COMMENT ON NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

ADDRESS: 1401 E. Susquehanna Avenue, Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

OVERVIEW: The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 1401 E. Susquehanna Avenue located in the Fishtown neighborhood of northeast Philadelphia and historically known as the Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission’s meetings.

The nomination for the building at 1401 E. Susquehanna Avenue states that the property is significant under Criterion A in the Area of Social History. Penn Asylum is an early and important example of a nineteenth-century, endowed, voluntary, philanthropic institution built specifically to house and care for single and widowed women in reduced economic circumstances. The institution was founded by four local women in 1848 and, although unusual for the time, run entirely by women and non-denominational. The building was constructed in eight phases: c. 1769, 1858, c. 1860, 1887, 1894, 1904 and 1958. Despite the phased construction, the consistency of building material, style and use give the building a cohesive appearance. The Penn Asylum retains its integrity, as both the overall form and defining institutional characteristics remain intact since the last period of major construction in 1958.

The Period of Significance begins in 1858 when Penn Asylum moved into the existing buildings and ends in 1991 when the institution amended its charter to allow men to be admitted as residents. The property was added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 2020.
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form  

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property  
   Historic name: Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women  
   Other names/site number: Penn Widow’s Asylum; Penn Asylum; Penn Home  
   Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
   (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location  
   Street & number: 1401 E. Susquehanna Avenue  
   City or town: Philadelphia  
   State: PA  
   County: Philadelphia  
   Vicinity:  

3. State/Federal Agency Certification  
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
   I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets  
   the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic  
   Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
   In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I  
   recommend that this property be considered significant at the following  
   level(s) of significance: ___national ___statewide ___local  
   Applicable National Register Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D

   ____________________________________________  
   Signature of certifying official/Title:  
   Date

   ______________________________  
   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

   In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.  

   ______________________________  
   Signature of commenting official:  
   Date

   ______________________________  
   Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) ____________________

Signature of the Keeper __________________________ Date of Action ____________

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: X

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

Building(s) X

District

Site

Structure

Object
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property
County and State

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC/institutional housing
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
VACANT/NOT IN USE
7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Late 20th Century Revival Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph
The Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women stands at 1401 E. Susquehanna Avenue in the Fishtown neighborhood of northeast Philadelphia. On the south elevation, the sections have been built in such a way to create an interior courtyard, which has a combination of landscaped and paved areas and is enclosed by a painted, picket metal fence. The 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-story building was constructed in eight phases: c. 1769, 1858, c. 1860, 1887, 1894, 1904 and 1958. The Penn Asylum retains its integrity.
Narrative Description

The Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women (from now on referred to as the Penn Asylum) stands at 1401 E. Susquehanna Avenue in the Fishtown neighborhood of northeast Philadelphia. The Penn Asylum is located on a rectangular lot bounded by E. Susquehanna Avenue to the west, Belgrade Street to the south, E. Fletcher Street to the east and the interior of the block to the north (Figure #1). On the south elevation, the sections have been built in such a way to create an interior courtyard, which has a combination of landscaped and paved areas and is enclosed by a painted, picket metal fence. There is a paved sidewalk along the east, south and west elevations and the latter two also have mature street trees.

On the remainder of the block, as well as in the immediate neighborhood, are 2- and 3-story rowhouses that date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Palmer Cemetery is located three blocks to the west and I-95 is located .3 miles to the south. H.W. Butterworth and Sons Company (1870, NR 2010) is located .3 miles to the northeast.

The 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-story building was constructed in eight phases: c. 1769, 1858, c. 1860, 1887, 1894, 1904 and 1958 (Figure #1 – Building Chronology). Despite the phased construction, the consistency of building material, style and use give the building a cohesive appearance. The Penn Asylum retains its integrity, as both the overall form and defining institutional characteristics remain intact since the last period of major construction in 1958.

The oldest portion of the building dates to c. 1769 and was originally part of the West Hill estate. The 3 ½-story building is only visible on its east and west elevations, and both are clad in painted stucco with regular, 1/1 vinyl windows and basement windows with brick infill (Photographs #1 and 2). The west elevation also features a continuous, c. 1915 porch on the 1st and 2nd floors (Photographs #3 and 4). This section has a gabled roof.

In 1858, the mansion was expanded slightly to the north. Only the east elevation is visible, but it matches the composition and scale of the c. 1769 section (Photographs #1 and 2). The north, west and south elevations are abutted by the 1904; 1887; and c. 1769 sections, respectively.

In c. 1860, a series of rowhouses was constructed along E. Susquehanna Avenue, to the north of the Penn Asylum. The rowhouse immediately to the north of the building (1413 E. Susquehanna Avenue) was purchased by the institution in 1896 and thereafter incorporate into its operations. The rowhouse, facing

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1 Historically, E. Susquehanna Avenue was known as Otis Street, Belgrade Street was known as West Street and E. Fletcher Street was known as Capewell Street.
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E. Susquehanna Avenue, is 3-stories with a 2-story rear extension. The front elevation is clad in brick with a marble base and a cornice covered by vinyl siding (Photograph #5). The 1st floor contains an elevated, single-leaf wood door with a 1-light wood transom, which is accessed by three marble steps. To the south of the door are two 1/1 vinyl windows with painted stone heads and sills. The 2nd and 3rd floors each contain two 1/1 vinyl windows with painted stone heads and sills. The south elevation faces a small, paved alley that is accessed by a metal gate (Photograph #13). It is clad in painted stucco. The rear elevations are clad in brick on the 1st floor and painted stucco above (Photograph #6). All have a combination of regularly spaced 1/1 vinyl and single and paired 6/6 wood windows. The 3-story section has a gabled roof, and the 2-story section has a shed roof.

