OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the four-story building at 704-08 S. 6th Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The proposed boundary excludes the non-historic former garage on the parcel formerly known as 710 S. 6th Street. The nomination contends that the Coroneos Brothers building, constructed in 1920, satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the building reflects the environment in an era characterized by the Classical Revival style of architecture with Beaux Arts influence. Under Criterion J, the nomination argues that the Coroneos Brothers building exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the community, as a purpose-built store and warehouse for the Coroneos brothers, who brought their grocery import/export business to an area of South Philadelphia that welcomed numerous immigrants and their businesses in the early 1900s.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Coroneos Brothers building on the parcel at 704-10 S. 6th Street satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J.
# Nomination of Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object

**Philadelphia Register of Historic Places**

**Philadelphia Historical Commission**

Submit all attached materials on paper and in electronic form (CD, email, flash drive). Electronic files must be Word or Word compatible.

1. **Address of Historic Resource** *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*
   - Street address: 704-10 S. 6th Street
   - Postal code: 19147

2. **Name of Historic Resource**
   - Historic Name: Coroneos Brothers
   - Current/Common Name: 704-08 S. 6th Street

3. **Type of Historic Resource**
   - Building
   - Structure
   - Site
   - Object

4. **Property Information**
   - Condition: good
   - Occupancy: occupied
   - Current use: condominium

5. **Boundary Description**
   - Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource’s boundaries.

6. **Description**
   - Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource’s physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. **Significance**
   - Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.
   - Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1920 to 1930
   - Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1920
   - Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Max A. Bernhardt
   - Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Penn Construction & Engineering Co.
   - Original owner: Coroneos Brothers, Inc.
   - Other significant persons:

---

1
CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:
The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

☐ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,

☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,

☑ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,

☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,

☐ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,

☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,

☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,

☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,

☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or

☑ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR
Organization: Bella Vista Neighbors Association
Date: April 7, 2023

Name with Title: Barbara Hauck-Mah, member
Email: hauckmah@gmail.com, ralph.marano1@gmail.com

Street Address: 801 S. Darien Street
Telephone: 973-818-4703

City, State, and Postal Code: 19147

Nominator ☐ is ☑ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: April 10, 2023

☑ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete
Date: April 19, 2023

Date of Notice Issuance: April 21, 2023

Property Owner at Time of Notice:
Name: Multiple condo owners
Address:

City: __________________________ State: ____ Postal Code: ______

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission:

Date of Final Action:

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected
The Coroneos Brothers building at 704-10 S. 6th Street is located on the west side of S. 6th Street between Bainbridge and Fitzwater Streets in the Bella Vista neighborhood of Philadelphia. The building is situated in a mixed residential and commercial area. The boundary for the designation includes only the four-story building on the parcels formerly known as 704 S. 6th Street, 706 S. 6th Street, and 708 S. 6th Street. The designation excludes the non-historic building on the parcel formerly known as 710 S. 6th Street, although this building is included in the official tax parcel as shown in Figure 1 above.
The boundary description for the four-story building is as follows:

Situate on the West side of 6th Street at the distance of 30 feet Southward from the South side of Bainbridge Street. Containing in front or breadth on the said 6th Street approximately 42 feet and extending of that width in length or depth Westward between lines parallel with the said Bainbridge Street approximately 71 feet. Being 704-08 S. 6th Street, and excluding the non-historic c. 1960 building at 710 S. 6th Street.
6. CORONEOS BROTHERS BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Coroneos Brothers store and warehouse building at 704-08 S. 6th Street was designed by architect Max Bernhardt in 1920 using a Classical Revival architectural motif. The building is four stories in height and three bays wide, clad in yellow brick with wide, triple light bays with casements common to industrial buildings. To the south at 710 S. 6th Street, a c. 1960 one-story former garage with second-story rooftop addition connects to the main building and is clad in a similar yellow brick. This building is part of the tax parcel but post-dates the period of significance and is excluded from the boundary for designation.

The first story of the building features rustic stonework piers with modern storefront infill between piers, with a terra cotta storefront cornice above. The upper floors continue the vertical piers between bays, with yellow brick cladding. Beneath the classically styled cornice, the company’s name “Coroneos Bros” is featured prominently on the frieze.

Both the north and south side elevations, in addition to the rear elevation, are exposed red brick. Visible telecommunications equipment is mounted to the roof.

Figure 3. View of part of the 700 block of S. 6th Street, Hidden City Philadelphia March 24, 2020.
Figure 4. 704-10 S. 6th Street, April 2023.
Figure 5. 704-08 S. 6th Street, February 2023.

