrial age. In the decade that spanned before the Civil War, Philadelphia experienced its greatest period of growth, reaching just over a 365 percent rise—from inhabitants numbering 121,376 in 1850 to 565,529 in 1860.²³ While the permanent bridge of 1804 had been an early means of stabling estate suburbs, the density of Philadelphia's once-quaint center was perhaps the great boon to the suburbanization of West Philadelphia that would occur between 1850 and 1880.²⁴

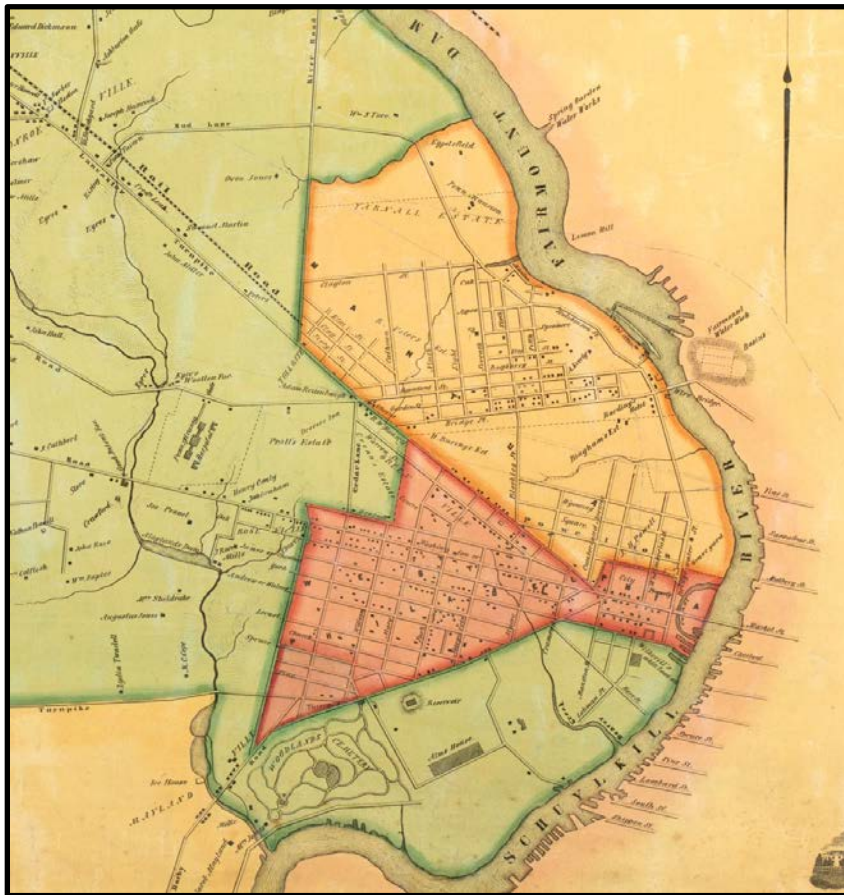


Figure 29. Detail from S.M. Rea & J. Miller, *Map of the Blockley Township, Including all Public Places*, c. 1850.²⁵ Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.

²² Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²³ 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.

²⁴ Miller and Stry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 117-19.

²⁵ S.M. Rea, and J. Miller, *Map of Blockley Township including all public places, property owners, etc.* (1849). Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.

The desire for expansion also coincided fortuitously with the development of a system of omnibuses that provided transportation to commuters who lived in West Philadelphia but needed to arrive at their place of business in Philadelphia proper. These omnibuses, eventually replaced by horse car lines, represent the coming of the street railway to West Philadelphia, which enabled the greater development of the area for more than just a wealthy class.²⁶



Figure 30. The Star Hotel at Thirty-ninth Street and Woodland Avenue, an old hostelry with new Second Empire style houses rises in the background. Source: The Castner Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia.

THE EARLY SUBURBANIZATION IN WEST PHILADELPHIA, 1850-1870

After much success as a lawyer, John C. Mitchell built a three-story stone Italianate mansion at 3905 Spruce Street in 1850. While Mitchell orchestrated the construction of this house for his own use, he began dabbling in real estate development in the neighborhood of his new dwelling. Another important house of this period was designed and constructed the same year. The eminent Philadelphia architect, Samuel Sloan (1815-1884) was commissioned by railroad builder, Charles Eastwick to construct his Italianate mansion—Bartram Hall (demolished), also in West Philadelphia. Sloan would go on to design several other mansions for the important men of the day that desired a fashionable retreat from the city in West Philadelphia.²⁷

²⁶ Erica Denhoff and Kim Franklin, "West Philadelphia: The Basic History, Chapter 2: A Streetcar Suburb in the City: West Philadelphia, 1854-1907," West Philadelphia Community History Center, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania, accessed 17 November 2020, <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/wphila/history/history2.html>.

²⁷ Harold N. Cooleage, Jr., *Samuel Sloan: Architect of Philadelphia, 1815-1884* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986); and Miller and Siry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 117-19.

Aside from the small-scale nature of these developments, another important factor was location. Mitchell's stone house, for example, stood on a lot in what was known as West Hamiltonville. Developers like Mitchell completed numerous projects in the area. A few years later, he commissioned the design and construction of another cohesive row of buildings at 4009-4018 Pine Street, which represented the evolving trends and market conditions of the time.

As the working-class population rose in Hamiltonville during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, social stratification between the wealthy and the working man grew ever greater, as suburban development moved further west. This trend would increase towards the mid-nineteenth century, as Philadelphians of means sought refuge from density. While development had crept in this direction in the 1840s, the third quarter of the nineteenth century would see the greatest stride; indeed, the true initial stride and establishment of West Philadelphia as one of the great early American suburbs. Like Mitchell and Eastwick, other wealthy Philadelphians built substantial houses and mansions in West Philadelphia, including the eminent financier, Anthony J. Drexel, who also commuted to his office from his West Philadelphia mansion. However, it was not until the 1850s this shifted to include projects geared toward upper middle-class Philadelphians.

After the District of West Philadelphia was incorporated in 1851, Samuel A. Harrison, a tile manufacturer, and Nathaniel B. Browne, a lawyer and landowner, embarked upon one of the early developments that would prove formative to the character and growth of West Philadelphia. The project included the design and construction of a series of buildings to the southwest of Hamiltonville. Having done some initial work in the area, Sloan was a desirable candidate to devise plans for a group of detached and semi-detached houses that would comprise Harrison's and Browne's development. While the use of the semi-detached house in this early period was for a wealthy to upper middle-class clientele, it represents an early employment of the twin. Sloan designed more than twenty residences for Harrison and Browne between 1851 and 1856.²⁸ These early designs include a row of eight attached houses in the 3900 block of Locust Street and a pair of detached houses at 3803-05 Locust Street. These developments were in close proximity to the wealthier residents of Walnut and Spruce Streets. The "wealthier" citizenry included important doctors, lawyers, judges, and businessman, largely related to industrial and/or financial investments.²⁹

The advent of passenger transportation in West Philadelphia was the catalyst for the availability and plausibility of expanding the net of suburbanites. Established as early as 1833 in Philadelphia proper, the omnibus lines of West Philadelphia extended from the