The south elevation of the rowhouse and the north elevation of the primary Penn Asylum building are currently connected by a late 20th century, enclosed, corrugated metal bridge at the 2nd floor (Photographs #5 and 6). This physical connection is shown on period maps as early as 1917.

The 1867 section is located to the south of the c. 1769 section. The east elevation, facing E. Fletcher Street, is slightly recessed from the c. 1769 section, but otherwise matches the composition and scale of the c. 1769 section (Photographs #1 and 2). In keeping with the c. 1769 section, the west elevation is also clad in painted stucco with regular, 1/1 vinyl windows, and also has the c. 1915 continuous balconies (Photograph #3). The south elevation is abutted by the southern 1958 section on the 1st and 2nd floors. The 3rd floor matches the composition and scale of the remaining elevations. The north elevation is entirely abutted by the c. 1769 section. The addition has a hipped roof.

The 1887 section was constructed to the west of the 1858 section. It is fully abutted to the east and west by the 1858 and 1894 elevations, respectively. The 3-story building is clad in brick and painted stucco with a corbelled brick cornice. On the south elevation, the 1st floor is entirely abutted by the northern 1958 section. The 2nd and 3rd floors are divided into three materials: red brick; a projecting vinyl-clad bay; and painted stucco from west to east. All sections have 1/1 vinyl windows (Photograph #7). The north elevation is clad in stucco and contains regularly spaced 1/1 vinyl windows (Photograph #8). A brick chimney projects from the center of the elevation. The roof of this section is flat.

The 1894 section is the largest of all the additions. Located at the southwest corner of the site, it is 3 ½-stories in height and entirely clad in red brick with a marble water table and a vinyl-clad cornice with brick corbels. There is a marble datestone above the water table at the southwest corner of the building. The south side of the stone reads “1852” for the year that the Asylum was founded, and the west side reads “1894” to commemorate the construction of the addition (Photographs #9 and 10). The addition is comprised of a central block with a hipped roof; a projecting tower at the southwest corner that has a flat roof; and a projecting section at the northeast corner that also has a flat roof. The primary, west, elevation
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
County and State
Name of Property

faces E. Susquehanna Avenue and is ten bays wide (Photographs #11-13). All of the openings in the raised basement contain glass block infill and stone heads. On the 1st floor, the center bay contains an elevated, single-leaf, 1-light, 2-panels wood door with 1-light wood sidelights and a wood fanlight above (Photograph #2).

The entrance to the 1894 addition has a decorative stone head with a keystone featuring a bas-relief bust of William Penn (Photograph #12). It is accessed by a concrete ramp and steps with a metal railing. The remaining 1st floor openings, as well as those on the 2nd and 3rd floors, contain 1/1 vinyl windows with marble heads and sills. The south elevation is two bays wide (Photograph #14). The westernmost bay on the 1st floor contains an elevated single-leaf metal door with a 1-light sidelight to the east, an arched, 1-light metal transom and a stone lintel with a flush stone keystone. The entrance is located up four stone steps. The easternmost bay contains a 1/1 vinyl window with a marble head and sill. On the 2nd and 3rd floors, the westernmost bay contains a single-leaf metal door with a marble lintel that leads to an exterior, open, metal fire escape. The easternmost bay contains a 1/1 vinyl window with a marble head and sill. The east elevation is eight bays wide. The fourth bay from the south on the 2nd and 3rd floors contains a projecting, 3-sided, vinyl clad bay (Photographs #15-17). The remainder of the openings on all floors contain 1/1 vinyl windows with stone heads and sills. The elevation also features the c. 1915 continuous balconies. The north elevation faces a narrow alley and contains multiple window openings containing both brick infill and 1/1 vinyl windows (Photograph #6). The projecting section at the southwest corner was originally topped by a prominent Italianate cupola (Figure #2). The cupola, which was removed prior to 1958 for unknown reasons, added enough height that the Delaware River was visible to those who climbed up it (Figure #3). Both projecting sections match the material and detailing of the central section. All openings on both contain 1/1 vinyl windows with stone heads and sills.

The 1904 construction consists of a 4 1/2-story brick section facing E. Fletcher Street, to the north of the 1858 section, and a freestanding, 3-story brick section to the west. The east elevation of the west section is three bays wide and a corbelled brick stringcourse between the 3rd and 4th floors and a simple metal cornice (Photograph #18). The raised basement openings contain concrete infill with a painted stone sill. On the 1st floor, the southernmost bay contains glass block infill with a metal vents and stone heads and sills. The two northernmost bays contain brick infill and stone heads and sills. The 2nd through 4th floor openings all contain 1/1 vinyl windows and stone heads and sills. The north elevation faces a narrow, paved alley with a metal gate (Photograph #18). There are no openings on the lower three floors and two 1/1 vinyl windows with stone heads and sills on the 4th floor. The west elevation is two bays wide with the northern bay projecting from the southern (Photograph #19). On the 1st floor, the northernmost bay contains a double-leaf, 1-light wood door. The southernmost bay contains an elevated single-leaf metal door with a stone lintel that is accessed by two stone steps with a metal railing to the north of paired 1/1

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vinyl windows with a stone sill and a metal, I-beam head. The remaining bays on the elevation contain 1/1 vinyl windows and stone heads and sills. The south elevation is entirely abutted by the 1858 section on the 1st through 3rd floors. The upper floor contains two 1/1 vinyl windows and stone heads and sills. The addition has a flat roof with four square skylights.