Figure 6. Closeup of upper floors with "Coroneos-Bros" sign, February 2023.
Figure 7. View of rear from Bainbridge Street, August 2022. Only the upper floors with telecommunications equipment are visible. Source: Google.

Site and Building History

The subject property is located on the previous site of three separate three-story brick houses, as seen in the 1895 map below. Those three properties were purchased between 1912 and 1916 by George Coroneos, a Greek businessman. In 1920, he had the buildings demolished.

Figure 8. G.W. Bromley Philadelphia Atlas of 1895. Source: PhilaGeoHistory.org.
The Coroneos Brothers hired Philadelphia architect Max Bernhardt to design the building at 704-08 S. 6th Street. The description in the September 1, 1920 Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide states that the store and warehouse will be brick, slow burning construction, four stories, with a slag roof and cement and pine floors (Figure 9).

On October 1, 1920, the Penn Construction & Engineering Company was granted a permit to erect the four-story 10,000 square foot brick store and warehouse for the Coroneos Brothers grocery import business. George Coroneos managed the business with several of his brothers. They were known for their Greek and Italian specialties.¹

In later years, the first floor of the building was used as a showroom, and the upper floors served as a factory to manufacture ceramic tile. Once home to the Gemini Equipment Company, Leonard Borton and Ned Stein owned the building into the 1980s. In 1981, the building was purchased by interior designer Sandy Ward and accountant Thomas Baldwin. Ward completely demolished and redesigned the building’s interior. The renovated commercial building served as the home for Sandy Ward’s design and real estate companies, as well as the Tony Ward photography studio and Thomas Baldwin’s accounting firm. Since 2001, the building has been used as condominiums.

3 Bella Vista Neighbors Association website, May 18, 2021, Coroneos Brothers by Ralph Marano.
7. CORONEOS BROTHERS STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Coroneos Brothers building at 704-08 S. 6th Street is historically significant and merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Pursuant to Section 14-1004(1) of the Philadelphia Code, the property satisfies Criteria for Designation C and J.

(J) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

The Coroneos Brothers building exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the community, as a purpose-built store and warehouse for the Coroneos brothers who brought their grocery import/export business to an area of South Philadelphia which welcomed numerous immigrants and their businesses in the early 1900s.

George Coroneos (1878-1921; Figure 12), a Greek immigrant businessman, purchased the properties at 704, 706, and 708 S. 6th Street in South Philadelphia between 1912 and 1916 for his grocery import and export business which he ran with his brothers James (Dimitrios), Harry (Haralambos), and Peter (Panayoti). George came to the United States between 1906 and 1908. The Coroneos Brothers Company was established in 1904 in Piraeus, Greece. Before the construction of the subject building, they operated out of the rowhouses, according to a 1917 City Directory where Coroneos Brothers are listed as George, John, and Peter. The brothers hired architect Max Bernhardt to design the store and warehouse building following demolition of the rowhouses which stood on the site. The Coroneos Brothers were well-known in the Greek circles of Philadelphia. They had a branch office of the grocery store in Athens, Greece, and also imported groceries from Italy.

---


5 The Philadelphia Inquirer, February 18, 1921, p. 16.
South Philadelphia was a classic American immigrant portal neighborhood. The first of two waves of immigrants from Greece to the region came between the 1890s and the 1920s. During this period of immigration from the 1890s to the 1920s, about 400,000 Greeks entered the United States but only a few thousand settled in Greater Philadelphia because the city’s most attractive employment opportunities in sectors such as small manufacturing and printing required a knowledge of English, and because most manual labor jobs they might have filled had been taken by earlier-arriving Italians. However, it appears that some immigrant groups found opportunities for advancement in Philadelphia that they did not find in other large cities which had greater proportions of immigrant populations. Philadelphia’s location as a major inland port and rail center was also significant for an import/export grocery business like the Coroneos Brothers.

The Coroneos Brothers location at S. 6th and Bainbridge Streets was not far from “Greektown,” an area spread across roughly six blocks centered on S. 10th and Locust Streets, which included Evangelismos Church (745 S. 12th Street), St. George’s Church (256 S. 8th Street), Greek-owned businesses, diners, a Greek senior citizen housing development, and a travel agency that specialized in travel to Greece and Cyprus. Emigration from Greece effectively halted in the mid-1920s, when the United States limited entry to quotas based on numbers of immigrants from each country in 1890, which was just before Greek transatlantic migration began. Nevertheless, by the mid-twentieth century, more than fifteen thousand first- and second-generation Greek Americans lived in the Greater Philadelphia area.