²⁸ *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "Samuel Sloan (1815-1884), Architect," by Roger W. Moss and Sandra L. Tatman, accessed 15 July 2015, https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21518

²⁹ Miller and Stry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 115-19.

railroad station at the foot of Market Street across the Schuylkill into Philadelphia at fifteen minute intervals throughout the day and making its last trip of the day to West Philadelphia in the late evening. Horse cars on rails replaced these lines in 1858 and served specific streets of residential development as it expanded southwest.³⁰



Figure 31. A streetscape rendering of Hamilton Terrace in West Philadelphia, completed by Samuel Sloan in 1856. Source: Pew Museum Loan – Philadelphia History Museum Loan Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

Through the 1850s a number of developments were completed that attributed to forms and styles seen later in the widespread development of the area. One formative project was the development of Hamilton Terrace in 1856 with designs by Samuel Sloan. Extant to-date as an extension of South Forty-First Street between Baltimore and Chester Avenues, the development included a carefully planned row of houses that made a unique, yet cohesive architectural presentation, maintaining a variation of type, color, and massing by architectural style and whether attached, detached or semi-detached. The corner houses were fully detached, being sold as “Elizabethan cottages,” while the twins were “double villas in the classical manner.”³¹ European-inspired, but distinctly American in architectural style, these projects established a new suburban standard in West Philadelphia, which led to the popularization of suburban lifestyle.³²

While slowed due to the Panic of 1857, land speculation and development continued in West Philadelphia through the 1860s. The pre-Civil War innovations of Sloan’s attached,

³⁰ Erica Denhoff and Kim Franklin, “West Philadelphia: The Basic History, Chapter 2: A Streetcar Suburb in the City: West Philadelphia, 1854-1907,” West Philadelphia Community History Center, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania, accessed 17 November 2020, <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/wphila/history/history2.html>.

³¹ Oscar Beisert. *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: The Satterlee Heights Historic District, Osage Avenue, West Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: Keeping Society, 2017).

³² Miller and Siry, “The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 117.

semi-detached and detached houses alike and in concert were further adapted to make room for more houses appealing to a wider audience of Philadelphians.³³

Charles M.S. Leslie was an enterprising conveyancer and real estate agent gone developer, who proved himself as a developer during the war years. Assembling a parcel as early as 1857, Leslie began construction of Woodland Terrace in 1861.³⁴ Naturally, Leslie chose the name due to its immediate proximity to the popular pleasure ground that The Woodlands Cemetery had become since its establishment in 1840 on the grounds of Andrew Hamilton's *The Woodlands* estate. These houses, also attributed to Samuel Sloan, were built between April 1861 and June 1862. The twenty houses that comprised Woodland Terrace appeared as ten large mansions in the Italianate style with carefully placed entrances at the side, but within the main elevation. Some of these houses were unfinished when sold to carpenters and plasterers, who retained title until the work was completed.³⁵

Leslie also sold five of the houses to individual buyers for the seemingly average price of \$6,100 and later for less money to manufacturers and industrialists. Interestingly, in 1870, only two buildings in Woodland Terrace were actually owner-occupied. This may suggest that the projected clientele was not present in West Philadelphia for the quality level and size of the dwellings. Regardless of the profit made by Leslie, the twin dwelling motif is a trend that caught on within Philadelphia's world of real estate development. Similar semi-detached dwellings were occupied by residents of like-backgrounds and professional endeavors, many of whom were merchants who lived in West Philadelphia and commuted to their offices in the city.³⁶ Subsequent projects by Leslie included a nearby street of six twins known as Fountain Terrace and a set of five attached houses across from the Hamilton Terrace.

While Leslie's projects were generally developed in a very carefully executed manner, this was not the constant model to be found during the Civil War years. Most housing built west of South Fortieth Street required an initial outlay of capital and control of a smaller parcel of land, which led to the early manner of plot division and house types with both detached and semi-detached buildings, but with twins as the predominant suburban form. These projects mimicked earlier, grander developments using Italianate and Second Empire style details which had come to represent fashion in the period. In the

³³ Miller and Siry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 122.

³⁴ Erica Denhoff and Kim Franklin, "West Philadelphia: The Basic History, Chapter 2: A Streetcar Suburb in the City: West Philadelphia, 1854-1907," West Philadelphia Community History Center, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania, accessed 17 November 2020, <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/wphila/history/history2.html>.

³⁵ Property files for 501-520 Woodland Terrace, Philadelphia Historical Commission; and Miller and Siry, "The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 125.

³⁶ U.S. Population Manuscript Census Schedule, 1870, City of Philadelphia, Ward 27, District 2; *McElroy's City Directory* for 1870 and 1871; U.S. Population Manuscript Census Schedule, 1880, City of Philadelphia, Ward 27, District 572; and *McElroy's City Directory* for 1880 and 1881.

4000 block of Pine (4000 and 4002 Pine Street), three-story, white stucco-clad Italianate houses were built between 1852 and 1856. Benjamin Knight and the successive generation occupied the house at 4000 Pine Street from the time it was built until 1910. At 4002 Pine Street, Edward C. Warne, a wholesale jeweler and real estate investor, resided. Both represent the type of individuals who were settling in West Philadelphia.³⁷

The eastern section of old Hamiltonville was also under development during the 1860s. The old estate lots were subdivided and new houses, including large but less ornate row houses and twins, were put up. As historians Roger Miller and Joseph Siry state in their article “The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880”:

New residents in this part of West Philadelphia were less exclusively wealthy and native born, though the new developments continued primarily to accommodate heads of house hold who worked the central city rather than those were dependent on the local economy.³⁸

Another important developer emerged between 1868 and 1878. Annesley R. Govett, a lumber merchant and local resident, completed three major projects during this period, which included an entire square of houses between Walnut, Sansom, South 34th and South 36th Streets; one block along Spruce Street between South 37th and South 38th Streets; and another between Pine Street and Woodland Avenue. Govett was careful in his execution although in a different way than Leslie had been, as these projects involved linking the quality of the house to the most desirable location. His building forms varied, including middle and even working-class housing, set upon small streets and alleys in some cases. In several cases, Govett would negotiate the sale of an entire row to a builder, including not only covenants on payment of the mortgage and terms of construction, but also design restrictions including set-back from the street. The builder would then either construct the buildings and then sell them to individuals or perhaps pass the project on to a second builder and sometimes a third. Partnerships were sometimes created. This was a mortgage financed building practice known in Philadelphia as “Bonus Building.” The practice is described extensively in the nomination for the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places for 3612-28 Lancaster Avenue, which was filed with the Philadelphia Historical Commission in the Spring of 2015.³⁹

³⁷ Miller and Siry, “The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 124.

³⁸ Miller and Siry, “The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 125.

³⁹ Miller and Siry, “The Emerging Suburb: West Philadelphia, 1850-1880,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, April 1980, 125-26.