The western 1904 section is a freestanding, exterior stair tower that is clad in brick with shallow brick corbelling along the roofline. The roof is flat with a large, centered mechanical unit and partial wood picket screening. The west elevation contains a single-leaf metal door with a 1-light metal transom and a stone lintel that is located up one stone step and two 2/2 metal windows at the north end of the elevation (Photograph #20). The south elevation contains a single-leaf metal door on the 2nd and 3rd floors that provide access to metal fire escapes that connect to the north elevation of the 1887 and the west elevation of the eastern 1904 section (Photograph #20). The east and north elevations have no openings (Photograph #21).

The 1st and 2nd floor porches along the west elevation of the c. 1769 and 1867 and the east elevation of the 1894 sections date to c. 1915 (Photographs #3, 4 and 15-17). Both porches have concrete floors and metal railings. The 1st floor porches are elevated and located up three, centered concrete steps with a metal railing. The balcony levels are connected by straight-run contemporary wood stairs with metal railings. The 2nd floor balcony has a metal shed roof.

The 1958 campaign consists of a 1- and 2-story addition in the southeast corner of the site and a 1-story section at the north end of the courtyard. The southern 1958 section is clad in red brick on the 1st floor with a simple brick cornice and a metal railing around the roofline. The east elevation, facing E. Fletcher Street, and the west elevation, facing the courtyard, contain three 1/1 vinyl windows and stone heads (Photographs #22 and 23). The south elevation, facing Belgrade Street, is four bays wide. The first, third and fourth bays from the east contain 1/1 vinyl windows and stone heads (Photographs #22-24). The second bay from the east contains a single-leaf, 4-panel and 4-light wood door with 5-light wood sidelight and a wood fanlight above, similar to the entrance on the 1894 section. The entrance is topped by an arched brick head. The north elevation entirely abuts the 1867 section. The 2nd floor is recessed from the south elevation and is clad in vinyl with a metal railing along the roofline. The east and west elevations contain large, 2-light aluminum windows. The south elevation contains a double-leaf, glazed aluminum door flanked by five, 1-light aluminum windows. Both levels have a flat roof. The northern 1958 section is only visible on its south elevation (Photograph #7). It is clad in brown brick with a simple brick cornice. Three bays wide, the outer bays contain 1/1 vinyl windows, and the center bay contains a large, 1-light vinyl window flanked by 4/4 vinyl windows. It has a flat roof with a metal railing.
On the interior, the floors of the main building have the same general configuration with the rooms organized around the perimeter of the floor plate and accessed by a central, U-shaped, double-loaded corridor (Photographs #25-56). On the 1st floor, adjacent to the entrance on the 1894 addition is a small vestibule with carpeted floors, plaster walls, wood chair rail and baseboards and a late-20th century, double-leaf, glazed aluminum door with a multi-light arched wood surround that leads to the primary lobby (Photograph #28). The lobby has carpeted floors, plaster walls and painted wood trim (Photograph #29). The former parlor space, which was more recently used as a chapel, is located directly to the north (Photograph #30). It has carpeted floors, a dropped acoustical tile ceiling, non-historic columns and painted wood trim. The northeast corner of the 1st floor also contains open, amenity and storage spaces, all of which have carpeted floors, plywood subfloors, linoleum tile, dropped drywall and acoustical tile ceilings, fluorescent lighting and plaster and drywall partitions (Photographs #32-34). The southeastern wing of the building contains smaller office, amenity and storage spaces, all of which have carpeted floors, plywood subfloors, dropped drywall and acoustical tile ceilings, fluorescent lighting and plaster and drywall partitions. In select locations on the perimeter walls, the original painted wood baseboard, and window surrounds and aprons remain. The southwestern corner of the floorplate contains two residential units with private bathrooms. The finishes match those in the southeastern wing. The 2nd and 3rd floors each contain sixteen residential rooms. The finishes are consistent with those on the 1st floor.

On all floors, the rooms are accessed by a central, U-shaped, double-loaded corridor that provides access to rooms organized around the perimeter of the floor plate (Photographs #26, 32, 42, 43, 46, 48, 50 and 52). The hallway finishes include carpeted floors, plywood subfloors, acoustical tile ceilings, original plaster ceilings and plaster walls.

Despite the phased building campaigns, the interior of the Penn Asylum, with the exception of the c. 1860 rowhouse, reads as a single, comprehensive building. Given the fairly extensive interior remodeling over the years, there are no major identifiers between each building campaign.