---


According to a promotional pamphlet (Figure 13), the Coroneos Brothers were importers of “oriental products” which included “olive oil, edible cotton & peanut oils, green ripe olives, Sicily green olives, and canned goods.” The Coroneos Brothers export of olive oil, specifically, lead to punishment in 1910, when it was determined that a shipment of 48 packages of olive oil was adulterated and misbranded. The labels stated that the product was pure olive oil, when in fact it was about 60-70% cottonseed oil. The Coroneos Brothers pleaded guilty and were fined.9

![Coroneos Bros. promotional material. Source: “Coroneos Brothers Letterhead” associated with George Nicholas Coroneos on Ancestry.com.](image)

On February 17, 1921, a tragic accident befell the Coroneos family and the community. A brick wall collapsed in the building during construction on the fourth floor. As George Coroneos called “watch out!” his brother James saw the walls fall, burying his brothers George and Harry and the workmen. According to the lengthy *Philadelphia Inquirer* article (Figure 14), the accident injured five workmen and killed two others: George Coroneos and an unidentified worker. George died intestate.10 According to a 1927 *Philadelphia Inquirer* mention, “an estate of $132,081 in personal property, exclusive of realty, was left by George Coroneos, according to an inventory and appraisal filed with the Register of Wills. The estate included George’s interest in the firm of Coroneos Brothers, valued at $122,364.”11

---

10 *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 18, 1921, p. 16.
2 KILLED, 5 HURT
AS WALL COLLAPSES

Removal of Bricks Weakened Sixth Street Structure, Says Building Inspector

At the upper left is shown Saratino Lobelia, and below him is Giuseppe Martino, workmen injured in the collapse of a wall in the rear of a wholesale grocery store at 704 South Sixth street. On the right firemen are shown clearing away the debris in a search for bodies. Two men were killed.

SHOTS WOMAN'S SHRINE MINIMIZE DEATH PERIL
Two men were killed and five hurt when a wall in the rear of a wholesale grocery at 704 S. South Sixth street, collapsed and buried them in the debris yesterday afternoon.

According to Edmund Clark, Chief Building Inspector, the collapse was due to the fact that too many bricks had been removed from the old wall, which was being razed and the new wall, which was being built, was not strong enough to stand by itself. The wall was thirteen inches thick and fifty feet wide.

Work was being done on the fourth floor of the building, and when the wall collapsed, the debris crashed down to the first floor, tearing its way through the boards that were placed on the third and second floors.

The dead are:

GEORGE CORONEOS, one of the proprietors of the establishment, and an unidentified workman.

The injured are:

HARRY CORONEOS, 25 years old, 704 S. South Sixth street, cut and bruises of the scalp and body.

LEX BARNEY, 67 years old, of 2028 West Clementine street, cut on face and body.

SERAFINO LOBELIA, 40 years old, 718 Kimball street, cut and bruises of face and scalp.

TONY SALINO, 41 years old, 4415 North Third street, cut on face and contusions of body.

GIUSEPPE MARGARO, 75 years old, 620 Federal street, Camden, lacerations of face and arms.

The building was occupied by an importing wholesale and retail grocery company, owned by James Coroneos and his two brothers. It was in use while being rebuilt.

At one o'clock James Coroneos stepped into the store to call his brothers to dinner. At that moment George cried, "Watch out!" James, looking towards the back of the store, saw the walls fall and bury his two brothers and the five workmen.

A side wall of the building at 708 S. South Sixth street, facing Marshall street, which plunged inward.

Some of the workmen say that the large iron pulley on top of the elevator shaft on the fourth floor, was carelessly thrown down the shaft, tearing the flooring away from it.

Police and Firemen on Job

District Building Inspector Hill declared that the razing of the thirteen-inch wall unloosed a large lump, which fell with such force that the floors could not withstand the stress.

As soon as the crash was heard a large crowd ran to the scene and immediately started rescue work. Police and firemen also helped to dig the men out of the ruins. Battalion Chief George F. McConaghy directed the firemen.

The injured were rushed to the Pennsylvania Hospital.

Director of Public Safety James T. Cortelyou was on the scene, while Captain Noon, with cords of police, kept the street clear.

Rev. Dionysios Papadato, of the Greek Orthodox Catholic Church, at Twelfth and Catharine streets, arrived early to administer the last sacrament to the injured men.

The first man found was Salino, whose head was protruding above the wreckage. The body of the unidentified man and the other injured men were recovered a few minutes later.