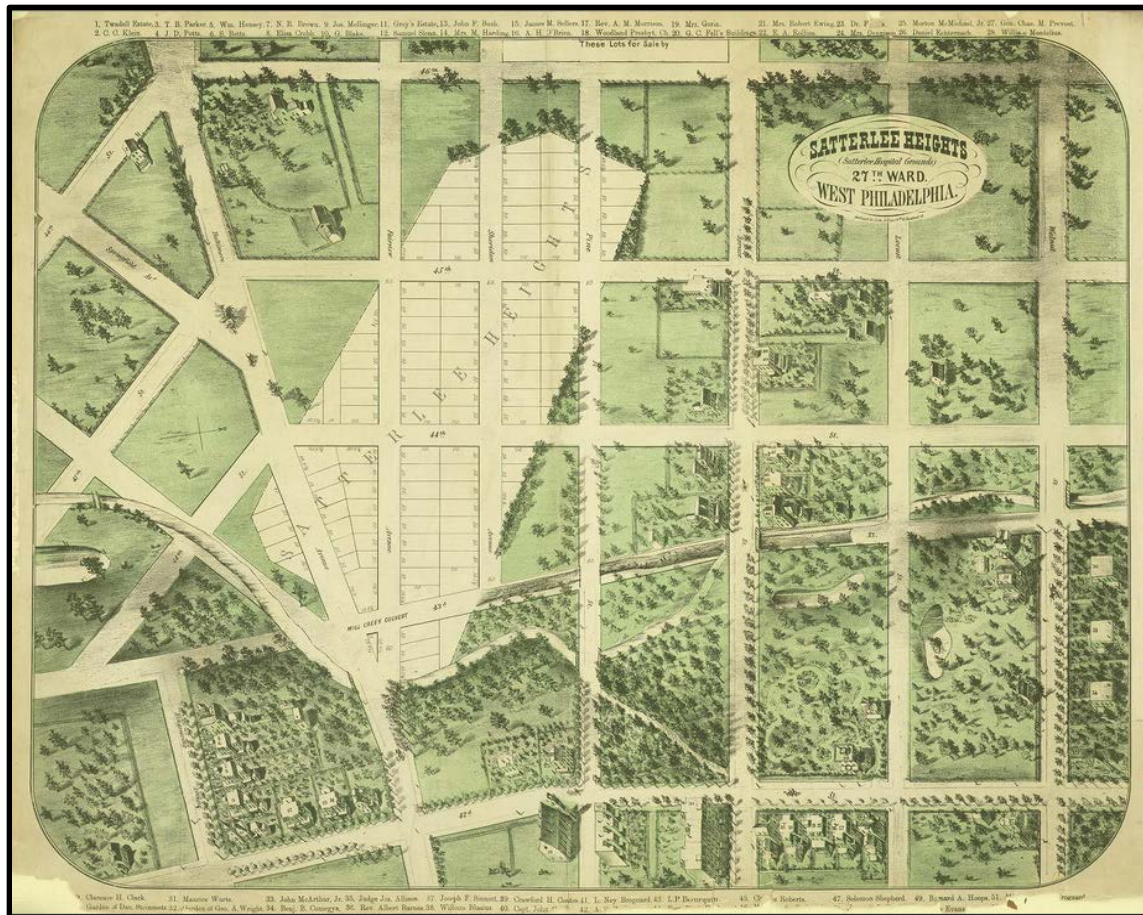


Figure 32. Satterlee Heights. Satterlee Hospital Grounds, 27th Ward. West Philadelphia, n.d. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

By the 1870s, the housing boom included large, dense row house and twin developments west of South Forty-Second Street. Building projects continued to emulate the forms, as well as aesthetic treatment seen in earlier developments like Woodland Terrace, but were largely downsized in architectural effect and size. This was a period of widespread expansion of the Philadelphia gridiron over large, undeveloped tracts of land. Property owners subdivided their land and in many cases their mansions were demolished for new tracts of houses. It is during this period that the standardization of development really takes hold. This was shown by some of Govett's work, but in a less varied fashion and appealing to a solidly middle-class clientele. Repetition in design, plans and architectural motifs resonated with trends that suburbanization of the post-1880 period took on for the completion of even larger development projects.

Among the larger projects of the early 1870s, several blocks of both Lombard Street (now Larchwood) and Osage Avenue, between South Forty-Third and South Forty-Fifth Streets, were developed as part of a planned subdivision that included multiple blocks. Unlike earlier projects that encompassed one to two city blocks, these were larger, multi-block plans that resemble "subdivisions" today. Such developments required a substantial outlay of capital to purchase larger tracts of land, as well as more extensive construction

budgets. Large parcels near transit systems were ripe for these types of development and the associated investors were seeking new ways to profit on a larger scale.



Figure 33. Showing the intended glimpse of middle to upper middle-class grandeur of the period, this unidentified Second Empire style twin was likely in Germantown, ca.1860-70s. Source: The Germantown Historical Society.

CRITERIA C & D

CRITERION D. According to Virginia & Lee McAlester's *A Field Guide To American Houses*, the Second Empire style's primary period of influence was 1855-1885, being a movement within the larger realm of Victorian architecture. The primary identifying features of the Second Empire style include a Mansard roof with dormers; molded cornices; and decorative brackets beneath the eaves. The buildings that comprise the 4208-30 Chester Avenue Historic District include all of these characteristics, which were especially popular in American suburban architecture of the nineteenth century.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Virginia & Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide To American Houses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 240-43.

Beyond the larger national trends, Pennsylvania enjoyed wide-spread use of the Second Empire style. The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission's (PHMC) *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide* describes the "Second Empire/Mansard Style" as being popular between 1860 and 1900, which is a longer period of time than recognized by the McAlesters. The PHMC states that the style enjoyed immense popularity and employment in the 1860s and 1870s, as influenced by "well-attended exhibitions in Paris in 1855 and 1867," becoming a modern architectural movement rather than a revivalist style like so many others. The PHMC identifies houses, public or commercial buildings, and government offices as the most common building types. The style guide goes on to list the most identifiable features: 1. Mansard roof, 2. Patterned shingle roof, 3. Iron roof crest, 4. Decorative window surrounds and dormers, 5. Eaves with brackets, 6. One story porch, 7. Tower, 8. Quoins, and 9. Balustrades.⁴¹ Again, the buildings that comprise the 4200-30 Chester Avenue Historic District feature mansard roofs, decorative window surrounds and dormers, eaves with brackets, one story porches, round-arch windows and dormers, among other features, and excellent local examples of the Second Empire style, retaining many of the features identified by the PHMC.

Summarily, using both McAlester's *A Field Guide To American Houses* and the PHMC's *Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide*, the houses that comprise the 4208-30 Chester Avenue Historic District embody distinguishing characteristics of the Second Empire Style of architecture.

CRITERION C. In Philadelphia and, specifically, in West Philadelphia twins, the Second Empire style was hugely influential in shaping the built environment. As previously stated, the PHMC's *Pennsylvania Architectural Style Guide* recognizes the most common building types to be executed in this style, which include residential, commercial buildings, government offices, and other public buildings.⁴² The buildings that comprise the subject 4208-30 Chester Avenue Historic District represent an era characterized by the Second Empire style.