The interior of the building has two primary, original stairways, which are located in the center and near the northeast corner of the 1894 section. The center stairway is an impressive U-return with carpeted treads and risers and a heavy wood railing and balusters (Photograph #40). The northeast stairway has a straight-run configuration with carpeted treads and risers and a heavy wood railing and balusters (Photograph #31). Both stairways provide access between the 1st and 3rd floors. The third original stairway remains in the 1904 stair tower. It was not accessible at the time of survey. There are also six secondary stairways, which are a combination of straight-run, L-shaped and U-return (Photographs #52, 53 and 56). None appear to be original to their additions and all only provide partial access between floors. Lastly, there is one passenger elevator, which is located in the northwest corner of the 1894
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section. It dates to the late 20th century and provides access between all floors. With the exception of the one in the freestanding stair tower. It was not accessible at the time of the survey.

The interior of the rowhouse continues to read as a freestanding unit (Photographs #57-62). There is a straight-run stairway with wood treads and risers along the north elevation that provides access to all floors. The 1st and 2nd floors are arranged into three linear spaces and the 3rd floor contains rooms in the northwest, southwest and southeast corners that are accessed by the stair hall. On all floors, the stair hall has wood floors, painted plaster walls and ceilings and painted wood trim. On all floors, the small rooms have wood and carpeted floors, plaster walls, some of which have painted wood baseboards, door and window trim and plaster and dropped acoustical tile ceilings.

Integrity
The Penn Asylum retains integrity. Both the overall form and the defining architectural characteristics remain, including its brick and stucco sections, brick detailing and regular window openings. While some window units have been replaced, no substantial changes have been made to the overall fenestration pattern. The quality, placement and condition of the construction materials, as well as the vernacular architectural style are both highly characteristic of the period and also all remain wholly intact. Despite the phased construction of the building, there have been no demolished or altered sections either during or since the period of significance.

On the interior of the building, all of the spaces and circulation patterns remain intact. Although contemporary finishes such as carpeting and dropped ceilings have been installed, it is likely to assume that the original finishes remain beneath. Moreover, due to the somewhat modest nature of the institution, there was never a particularly high level of finish and detail.

The location and setting of the building remain intact since the initial construction, particularly the surrounding and dense residential community, which was such an integral component of the home’s operations.
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark “x” in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Social History

Period of Significance
1858-1971

Significant Dates
C. 1769, 1858, c. 1860, 1887, 1894, 1904 and 1958

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Criterion A: Significance in Social History
The Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women, also known as the Penn Home for Indigent Widows and Single Women and the Penn Widows’ Asylum (hereafter referred to as the Penn Asylum), is significant under Criterion A, Social History, as an early and important example of a late 19th century endowed, voluntary philanthropic institution built specifically to house and care for single and widowed women in reduced economic circumstances. The period of significance begins when the institution moved to the property in 1858 and ends in 1991, as that was the year that the institution amended its charter to allow men to be admitted as residents.
Building and Institutional History

The Penn Asylum was established in 1848 as a residential accommodation for single and widowed women in “reduced circumstances.” The four, local women who founded the home were Elizabeth Van Dusen, Margaret Creamer, Elizabeth Keen and Ann Lee. All “shipwright’s wives”, this commonality was one of the reasons that the institution was non-denominational, choosing instead to serve the broader community. Perhaps appropriately, but nonetheless unusual, was the fact that the home was “conducted entirely by ladies.” This applied not only to the Board of Managers, consisting of a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, but also to the committee members and the membership at-large. Membership cost $1 per year and was in charge of electing the Board, committee members and trustees. In 1858, the Penn Asylum had approximately 500 members. Of those involved with the organization, it was only this membership group that was male. However, their only involvement was to manage the real estate held by the home and advise the Board.

After first operating out of a private home in the Kensington neighborhood, on Crease and Franklin Streets, with thirteen residents, the institution was incorporated in 1852 and, after a second rental location, purchased the former West Hill estate for its permanent home on June 14, 1858 for $6,000. The owner of the estate, Mr. Cooley, donated $1,000 to the purchase price and the Penn Asylum had raised $2,000. They consequently opened with $3,000 in debt. The Penn Asylum deemed the relocation necessary, as they previously had to turn away prospective residents because there wasn’t enough room. Richard Vaux, then Mayor of Philadelphia, presided over the dedication.

The acquisition consisted of the oldest section of the Penn Asylum complex, which dates to c. 1769. These sections were originally constructed by the Austin family as an estate called West Hill. The Austin

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family were prominent local shipbuilders and the 3-story, stucco-clad, Italianate mansion they built for themselves was typical of the era (Figure #4). 12

Referred to as a “fine old mansion, 40 feet square”, the Penn Asylum undertook “necessary repairs” on the property, including the construction of the 1858 section, which included a new kitchen, and formally opened in October of that year. 13 The first year, the home could accommodate thirty residents for a fee of $30 with bedroom furniture or $70 without. 14 This fee provided each resident, initially referred to as an “inmate,” with a “home during life, abundant food, comfortable clothing and a kind existence” for the rest of her life. 15

By 1863, the home had thirty-six residents and, in 1867, another expansion was undertaken. 16 By November of that year, the home had been “enlarged and improved” and could then accommodate up to fifty residents (Figure #5). 17