The workman's body was taken to the Morgue.

After three hours' digging the body of George Coroneos was found.

The Coroneos brothers are well known in the Greek circles of this city. They have a branch office of the grocery store in Athens, Greece, and import groceries from Italy also.

Tony Salino, who gave the alarm and guided the rescuers to the places where the men were buried, left the hospital after his injuries were dressed.

James Coroneos was struck by a timber.

"Save George," he cried to the first of the rescuers. "He is under there."

He was taken to his home across the street, but returned to the ruined building and helped in the rescue work.

The crash of the walls could be heard for a radius of three blocks. People were rushed to the scene thinking that an explosion had occurred.

Harry Coroneos told about the accident a few minutes after he had been treated in the Pennsylvania Hospital.

"My brother, George, and I were moving some olive oil from the old building into the new one. We had just set down a barrel and he went to the rear of the store. As it was 1 o'clock I told him dinner was ready and walked out front ready to leave. I heard him call, 'Watch out!' and then I heard a crash. I saw the wall fall in and bury him and some workmen. I was hit by a timber."
The Coroneos Brothers business appears to have survived until the Great Depression, at which time it ceased operations and the property was sold. For this reason, the period of significance ends in 1930.

(C) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style

The Coroneos Brothers building at 704-08 S. 6th Street, designed in 1920, reflects the environment in an era characterized by the Classical Revival style of architecture with Beaux Arts influence. This style was inspired by the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago held in 1893 which promoted a renewed interest in the classical forms. The Classical Revival style relied on stylistic details of the earlier Greek Revival style, with symmetrical arrangements of windows and doors. The Beaux Arts style, also popular during this period of 1895 – 1930, used classical Greek and Roman decorative elements such as columns, pediments, and balustrades to create imposing architectural statements. The Classical Revival style is considered to be less ornate than the Beaux Arts, although both employed similar classical details found on the subject building. Designed to convey a sense of wealth, the ornamental motifs above the main entrance and flanking the prominent company name, the verticality of the pilasters, the light stone base, the classical detailing of the cornice, the formal symmetry – all of these architectural features reflect this era of renewed popularity of classical forms.12

Figure 15. Façade detail, February 2023.

In conclusion, the Coroneos Brothers building at 704-08 S. 6th Street is historically significant and merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, as satisfying Criteria C and J. The building reflects the environment in an era characterized by the Classical Revival style of architecture with Beaux Arts influence, which was popular from about 1895 until 1930. Additionally, the Coroneos Brothers building exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the community, as a purpose-built store and warehouse for the Coroneos brothers who brought their grocery import/export business to an area of South Philadelphia which welcomed numerous immigrants and their businesses in the early 1900s.
8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

“2 Killed, 5 Hurt as Wall Collapses.” The Philadelphia Inquirer, 02/18/1921.


“Building Permit for Coroneos Brothers.” The Philadelphia Inquirer, p. 9, 10/01/1920.

Christofas Family Tree, created by user abogansky1, Ancestry.com.


The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide, v. 35, p. 765, 09/01/1920; v. 36, p. 213, 04/06/1921; p. 542, 08/24/1921.
Appendix: Architect Max A. Bernhardt

Biography written by Emily T. Cooperman and Sandra L. Tatman
https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23865

Max Arthur Bernhardt
Born: 4/16/1896, Died: c. 1947

Max Bernhardt, son of Samuel Bernhardt, attended Southern High School in Philadelphia before he
studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. He received his B.S. in Architecture in 1917 and
his M.S. in 1918. His design and rendering abilities won several prizes: the Arthur Spayd Brooke Prize;
the Faculty Prize; and awards from the Municipal Art Society of New York. In the 1918 Philadelphia city
directory he lists himself as a draftsman, but follows that with 1920 to 1921 as a clerk. By 1923,
however, he shares an office with Edwin H. Bertolett and will remain with Bertolett through 1930
although their names are never formally associated as a partnership. During the 1930s Bernhardt served
as architect for the Department of Banking of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Bernhardt further
served as an instructor at the Weidener Memorial School and at the Graphic Sketch Club.

Bernhardt’s project list on the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website includes 54 projects, 78
published references not yet linked to a project, and four holdings of rolled drawings.13

The 1920 commission of 704-08 S. 6th Street would have been a very early commission for Bernhardt,
based on a review of his other work from the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website and the
online database of the Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide.

13 Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, Bernhardt, Max Arthur by Emily T. Cooperman, and Sandra L.
Tatman, Philadelphiabuildings.org.