⁴¹ "Second Empire/Mansard Style," Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, accessed January 24, 2017. <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/second-empire.html>

⁴² "Second Empire/Mansard Style," Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, accessed January 24, 2017. <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/second-empire.html>

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APPENDIX A

THE GROUND-RENT ESTATE AND ITS ROLE IN THE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF PHILADELPHIA

THE GROUND-RENT ESTATE: A BRIEF HISTORY

Ground rents are of common-law origin, and in some shape were common in most of the original colonies; but, although ground rents are frequently found in Maryland and sometimes in Delaware and occasionally in New Jersey, and the old Rensselaer Wyck leases of New York partook of their nature, it is in Pennsylvania, and especially in Philadelphia, that this estate has attained its and out from suburban homes in the city limits.⁴³

In its early years, Pennsylvania and, in turn, Philadelphia was held by William Penn under “tenure of free and common socage,” which created a sort-of American fealty between the colony and its founder. This was a system that prevailed in the form of quit and ground rent through the colonial period. After the American Revolution, the said fealty was transferred from the British Crown to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In 1779, the Divestiture Act was passed, divesting the Penn family of all rights and privileges, including quit rents, which, while similar in character, are not to be confused with ground rents.⁴⁴ Ground rents would continue on into the nineteenth century.

In 1888, Edward P. Allinson (1852-1901) and Boies Penrose (1860-1921) defined “ground rents” in a legal paper that was delivered at the Wharton School in February 1888 and subsequently published:

A ground-rent is reserved by indenture. The deed is the act of both parties, and the value or principal of the estate is usually considered one of which the rent would be the annual return of six per cent, or about sixteen years' purchase. The deed usually has a clause of reentry and distress, a waiver of exemption, covenant for payment, and certain provisions as to redemption. Being a rent service, the clause providing for re-entry and distress on default is not necessary. Being also a separate estate from the fee, it is separately assessed and taxed as real estate, although now in all modern deeds the *terretenant*, or grantee of the deed, covenants to pay all taxes. The annual rent payments spring into existence and become debts when they are demandable, and carry interest from that time, and are liens on the land from the date of the deed; but all arrears are discharged by a judicial sale, which, however, does not affect the principal or estate. The principal, not being a debt, was not affected by the legal tender acts, although they gave rise to much litigation as regards ground rents, which was finally settled by the Supreme Court of the United States in *Butler v. Horwitz*, 1 Wallace, 258. It is therefore now accepted law that the rental of a ground-rent estate is not a debt within the meaning of any legal tender acts; rent reserved in coin dollars of a certain weight and fineness cannot be paid by dollars of a less weight

⁴³ Edward Pease Allinson and Boies Penrose. *Ground Rents in Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1888).

⁴⁴ Edward Pease Allinson and Boies Penrose. *Ground Rents in Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1888).

and fineness, and a rent reserved in coin dollars cannot be paid in note dollars; rent payable in silver dollars can be paid in gold dollars; and where rent is reserved in so many dollars lawful silver money of the United States, though it cannot be paid in currency, yet it may be paid in any silver or gold coin which Congress has declared to be lawful money and a legal tender at the time when the payment is made. A ground-rent, being real estate, is sold and conveyed as such, and is liable to all its incidents, is subject to judgment, and may be mortgaged. It is the most perfect form of an incorporeal hereditament. It must be reserved by deed with apt words, and may be for a term of years, for life, or in fee; but, in Pennsylvania, it is invariably in the latter form.⁴⁵

Unlike other large American cities, such as Boston and New York, Philadelphia's landowners chose not to invest significant amounts of capital into construction as related to residential and other real estate development. For the first 150 years of Philadelphia's history, construction of residential properties was almost entirely limited to single houses, being built largely on narrow lots subject to ground rents.⁴⁶ Aside from Baltimore, founded much later than Philadelphia, few places in America knew the ground rent estate and, as a result, their great strides in home ownership came later.⁴⁷ However, it is not to be misunderstood that the homeownership component was the intension of the ground rent estate.

Philadelphia investors therefore developed ground rents to serve as their own private form of low-risk perpetual debt.⁴⁸

The question as to why the ground rent estate was established could be a simple answer—or it could be complex, but, it's more important to understand its largely positive effect on Philadelphia.

GROUND RENTS, HOUSE BUILDING, AND THE CITY OF HOMES IN PHILADELPHIA, 1790-1855

Most denizens of early America's other large cities (except for Baltimore, which also enjoyed ground rents) found it very difficult to save or cheaply borrow enough money to purchase their own homes. They usually found themselves trapped in a vicious cycle of high rents and low or now savings. Unable to break the cycle, they remained tenants throughout their lives.⁴⁹

A simple explanation of the ground-rent estate and its use in building houses in Philadelphia: a parcel is subdivided into building lots by its owner with interest and/or

⁴⁵ Edward Pease Allinson and Boies Penrose. *Ground Rents in Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1888).

⁴⁶ Donna J. Rilling. *Making Houses: Crafting Capitalism, Builders in Philadelphia, 1790-1850*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001).

⁴⁷ Mary Ellen Hayward. *Baltimore's Alley Houses: Homes for Working People since the 1780s*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

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⁴⁹ Robert E. Wright., *ibid.*

willingness to sell lots while also retaining interest. Often for the sum of one dollar, the grantee enters the ground-rent estate, gaining ownership with the stipulation of paying annual ground-rent and an almost immediate requirement of “improving the property” (usually with one or more houses). Not having to pay for a lot at purchase, mechanic(s), developer(s), and/or any private individual of modest means could more readily afford to complete a single home and/or a development project.

While ground-rent estate was an important factor in Baltimore and a few other smaller places, for cities like Boston and New York, the construction of a home and/or development(s) by small entrepreneurs was almost always prohibited by the high cost of building lots.

Ground rent is key to explaining the evolution of property and capital in Philadelphia, though geography compounded its influence. This land tenure form evolved from English law and custom and was peculiar [in its magnitude] among [most] other American cities.⁵⁰

The First U.S. Census of 1790 recorded 44,000 Philadelphians.⁵¹ In the six decades that transpired between that time and the beginning of the Civil War, the landscape of Philadelphia changed entirely. By 1850, the population had risen to 389,000.⁵² By this time the city’s built environment boasted 52,000 houses.⁵³ By and large, this achievement was enabled by the ground-rent estate. Many of the city’s oldest families, having arrived in the first decades as followers of William Penn, were landholders through the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries. As said previously, rather than take on the risk of “real estate development” and/or the task of renting buildings to tenants at-large, descendants of the first purchasers preferred to perpetuate the ground-rent estate.

In the tradition of its conservative Quaker origins, Philadelphians who were “ground lords” preferred the guarantee of long-term and regular profits reaped by the ground-rent estate to the potential risks associated with construction finance and/or speculative development. This “system of fealty” influenced the price of small lots long after America’s removal from Great Britain and William Penn’s quit rents. While this is indicative of a perpetual system of the ground-rent estate, land in American cities was expensive in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. In Philadelphia, the cost of building-lots was out of scale with the cost associated with construction, which is the reserve in most places. A small lot could cost upwards of \$1,000, while a wood-frame tenement could be constructed for about \$500. Escalated lot prices were

⁵⁰ Donna J. Rilling. *Making Houses: Crafting Capitalism, Builders in Philadelphia, 1790-1850*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001.

⁵¹ First Census of the United States, 1790. (NARA microfilm). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29.