By 1874, the home had fifty-four residents and twenty-five managers. 18 The requirements stated that each resident have a minimum age of sixty and lack the “means [that are] altogether inadequate to her support. To all whom it receives it supplies a home during life, abundant food, comfortable clothing and kind attendance.” 19 Additionally, the home “recognize[d] no sectarian preferences. The requisite for participation in its charities are advanced age, destitution and meritorious character. No one is admitted who has not passed the limit of sixty years, whose means are not altogether inadequate to her support, and whose character and habits are entirely without reproach.” 20

The following year, there were an additional two residents. It was also reported than the entrance fee had increased to $150. There is no explanation as to why that had changed. The 1875 Hopkins Atlas shows the c. 1769, 1858 and 1867 sections (as well as then then unrelated rowhouse at 1413 E. Susquehanna Avenue) (Figure #6). The structure, labeled “Penn Widows’ Asylum” is surrounded by L-shaped green space. There is also an unrelated structure at the southwest corner of the property with an address of 800 Belgrade Street.

12 “Old Kensington.”
14 “The Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women,” 32.
15 “2176-78 E. York Street,” 22.
16 “The Penn Widow’s Asylum.”
18 “Penn Asylum.” The Philadelphia Daily News (9 January 1874): 2. Based on primary references, most residents would have had private rooms.
19 “Penn Asylum.”
In 1887, a 3-story addition was constructed perpendicular to the 1858 section. Constructed by Alex J. Richard, the additional square footage increased the resident count to sixty-three. It also provided for a new kitchen, laundry, bath and toilets, as well as a larger dining room. Perhaps in order to pay for the construction, the entrance fee was raised to $200. However, this provided a home that was in “good order and everything needful provided for the comfort of the inmates.”

On January 14, 1893, the lot at the southwest corner of the block was purchased from Harriett A. Lovett. With this acquisition, Penn Asylum would now own the entire south end of the block. That August, they accepted accept bids for the proposed addition and when the corner stone was laid on March 16, 1894, the event was important enough for both the Mayor of Philadelphia and the Governor of Pennsylvania to be in attendance. The 3-story, brick, L-shaped addition was designed by Joseph F. Myers and had brick detailing of a “most ornamental character” (Figures #2 and 7). The 1st floor contained a parlor, a Board of Managers room and other apartments. The 2nd and 3rd floors contained residential rooms with hot and cold water. The additional square footage could accommodate an additional fifty residents. The completed addition is shown on an 1895 Bromley Atlas (Figure #8).

On May 13, 1896, the Penn Asylum purchased the row house at 1413 E. Susquehanna Avenue from H.B. Luffberry. The reason for this acquisition is not definitively known, but it was presumably a way of providing additional square footage at minimal effort. A 1901 report stated that the home was in “very good condition” with seventy residents. The entrance fee at the time was $300 and the minimum age was still fixed at sixty-five.

In 1904, Joseph F. Myers was again hired to construct a 4-story brick building, containing a kitchen on the 1st floor and laundry on the 4th floor, as well as a freestanding brick fire tower at a cost of $11,500. The lot was previously vacant. The completed addition is shown on a 1910 Bromley Atlas (Figure #9). A 1912 report stated that the home had a capacity of seventy-six but only had seventy-four residents, each of whom had their own room.

22 “Official Documents.”
26 “With Silver Trowel.”
A 1917 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows minimal changes from the 1910 Bromley Atlas (Figure #10). On the 1st floor of the 1894 addition, the former parlor space is shown as being used as a chapel (Photograph #30). There is also a 2nd floor bridge between the 1894 addition and the c. 1860 rowhouse at 1413 E. Susquehanna Avenue and the double-height balconies along the sides of the courtyard. Balconies, such as these, had a medicinal function beginning in the early 20th century, providing fresh air and circulation.

There were no substantial changes in configuration or use until 1958 when two small additions were constructed. A 1- and 2-story addition was built at the south end of the 1867 section and a 1-story addition was built at the south end of the 1887 section. Both were constructed on previously open land. Shortly after completion, Penn Asylum housed seventy-five residents.

Penn Asylum continued in the same vein for nearly twenty years until 1991, when the first man was admitted as a resident. This was the first significant change in use since the home was founded in 1852. Internal discussions regarding this decision are no longer available but it is likely due to a significant decrease in occupants, which totaled twenty-two in 1991.

**A Brief Discussion of Operations at the Penn Asylum**

The Penn Asylum was established in 1852 to provide residential and medical services to lower-income women. Referred to as “one of the oldest and worthiest institutions of its kind in the city” in an “Old-fashioned and homelike” setting, the home filled a gap in elder services that did not exist at a municipal level. In addition to room and board, there were also medical professionals on staff. One of the first, as well as the most prominent, doctors was Thomas Shriner (b. 1843). Shriner was “one of the most prominent physicians in northeastern Philadelphia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.” His primary practice was located at 2176-2718 E. York Street, one-half mile northeast of the Penn Asylum, but he was actively associated with the home in a medical capacity for forty-six years. This testifies not only to the extremely high level of care that was provided to an often-overlooked population but also that the home was an inherently neighbor-focused institution. In reviewing period obituaries, the vast majority of residents with noted addresses came from the adjacent neighborhoods.

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30 City of Philadelphia Building Permit #84818 (30 January 1958).
31 “Giving the Elderly a Place to Live.”
32 “Giving the Elderly a Place to Live.”
34 “2176-78 E. York Street,” 22.
35 “2176-78 E. York Street,” 24.
At the time of its founding, the Penn Asylum was located in a rowhouse in Kensington. In its bylaws, the Penn Asylum states the following:

This Society was founded for the relief of aged and indigent women. It recognizes no sectarian preferences – the only requisites for participation in its charities are, advanced age, destitution and meritorious character. No one is admitted who has not passed the limit of sixty years, whose means are not altogether inadequate to her support, and whose character and habits are entirely without reproach. It is especially designed to furnish an asylum for those whose earlier years have been passed in more elevated walks of life, and whose experience has not therefore inured them to the struggles of penury. To all whom it receives it supplies a home during life, abundant food, comfortable clothing and kind attendance; watching over them in sickness and administering to their wants in a filial spirit.

This missive is informative not only because it provides information about the intent of the Penn Asylum, but also because the vast majority of it was copied directly from the bylaws of the Indigent Widows and Single Women’s Society of Philadelphia, discussed below. Given their significant overlap of operation, the reuse is not a surprise, but it is worth noting that nowhere in the Penn Asylum’s records do either acknowledge this attribution or credit the Indigent Widows and Single Women’s Society of Philadelphia, which was founded in 1819, for their basis.

The Penn Asylum, which was known as a “gracious home living for retired ladies,” had additional requirements for admittance. In 1858, entrance cost either $60 and “furnishing a good bedstead and bedding and furniture for a room, or by the payment of seventy dollars without furniture.” Tenant were also required to keep up any existing pensions, give over any property either at the time of admission or whenever it was inherited during their stay, and had to leave the furniture they brought to the home after their death.

Throughout its history, funding for the home relied entirely upon the donations that it received. In 1858, when the Penn Asylum first occupied the former West Hill estate, all of the finishes and furnishings were donated by the community. These ranged from paper hangings and medicines to spoons and two bunches of herrings.

In 1867, an article in The Philadelphia Daily News reported that the home was “supported entirely by the voluntary contributions of those whose kind heartedness leads them in that direction.”

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newspapers also note numerous bequests to the home, as well as notifications of fundraisers, including lectures, concerts, skating parties, teas and raffles.

A Brief Discussion of Old-Age Homes in Philadelphia in the 19th and 20th Centuries

The Penn Asylum was not the first society of its kind, either with respect to the neighborhood in which it was located or the community that it served. In Kensington, the Kensington Soup Society, which was founded in 1844, served as a soup kitchen and a temporary shelter that specifically helped those who lived within designated boundaries.42 Similarly, beginning in 1860, St. Mary’s Hospital opened a free dispensary to neighborhood residents.43 Earlier female-oriented charities included the Female Society for the Relief of the Distresses (1795); the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances (1800); the Female Hospitable Society (1808); and the Indigent Widows & Single Women's Society, later known as the Ralston Center (1819).44

These societies were not just a manifestation of the city’s nickname but part of a larger socio-economic movement throughout the country. In the 19th century, rapid population growth, along with “changes in family structure, religious belief, labor force participation, occupational opportunities, as well as advances in medicine, science and technology, all served to separate the old from their traditional spheres and accepted patterns of life.”45 If an old or sick person was economically disadvantaged and could not be cared for inside the home, they would be subjected to a government-run institution: poorhouses, insane asylums, almshouses or other municipal facilities.46

As it became understood that these institutions either did not or could not provide an optimum level of care, “various church denominations, beneficial orders, [and] benevolent societies” stepped in to fill the gaps.47 By doing those, these entities were able to give "respectable" poor people a way to avoid the degradation of the poorhouse. Benevolent societies affiliated with ethnic, religious, trade or social groups organized old-age assistance programs by collecting monthly dues from members to be used when they were elderly, infirm, or in need. These nonprofit societies were called "voluntary" organizations, because each eligible person could choose whether or not to join. In addition, new laws were enacted in the late 19th century.

43 “Old Kensington.”
44 It is not believed that any of these buildings are extant, other than the most recent home of the Ralston Center.
century that gave these charitable organizations the ability to operate like corporations and allowed wealthy benefactors to fund old age homes for people who fit specialized criteria based on poverty level, gender, age, race, country of origin, and profession.

By the early 20th century, hundreds of large voluntary and non-profit old-age homes were built throughout the nation, many set on large pieces of property with farms or gardens. These voluntary and charitable facilities seemed luxurious compared to government-funded almshouses. Many were newly constructed buildings, built specifically to house the elderly, and others were stately old mansions whose owners had died.48

In Philadelphia, specifically, there were sixty-two old age homes, which was “significantly more than other cities.”49 These not only fit within the criteria above but also shared many programmatic and operational similarities. The Penn Asylum, along with most others in the city charged an admission fee, the average of which was $500 in the first half of the 20th century.50 Additionally, there was typically a minimum age requirement, which was, most often, sixty or sixty-five.51 Both to save on costs and enhance the living environment, these societies were also located in more mansion-like accommodations and furnished with antiques or other personalized furnishings, such as window treatments and wallpaper, which further distinguished them from more formal institutions.

While the Penn Asylum is part of the particular subset described above, the 20th century saw significant progress in the relationship between State and Federal agencies and the elderly poor. Landmark policies such as the Social Security Act of 1935 and its subsequent amendment in 1956, legislation in 1950 that licensed and provided oversight for nursing homes and the creation of Medicare in 1965, all provided significant financial and functional resources for this underserved group. However, as a private institution, Penn Asylum did not have any direct benefit from these policies, including Medicare.