⁵² Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. (NARA microfilm publication). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵³ Edward Pease Allison and Boies Penrose. *Ground Rents in Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1888.

often associated with potential urban development; however, in a more affordable city like Philadelphia, lot costs remained high due to the existence of a perpetual ground-rent estate. This made the tasks of both procuring a lot and building a house prohibitive for new entrepreneurs in cities like Boston and New York and, as it does now, development and ownership was largely limited to the upper classes. However, in Philadelphia, a developer could use the ground-rent estate and construction loans from wealthy Philadelphians to fund small residential development projects. Or a man of moderate means could construct their own home.⁵⁴

Owing to the lower immediate costs of obtaining land on ground rent property prices reflected the value of the house exclusive of the cost of the lot. In New York, a respectable brick house required from \$2,000 to \$3,500 to erect (in the decade of 1825-35); to that sum \$500 to \$1,000 would have been added for the lot. In Boston, too, builders found land prices a major hurdle.⁵⁵

In terms of the actual costs of the ground rent, it was usually set at no more than six percent of the lot value. After a deed was drawn up, the contract usually allowed the ground rents to be redeemed within fourteen years, after which time one was presumably bound to perpetual ground-rent. For homeowners, this established a bittersweet culture, allowing homeownership for the “middling sort,” who would have been unlikely candidates elsewhere, but leaving many “house poor.”

⁵⁴ Donna J. Rilling. *Making Houses: Crafting Capitalism, Builders in Philadelphia, 1790-1850*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001).

⁵⁵ Donna J. Rilling. *Making Houses: Crafting Capitalism, Builders in Philadelphia, 1790-1850*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001).

was epic in the dense context of urban Philadelphia—or any growing American city. And while these houses may not invoke the feeling of accomplishment today, these were important small houses to the people who had the potential to own for the first time in the history of their class level.⁵⁸ The row house defined Philadelphia's built environment from its earliest days to the current period and was a highly practical building type that maximized space and minimized maintenance, as applied to private houses that stand as their own physical entity within a premises. However, this house type and/or form is not one that was developed because of conscious principals in the new nation. Instead, it was an inherited, largely English, building type and/or form that was perpetuated in Philadelphia largely by the ground-rent estate and the maximization of ground rent that was possible through lots containing narrow attached houses.

Visually, the Philadelphia row house was of load-bearing masonry construction, with occasional wooden examples, that most commonly stood two and one-half or three stories high in alignment and separated from the street by the limits of a paved sidewalk. Most of the houses featured red brick facades, emulating the Georgian tradition of architecture, later known in America distinctively as Federal. The Greek Revival style was melding with the Federal to create a similar school of Philadelphia taste. Buildings that stood higher than three or four stories were rare in Philadelphia before the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Visitors to the Quaker City found their uniformity and architectural monotonous, but these brick dwellings came to distinguish Philadelphia as the “City of Homes.” This architectural consistency meant that the type of shelter for workingmen changes very little from 1790 to 1850. Architecture for both the “working class” and the “white collar” varied little in architectural style and form.

Building accomplishments of the first decades of the nineteenth century led Philadelphia to become the “City of Homes.” As early as 1840, columnists for Philadelphia papers, *The North American* and *Daily Advertiser*, referred to the City of Homes.⁵⁹ On January 31, 1848, a visitor, quietly identified as “H.W.B.,” wrote an editorial for the *Christian Inquirer*, which was published on February 5:

Going from New York to Philadelphia, seems like going from a city of hotels, and boarding-houses and exchanges, and theaters, and shops, and foreigners and strangers, to a city of homes, inhabited by a homogeneous population, where the comforts and quietude of domestic life form the principal feature.

This appears in the endless blocks of neat and comfortable dwellings, rarely interrupted by anything magnificent or unclean. The city, for several square miles, appears to be chiefly occupied with moderately sized houses, wearing very much the same appearance, pretty and clean, and giving the idea of substantial comfort. You are persuaded that this is no city of boarding houses; that the population do not merely stay, but live here; and that

⁵⁸ Robert E. Wright. *The First Wall Street: Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, & the Birth of American Finance*. (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 2005).

⁵⁹ *The North American* and *Daily Advertiser*, 24 December 1840, Issue 546.

the middle and largest class are all in possession of pleasant and convenient houses of their own. There is an air of ownership on these houses.⁶⁰

Since over-analyzed as a pleasant ploy to satisfy working people in its entirety, this reference to Philadelphia continued after the Civil War and was not used towards any one particular class. By 1865, the phrase, "in our City of Homes," was used by prominent Philadelphians in a letter to General U.S. Grant, at which time he was house hunting in their city.⁶¹ By 1870, Philadelphia boasted 112,336 private houses with an average of 6.01 inhabitants per.⁶² The *New York Times* used this information to compare Philadelphia to New York City—then with 64,044 private houses with an average of 14.72 inhabitants per. As Philadelphia continued to grow and develop, the city would be physically defined by the row house and the high rate of home ownership it allowed through mid-twentieth century.

While Philadelphia had achieved this element of domestic status by the first half of the nineteenth century and perhaps earlier, the culmination of the term was in the 1893 book, *Philadelphia: A City of Homes* by Talcott Williams.⁶³

BONUS BUILDING: A DEVELOPMENT PATTERN IN PHILADELPHIA AFTER THE GROUND RENT ESTATE: POST-1855

Eighteen-fifty-four initiated a period of great change for the City of Philadelphia. Known as the act of February 2, 1854, the Act of Consolidation was brought into law by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, creating the consolidated City and County of Philadelphia. This Act brought all of the former government systems of the county under one municipal government. In the following year, another important legislative act would forever change the transmission of real and personal estate in Philadelphia.⁶⁴

Only who are accustomed to make or read briefs of title in Philadelphia, going back to the times of the first settlement, know how frequently occur ancient rent charges and ground rents, which the owners of the present day never heard of, and which generally have no doubt been honestly extinguished; while making this note the writer has such a single brief before him for an opinion, in which no less than three such charges occur as blemishes, grants, or reservations more than a century ago, which no person living has any knowledge of.⁶⁵

On April 27, 1855, An Act to Amend Certain Defects of the Law for the More Just and Safe Transmission, and Secure Enjoyment of Real and Personal Estate was passed by the General Assembly, which, most importantly, ended the perpetual ground rent estate. This

⁶⁰ H.W.B., Editorial. *Christian Inquirer*, 5 February 1848.

⁶¹ "Philadelphia, special to the...", *New York Herald*, 25 January 1865.

⁶² Edward Pease Allinson and Boies Penrose. *Ground Rents in Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1888).

⁶³ Robert E. Wright. *The First Wall Street: Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, & the Birth of American Finance*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

⁶⁴ PHILADELPHIA CONSOLIDATION ACT. Act of Feb. 2, 1854, P.L. 21, No. 16. Cl. 11. A FURTHER SUPPLEMENT.

⁶⁵ *WILSON v. ISEMINER*, 185 U.S. 55 (1902)

act created the statute of limitations related to real and personal estate transactions, as related to the sale and/or lease of land. The Act also limited the number of years one could collect ground rent, which, essentially, terminated the widespread use of the ground rent estate in real estate development.⁶⁶

While the bank and the building and loan would shape home ownership in the second half of the nineteenth and through the twentieth century, real estate development did not entirely and/or immediately diverge from the private transactions that were inspired by Philadelphia's ground rent estate. In a city like Philadelphia, small scale development had been become so dependent on the ground rent estate that its naturally transitioned to a system known as bonus building and/or operations.

Sometime before the war of 1861, there began a great activity in what was known as "bonus building," which may be briefly described as follows:

A, holding a tract of land of one or more acres ready for improvement, having divided it into city lots, would sell the same to an irresponsible party,—a man of straw, X,— who would give a bond and mortgage for each property, covering the supposed value of the same after the erection of the contemplated building. Under this advance-money mortgage, A was to advance to B, the builder and real purchaser, to whom an assignment of the property subject to the mortgage had been made by X, the difference between the agreed price for the land and the amount of the mortgage to be made as advances to the builder, payable, as specified, upon completion of certain steps in the building,— i.e., so much when first joists were laid, so much when the second floor was done, so much when under roof, etc. These mortgages, being a first lien, protected the mortgagee from mechanics' liens to the extent of his mortgage. For the above purposes, mortgages were preferred to ground rents, as they were more easily converted, sold, or placed; and, in the "flush" period after the war, the speculator would easily sell his houses for greater or less amounts over the mortgages. Sometimes, the mechanic or material men were paid; but, if the venture failed, they would often be "cut out" by the properties being sold under the mortgage, when they frequently would not bring the face value thereof. Individuals would suffer; but a net result was that the city had so many new houses, and the neighborhoods generally recovered from the effects of over-building and grew up to them, unless a mistake had been made in erecting too high a grade of house for the place or in calculating the somewhat arbitrary trend in the fashion of municipal emigration.⁶⁷

While "agreements" filed with the Recorder of Deeds were known long before the advent of bonus building, this was merely a component of the ground rent estate. The agreement(s) filed with the Recorder of Deeds served as the principal document of the real estate transaction between a capitalist and a trades person—essentially, the landowner and the builder. As described above, the acquiescence of the ground rent

⁶⁶ Steven Conn. *Metropolitan Philadelphia: Living with the Presence of the Past*. (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

⁶⁷ Edward Pease Allinson and Boies Penrose. *Ground Rents in Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1888), 14-15.

estate as changed in 1855 led to initial bonus building in the years prior to the Civil War.⁶⁸

Another explanation of the bonus building system is as follows:

The system [bonus operations] is very generally misunderstood; but I will give you an example that will serve to fully illustrate its workings: Suppose I am the owner of a certain lot, and am also a capitalist I go to you, who are a builder, and sell you my ground at say \$50,000, which it is fair to presume nets me a handsome profit, agreeing to advance you an additional \$50,000 in cash to build with—so much when cellars are dug, so much when the first floor joists are laid, so much when the second floor joists are laid....

Mind, now you have do not pay me a cent in money for my ground, and receive, besides the property, a bonus of \$50,000 in cash. The settlement is accomplished in this way: The property is deeded to a ‘man of straw,’ who is usually paid a handsome sum for the use of his name, then executes mortgages upon all the buildings to be erected, amounting in the aggregate to \$100,000, the property having been previously surveyed...laid out lots...kind of houses agreed upon.

The mortgages, accompanied by the usual bonds, are made in my favor and delivered to me, and I advance the bonus in the sums and at times decided upon, the bonus being divided up and paid as the work progresses, so that I will always be safe, with my advances covered by improved property. It is proper to state, though, that before a spade is stuck in the ground, at which time mechanics liens become valid against the operation, an agreement to build, on part of the operator, and to advance the bonus, on part of the capitalist, is executed and filed in the office of the Recorder of Deeds.⁶⁹

Amos Ellis was one of the earliest known individuals in connection with the Bonus Business, being both “capitalist and operator” up until the time of his death. Ellis was an extremely wealthy man from this business operations, building many quality houses through the system; however, not without some bad rapport along the way.⁷⁰ Another important Bonus Builder was Charles M. Smith of Philadelphia. Smith made a great deal of money in the bonus operations that constructed St. Albans’ place, the beautiful park-facing, pedestrian houses in South Philadelphia just to the east the Old Naval Hospital across Gray’s Ferry Road. Unlike most houses in Philadelphia, the buildings in St. Albans’ face into the court space of the block creating a wide promenade with an improved park and fountains. Only the east and west, sidewalls of the houses face onto a public street. Alleyways run behind each house. A later project, Madison Square is another beautiful, but unusual block of houses oriented in the same manner very close in proximity to St. Alban’s.⁷¹

⁶⁸ “Bonus Building in Philadelphia,” *American Architect and Architecture*, Volume 4. 1878.

⁶⁹ “Bonus Houses: Egg-Shell Dwellings of the Outskirts,” *The Times*, 26 May 1875, 5.

⁷⁰ Henry Budd and Ardemus Stewart. *American and English Decisions in Equity*. (1903).

⁷¹ “Bonus Houses: Egg-Shell Dwellings of the Outskirts,” *The Times*, 26 May 1875, 5.

Other Bonus Builders of the day include Isaac E. Bliem, who built “fine houses” with capitol on loan from William Weightman, the chemist. The houses are extant in the block from Nineteenth to Twentieth Streets between Jefferson and Oxford Streets. James McElroy was another Bonus Builder of quality houses, including the properties that filled in Judge Stroud’s estate.⁷²

Previously, a property owner would sell land to a purchaser for one dollar with a contract for perpetual ground rents and a stipulation and/or clause requiring immediately construction of a building, usually a dwelling, to ensure that ground rents could be paid. In some cases the property owner funded construction, but often it was a private party of means. The developer would escape both perpetual ground rents and the mortgage for construction upon selling the house and/or subsidizing the payments with rental income. After the extinguishment of the ground rent estate, individuals who wished to purchase a home sought out opportunities with building and loan associations, and other “savings”-oriented institutions, while small developers followed a new system based on the old ground rent estate. A wealthy investor would purchase land from an old and/or larger landowner; subdivided the lots; and find a builder, carpenter, contractor, etc. to invest in a project.⁷³ Once secured, an agreement was drawn up in the form of a deed and the developer would purchase the property, making payments on the loan for a period of time. The contracts were not “simple” by any means. Not only were the number of lots stipulated, but also the number of dwellings, the construction schedule—the precise payment upon plastering, roofing, etc. The grantor often required specialized forms of fire insurance among other requirements:

- a. ...declaration[s] of “no off set” at any time when asked...for the amount of the purchase money and advances then secured by the mortgages; if ...refuse[d], [grantor] could decline to advance any more money
- b. [grantor] may at his option anticipate payment of any or all money advanced
- c. [if grantee]...stop[s] building for 30 days without prior notice, [grantor] ...can demand the purchase and any money advance according to the terms of the bonds (has specifics on how this is to be handled and actions taken, etc)
- d. If any of the bonds or mortgages are assigned to someone else, any interest due on them shall be paid by...[grantor] to...[grantee] calculated on the purchase price and advances prior to...[specified date]
- e. Taxes...will be adjusted “in the usual way” ...⁷⁴

Upon completion of a project, the grantee would either sell and/or rent the newly constructed buildings and this income would allow the developer to comply with the agreement, the capitalist making way with what were often the greatest profits of the particular bonus operation.⁷⁵

⁷² “Bonus Houses: Egg-Shell Dwellings of the Outskirts,” *The Times*, 26 May 1875, 5.