Comparables
The closest comparable institution to the Penn Asylum is the Indigent Widows and Single Women’s Society of Philadelphia, now known as the Ralston Center (PA SHPO DOE 2019).52 Established in 1819, it was the first and only organization in Philadelphia to serve this community until the establishment of the Penn Asylum in 1852. The Ralston Center was supported by major names in Philadelphia society, including Wistar, Lippincott, Vaux, Mutter and Chew. It provided the same relief as the Penn Asylum – namely room and board to single and impoverished women with access to limited medical care. First

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49 Snyder, 24.
located on Cherry Street between N. 5th and 6th Streets, the organization offered room to thirty women.\textsuperscript{53} The membership fee for donors was either $3 per year or $30 for life. This was in contrast to the membership fee for the Penn Home, which was either $1 per year or $20 for life. Although “indigent” was in their title, the Indigent Widows and Single Women’s Society catered to upper-middle class women “who have known affluence, and the better distinctions of social worth, and who ministered in their day to the bounty on which they are now dependent.”\textsuperscript{54} As with the Penn Asylum, there was an entrance fee but while the Penn Asylum offered theirs at $30, the Indigent Widows and Single Women’s Society offered theirs at $150 for the same year, further reflecting this alternate demographic. By 1887, this fee had increased to $400. As with Penn Asylum, the center also relocated several times, first to Cherry Street between N. 18th and N. 19th Streets in 1857 and then to a mansion on Chestnut Street in West Philadelphia in 1884. Lastly, the center ultimately also offered rooms to men, as at the Penn Asylum, beginning in 1962.

In addition to the price point and a more rigorous screening process at the society, the primary difference between the two institutions is that the society operated in several locations around Philadelphia and had no specific connection to any neighborhood within the city. The Penn Asylum, on the other hand, had deep roots in the Kensington community and was very committed to prioritizing the care of its residents.

In the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, there were twenty-two institutions that catered to a similar demographic, however, all but the Ralston Center and the Penn Asylum had such specific requirements for entry that they created “homogenous units which reflected the public’s greatly expanded conception of who among the elderly should be privately institutionalized.”\textsuperscript{55} In particular, this focus was concentrated around religious groups, including the “Lutherans in 1859, the Methodists and Jews in 1865, the Baptists in 1869, the Presbyterians in 1872 and 1885, and the Evangelical Association in 1888.”\textsuperscript{56} That both the Ralston Center and the Penn Asylum not did require such an affiliation from their residents sets them distinctly apart in a time when religious identification was a consistent, defining personal characteristic.

\textsuperscript{54} The 28\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report for the Year 1844 of the Indigent Widows’ and Single Women’s Society of Philadelphia, 5.
\textsuperscript{55} Haber, 246.
\textsuperscript{56} Haber, 247.
9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


City of Philadelphia Building Permit #84818 (30 January 1958).


“Presser Home for Retired Music Teachers.” National Register of Historic Places. 2005


Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #________
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #________
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #________

Primary location of additional data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
   Name of repository: ________________________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ______________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: ___________________ Longitude: ___________________
2. Latitude: ___________________ Longitude: ___________________
3. Latitude: ___________________ Longitude: ___________________
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property                   County and State

4. Latitude:   Longitude:

Or

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927   or   ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:   Easting:    Northing:
2. Zone:   Easting:    Northing:
3. Zone:   Easting:    Northing:
4. Zone:   Easting:    Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property corresponds to the entire current tax parcel. (see Figure 12)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all resources and land historically associated with the Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women, as determined by period maps and current tax parcels, and does not exclude any known buildings, structures, or acreage.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title:  Logan I. Ferguson, Senior Associate
organization:  Powers & Company, Inc.
street & number:  1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1717
city or town:  Philadelphia    state:  PA    zip code:  19107
e-mail: logan@powersco.net    telephone:  (215) 636-0192    date:  August 2022
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Additional Documentation

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: The Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
City or Vicinity: Philadelphia County: Philadelphia State: PA
Date Photographed: December 2021

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph #</th>
<th>Description of Photograph</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>East elevation, view southwest</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>East elevation, view northwest</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Courtyard, view east</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Courtyard, Stairway, view north</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>West elevation, view northeast</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>East elevation, view west</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Courtyard, view northeast</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>North elevation, view south</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Datestone, view east</td>
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<td>West elevation, view southeast</td>
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<td>West and south elevations, view northeast</td>
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<td>Courtyard, Stairway, view north</td>
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<td>Courtyard, view southwest</td>
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<td>South and west elevations, view northeast</td>
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<td>1st floor, Lobby, view east</td>
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<td>1st floor, view south</td>
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<td>1st floor, Porch, view south</td>
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<td>61.</td>
<td>Rowhouse, 3rd floor, view west</td>
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<td>62.</td>
<td>Rowhouse, 3rd floor, view east</td>
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</table>
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Name of Property: Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
County and State: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #1 – East elevation, view southwest
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #2 – East elevation, view northwest
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

Photograph #3 – Courtyard, view east
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #4 – Courtyard, Stairway, view north
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #5 – West elevation, view northeast
Photograph #6 – East elevation, view west
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property
County and State