⁷³ “A Building System for the Great Cities—The Business and Social Influences of Buildings Systems Illustrated,” *The Penn Monthly*, Volume 8. (Philadelphia: 1877).

⁷⁴ Francis Balionis and Atheniasis T. Mallis. *East View on Lancaster Avenue – From 3616 Lancaster Avenue*. December 12, 1951, City of Philadelphia/DOR Archives, Philadelphia

⁷⁵ “Bonus Houses: Egg-Shell Dwellings of the Outskirts,” *The Times*, 26 May 1875, 5.

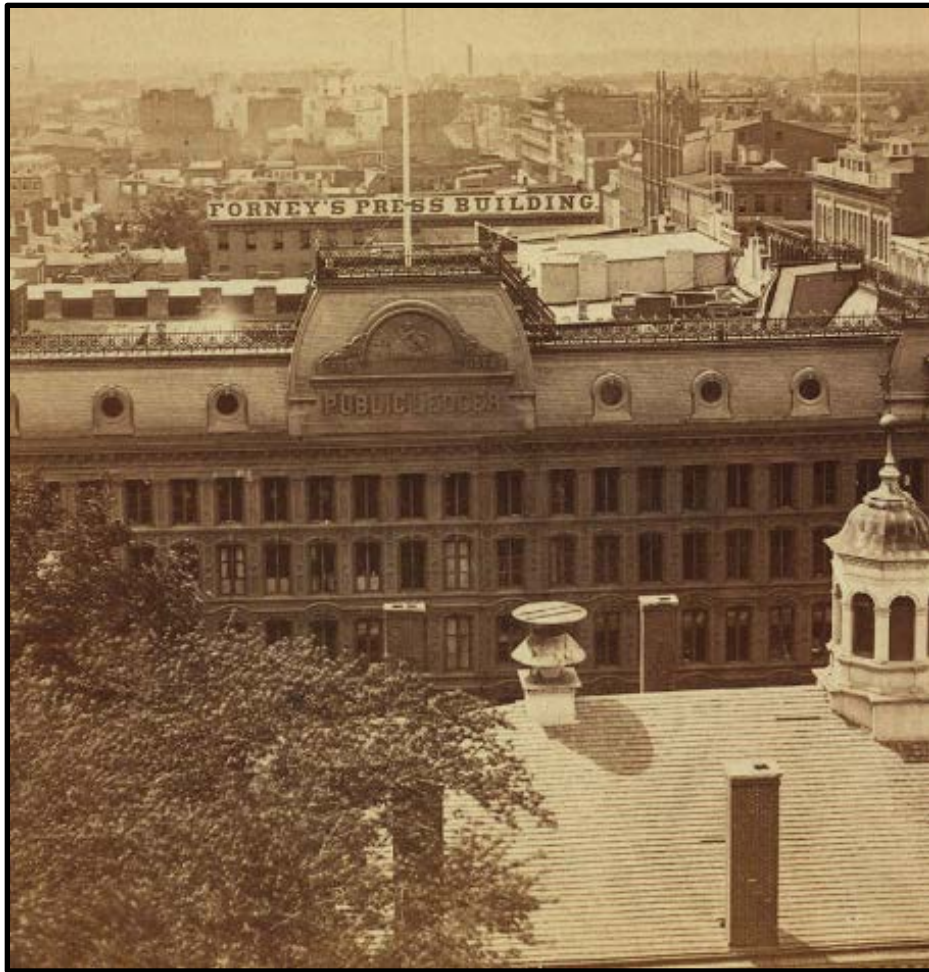
As result of the Panic of 1873, the downside of bonus building was highlighted greatly by widespread failure of bonus operations. The financial downturn led to the sale of thousands of homes, some carrying first and second mortgages, and the widespread sale of such properties led to an overall loss, as the individual sales did not realize the "...face of the first mortgage..."⁷⁶ The mechanics and the suppliers suffered greatly as a result. The aide of the General Assembly was sought, but a legislative solution took many years. Finally, the Act of 1881 was passed:

...which inhibited the creation of purchase-money mortgages for a greater amount than the actual value of the unimproved land, at least subordinating the lien of any thus created to liens of mechanics, etc.⁷⁷

The Act of 1881 essentially ended the bonus building period of real estate development, much as it had the much longer-lived ground rent estate. However, this did, for a short time, restore credence and necessity for the use of the limited ground rent estate, as a means of safeguarding risk.

⁷⁶ Edward Pease Allinson and Boies Penrose. *Ground Rents in Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1888), 14-15.

⁷⁷ Pamphlet Laws, 1881, 56.



Public Ledger Building, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, c. 1867.
Source: Library Company of Philadelphia.

APPENDIX B

EVIDENCE OF THE SECOND EMPIRE STYLE IN PHILADELPHIA

Perhaps the most significant Second Empire Style building in America is Philadelphia's City Hall. Designed by John McArthur Jr., the massive building was constructed between 1871 and 1901 at a cost of \$24 million.⁷⁸ Built earlier, just south of Center Square, the Union League of Philadelphia was completed in the Second Empire Style in 1865.⁷⁹ The building was designed by architect John Fraser and still stands at 140 S. Broad Street. Unlike City Hall, the private club building resembles a residence rather than a purely public edifice. Another important example, the Public Ledger Building stood at the southwest corner of Sixth and Chestnut Streets, it was finished in 1867, also on designs by John McArthur, Jr. The *Scientific American* said the following about the building:

The new *Ledger* building is one of the largest printing houses in Union, very beautiful in architecture, located on the corner of Sixth and Chestnut Streets. Every portion of the establishment is complete with regard to light, heating, ventilation, and other comforts. The office and editorial rooms are furnished splendidly. The composing room is on the upper floor, which, by aid of a Mansard roof, has a height of twenty-one feet.⁸⁰

Another important public building that is no longer extant was the Court House and Post Office, also designed in the Second Empire Style, by Alfred B. Mullet. The building was completed in 1874. It featured a large multi-level Mansard roof structure at the center and a smaller, low-slung Mansard roof atop most of the four-story structure.



Court House and Post Office, Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, c. 1874.
Source: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁷⁸ Russ F. Weigley (editor). *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*. (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982).

⁷⁹ Walter L. Fleming. *Documentary History of Reconstruction: Political, Military, Social, Religious, Educational, and Industrial, Vol. 2*. (1906), 1-20.

⁸⁰ "A Philadelphia Newspaper Establishment," *Scientific American*, 6 July 1867, 10.

Commercial and other private, for-profit establishments styled their buildings and, in some cases, their advertisements in response to the Mansard mania. Even the conservatism that guided many old Philadelphians warmed to the Mansard roof. The Philadelphia Contributionship, the “Oldest Continually Operating Fire Insurance Company in America” commissioned Thomas U. Walter to design a commodious building for the establishment in 1835.⁸¹ It had the appearance of a large Greek Revival House with Federal antecedents. Later in the nineteenth century the fourth, half-story was enlarged to accommodate a full floor—a design that was achieved politely with a Mansard roof.