Photograph #7 – Courtyard, view northeast
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #8 – North elevation, view south
Photograph #9 – Datestone, view east
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #10 – Datestone, view north
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #11 – West elevation, view southeast
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property                  County and State

Photograph #12 – West elevation, Entrance, view east

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Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #13 – West and south elevations, view northeast
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

Photograph #14 – South elevation, view north
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #15 – Courtyard, view north
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #16 – Courtyard, Stairway, view north
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property: Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
County and State: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #17 – Courtyard, view southwest
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property County and State

Photograph #18 – East elevation, view southwest
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Photograph #19 – West elevation, view northeast
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #20 – West elevation, view east
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property: Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
County and State: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #21 – North elevation, view southwest
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #22 – South and east elevations, view northwest
Photograph #23 – South and west elevations, view northeast
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #24 – South elevation, view north
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property
County and State

Photograph #25 – 1st floor, view southwest
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #26 – 1st floor, Hallway, view south
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property: ____________________________
County and State: ____________________________

Photograph #27 – 1st floor, view west
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

Photograph #28 – 1st floor, Vestibule, view west
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property
County and State

Photograph #29 – 1st floor, Lobby, view east
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #31 – 1st floor, Stairway, view southeast

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Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #32 – 1st floor, view east
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #33 – 1st floor, view west
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #34 – 1st floor, view northwest
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

Photograph #35 – 1st floor, view west
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single
Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #36 – 1st floor, Hallway, view south
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #37 – 1st floor, view south
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

Photograph #38 – 1st floor, Porch, view south
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #39 – 2nd floor, view southwest

Section 9-end page 65
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property: Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
County and State: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #40 – 2nd floor, Stairway, view southeast
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single
Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #41 – 2nd floor, view east

Section 9-end page 67
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #42 – 2nd floor, Hallway, view south

Section 9-end page 68
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

Photograph #43 – 2nd floor, Elevator, view west
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name of Property</th>
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<tr>
<td>Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women</td>
<td>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Photograph #44 – 2nd floor, view south**
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property
County and State

Photograph #45 – 2nd floor, view northeast
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #46 – 2nd floor, Hallway, view south

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Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property: ____________________________
County and State: ____________________________

Photograph #47 – 2nd floor, view southeast
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Photograph #48 – 3rd floor, Hallway, view north
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #49 – 3rd floor, view east
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

Photograph #50 – 3rd floor, view east
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photograph #51 – 3rd floor, view southeast
Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

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Photograph #52 – 3rd floor, Stairway, view south

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Photograph #53 – 3rd floor, Stairway, view east
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Photograph #54 – 3rd floor, view east
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Photograph #55 – 4th floor, view east
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Photograph #56 – 4th floor, Stairway, view south
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Photograph #57 – Rowhouse, 1st floor, Stairway, view east

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Photograph #58 – Rowhouse, 1st floor, view east
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Photograph #59 – Rowhouse, 2nd floor, Stairway, view east
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Photograph #60 – Rowhouse, 2nd floor, view east

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Photograph #61 – Rowhouse, 3rd floor, view west
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Photograph #62 – Rowhouse, 3rd floor, view east

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Figure 1 – Building Chronology. Project north is at the top of the page.
Figure 2 – “Penn Asylum”, 1910. Jane Campbell Scrapbooks, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Note the presence of the cupola.
Figure 3 – “Penn Asylum”, 1958. Note that the cupola has been removed and that the southern 1958 addition is visible.
Figure 4 – “West Hill”, c. 1840. “The Penn Asylum for Indigent Widows and Single Women.” Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (2020): 7. With the exception of the interior staircase, very little integrity remains of this original structure.

Figure 5 – “Penn Asylum”, c. 1890. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The c. 1769, 1867 and 1887 sections are visible.
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**Figure 6** – Hopkins Atlas, 1875. The 1875 Hopkins Atlas shows the c. 1769, 1858 and 1867 sections (as well as then unrelated rowhouse at 1413 E. Susquehanna Avenue) (Figure #6). The structure, labeled “Penn Widows’ Asylum” is surrounded by L-shaped green space.
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Figure 7 – “Penn Asylum”, 1894. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The 1867 and the 1894 additions are visible.
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**Figure 8** – Bromley Atlas, 1895. The c. 1769, 1858, 1867, 1887 and 1894 sections are visible.
Figure 9 – Bromley Atlas, 1910. The c. 1769, 1838, 1867, 1887, 1894 and 1904 sections are visible.
Figure 10 – Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1917. The porches are visible, along with the connector to the associated rowhouse.
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Figure 11 – USGS Map excerpt. Penn Asylum shown in blue.
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Figure 12 – Site Plan with NR Boundary shown in red. Scale: 1” = 65’. The National Register boundary corresponds to the tax parcel for the subject property. Directional north is at the top of the image.
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Figure 13 – Aerial image (2021), view northwest.
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Figure 14 – Aerial image (2021), view southwest.
Figure 15 – Existing Site and 1st Floor Plan with Photograph Key.
Figure 16 – Existing 2nd Floor Plan with Photograph Key.
Figure 17 – Existing 3rd Floor Plan with Photograph Key.
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Figure 18 – Existing 4th Floor Plan with Photograph Key.
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