By 1883, Hagar & Campbell’s “New Dime Museum” was proudly advertised as opening on “Monday September 3d.” at the corner of Ninth and Arch Streets. The billet boasts a distinct four-story Second Empire Style edifice that is covered with promotional advertisements for the museum.⁸² Just in time for the Centennial Exhibition, the Second Empire Style was so popular in Philadelphians and beyond that companies like Cunningham & Hill, Manufacturers and Retailers of Flags and Shields, used a building not entirely dissimilar in size, scale, and style from the Union League in one of their advertisements. However, these are just a few examples, and do not begin to scratch the surface of the buildings in Philadelphia designed in the Second Empire style during the nineteenth century.

⁸¹ “Company History,” The Philadelphia Contributionship. Accessed 25 January 2017.
<<http://www.contributionship.com/history/tour.html>>

⁸² Advertisement Card: “Hagar & Campbell’s Dime Museum, Ninth & Arch Sts. Opens Monday September 3d. 1883.” (The Stobridge Lithograph Co., 1883). Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.



Top: Advertisement Card: "Hagar & Campbell's Dime Museum, Ninth & Arch Streets. Opens Monday September 3d. 1883." (The Stobridge Lithograph Co., 1883). Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia. Bottom: Advertisement of Cunningham & Hill, 204 Church Street, Philadelphia, c. 1876. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.

The Second Empire style was particularly popular for use in residential architecture with a continual employment in detached, semi-detached (twins) and row houses from the 1860s into the early twentieth century. It is understood that the French influence in local domestic architecture appeared earlier, if not just for brief moment. Purported to be the first Mansard roof in America, Robert Morris (1734-1806), known as the "Financier of the American Revolution," commissioned the eminent architect, Pierre Charles L'Enfant (1754-1825), to design a mansion for him about 1794. After the project was well underway, he underwent major financial problems so that the house stood unfinished. It was afterwards known as "Morris' Folly," standing on a large parcel bound by Chestnut

Street at the north, South Seventh Street at the east, Walnut Street at the south, and Eighth Street at the south.⁸³



Top: Detail of “The Morris Mansion, Philadelphia, As It Was.” Source: PhiladelphiaBuildings.org. Bottom: Marble Terrace, 3200 Block of Chestnut Street, West Philadelphia, c. 1872. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.

After Morris’ Folly, the employment of the Mansard roof was almost entirely dormant until the second half of the nineteenth century. In the 1860s, one of the most impressive blocks in Philadelphia employing the Mansard roof was known as Marble Terrace, which was constructed circa 1870. Located in the 3200 block of Chestnut Street, the development was described in real estate advertisements as: “Handsomeness Modern Four-story Marble Front,” a property that was, in fact, four stories in height—the fourth floor

⁸³ Charles Rappleye. *Robert Morris: Financier of the American Revolution*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).

being a Mansard roof with a variation of dormer types indicative of high style designs in the 1860s and 1870s.⁸⁴ A similar marble-front development was completed in the same manner on the northeast side of Ridge Avenue just below Girard, the last vestiges of which are being renovated or destroyed today.



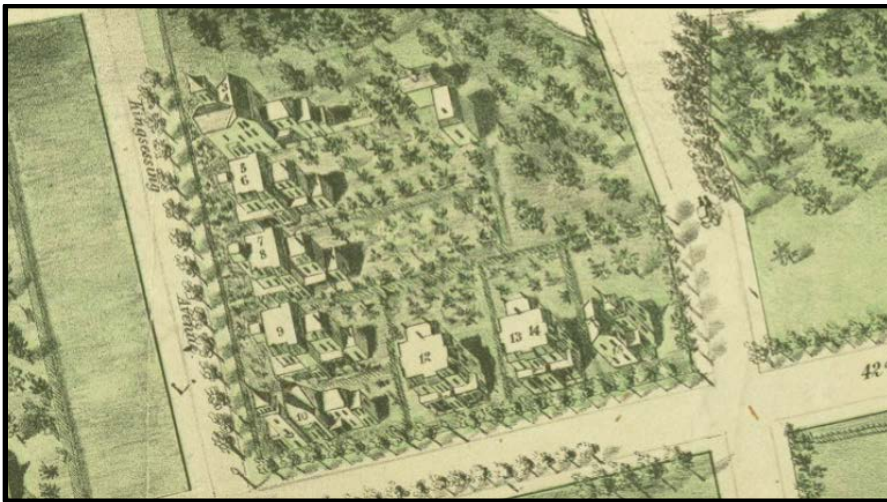
A Second Empire style development at Thirty-Fourth Street and Woodland Avenue in West Philadelphia. Source: Robert Morris Skaler. *West Philadelphia: University City to 52nd Street*. (Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 16.

In West Philadelphia, the style was employed in detached, semi-detached, and row houses. The development of the street car suburb led to the construction of enumerable buildings in the Second Empire style. The following is a list of buildings featuring Mansard roofs and/or other related stylistic characteristics.

Name	Location	Type
C. S. Lewis Development (ca. 1875)	3835-37 Walnut Street	Twins
The Charles Mosley Swain Residence	NE Forty-first & Spruce Sts.	Detached
The Clark House (ca. 1865)	200 block of S. Forty-second	Twins
John D. Jones Development (ca. 1865)	225-27 S. Forty-second Street	Twin
John Lamphie Development (ca. 1871)	525-27 S. Forty-first Street	Twins
Unknown (ca. 1875)	100 block of N. Thirty-fourth	Twins
Unknown (ca. 1885)	200 block of N. Thirty-sixth	Twins
Unknown (ca. 1880)	300 block of N. Thirty-seventh	Twins
Sansom Row (ca. 1870)	3400 block of Sansom Street	Row Houses
The Satterlee Heights Development	4300 block of Osage Avenue	Twins
Unknown (ca. 1870)	3400 block of Baring Street	Twins
Unknown (ca. 1875)	3400 block of Lancaster Ave.	Row
Unknown (ca. 1875)	3400 block of Powelton Ave.	Twins

⁸⁴ "M. Thomas & Sons. Auctioneers," *Legal Gazette*, 15 May 1874, 160.

Unknown (ca.1875)	3400 block of Race Street	Twins
Unknown (ca.1870)	3500 block of Baring Street	Twins
Unknown (ca.1875)	3600 block of Baring Street	Twins
Unknown (ca.1870)	3513-15 Hamilton Street	Detached
Unknown (ca.1880)	3700 block of Hamilton	Twins
Unknown (ca.1880)	3700 block of Powelton Ave.	Twins
William S. Kimball Development (ca. 1876) 203-17 S. Forty-second StreetTwins ⁸⁵		



Detail from Satterlee Heights. Satterlee Hospital Grounds, 27th Ward. West Philadelphia., n.d. Note: the large detached house facing onto 42nd Street is labeled “12” and was the home of Samuel Sloan. Immediately to the north, a twin is labeled with two numbers, “13” and “14,” being the homes John F. Bush and Mrs. M. Harding. Each of these houses appear to be designed in the Second Empire Style. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

⁸⁵ Oscar Beisert. *Nomination of a Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object: 4300-03 Osage Avenue*. Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Philadelphia Historical Commission, Philadelphia, 2015.