

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current/Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Building

Structure

Site

Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition:     excellent     good     fair     poor     ruins

Occupancy:     occupied     vacant     under construction     unknown

Current use: \_\_\_\_\_

**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 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: \_\_\_\_\_

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Original owner: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

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

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

\*Criterion C added by Committee on Historic Designation/Historcal Commission

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*Please attach a bibliography.*

**9. NOMINATOR**

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name with Title \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, and Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: \_\_\_\_\_

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Notice Issuance: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: 1268 S. 26<sup>TH</sup> STREET

The property boundaries, as described on deeds of sale, are as follows: "Situate at the Northwest corner of Wharton Street and Twenty-sixth Street in the Thirty-sixth Ward of the City of Philadelphia. Containing in front or breadth on the said Wharton Street Forty-eight Feet and extending of that width in length or depth Northward along the Northerly side of Twenty-sixth Street Fifty-five Feet to a certain Two Feet Eight Inches wide alley leading into and from said Twenty-sixth Street."

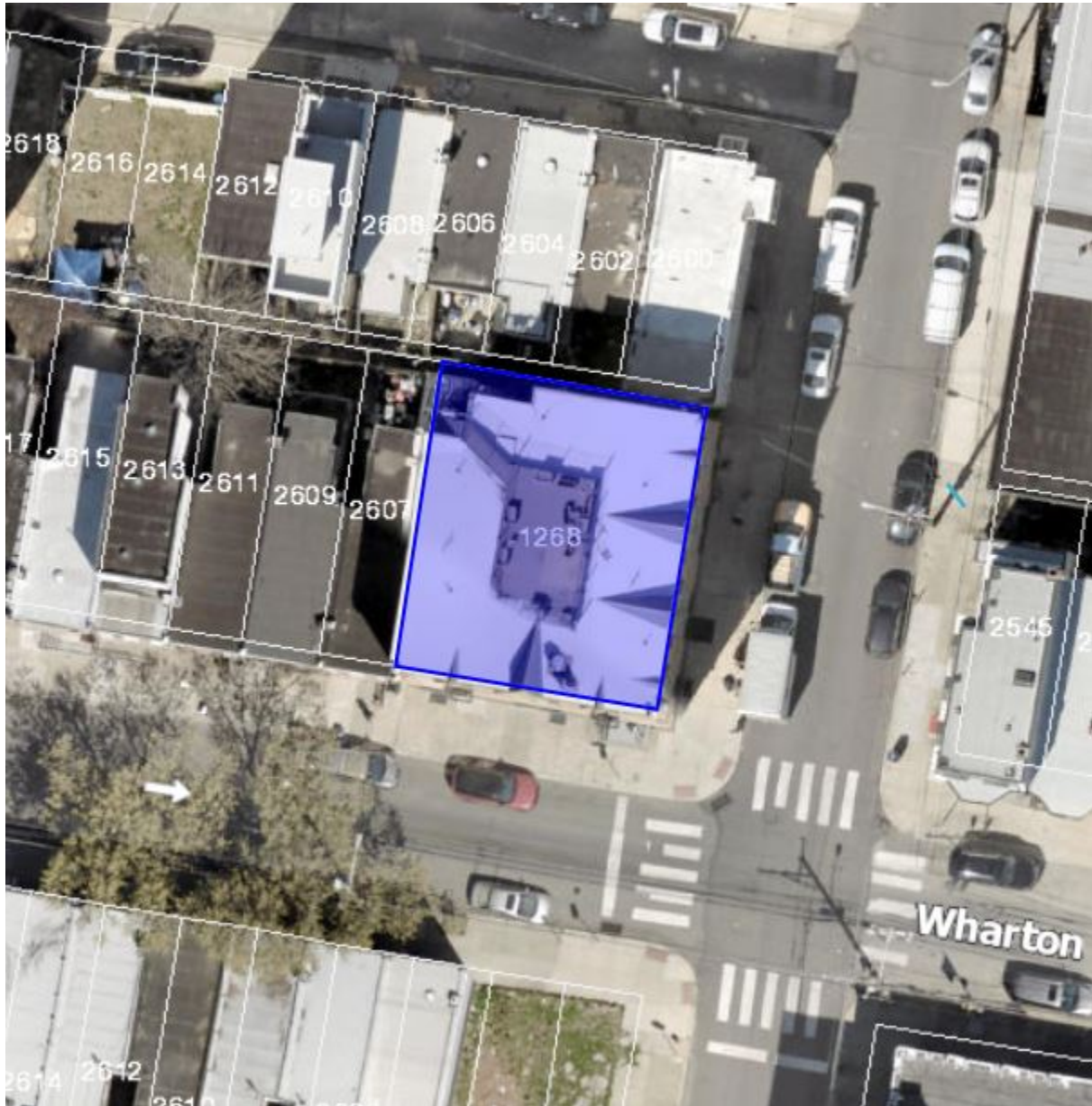


Figure 1: Location of 1268 S. 26<sup>th</sup> St, at the intersection of Wharton St and Twenty-sixth St. North at top of image. Source: Atlas.phila.gov

## 6. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Constructed between 1892-94 under the ownership of Alfred G. Clay<sup>1</sup>, Wharton Hall is a three-story red brick meeting hall/multipurpose commercial building in an eclectic mixture of late Victorian architectural styles including Gothic revival, Romanesque, and Italianate. It sits in a largely residential Gray's Ferry neighborhood of rowhouses along with scattered small stores, churches, and similar buildings. Sitting catty-corner across from it is a Pentecostal Church and there is another church, New Temple Baptist, at the other end of the 2600 block of Wharton St. A large, elevated rail line runs along 25<sup>th</sup> street one block to the east of the address and the neighborhood is ringed with a mixture of industrial and larger commercial sites.

The primary (South) elevation on Wharton Street is approximately three bays wide with a dark stone water table at its base, added in a recent renovation, and a flat roofline with a decorated cornice that is punctured by three pointed-arched window hoods/faux cross gables along its length. There is a band of raised decorative brick corbeling at each of the building's corners extending from the second story to the base of the cornice on the third. The first floor contains a set of double doors with narrow lights on either side set in the east bay, two closely spaced 12/1 sash windows in the central bay, and a single 12/1 sash window in the west bay. There is evidence of a bricked over doorway beside the window in the west bay. The second story is separated from the first by a double wide molded stone stringcourse with a bracket at its west end that extends around to the east facade. Above this the east and west bays each contain a set of narrow French doors with a small iron balcony and a fixed 8-light window above. The west bay also contains a second 12/12 sash window beside the doors and balcony. The central bay has two 12/12 sash windows. The two balconies and doors extend downward into the decorative stone course below. The third story is separated from the second with a single narrow stone stringcourse that extends between the corbeling at the corners. The east and west bays each contain a set of French doors and small iron balcony with 8-light fixed windows set both above and below the doors. There is an additional 12/12 sash window beside the doors in the west bay. The central bay contains two 12/12 sash windows with fixed 8-light windows below each one. There are decorative panels positioned below each of the balconies and sash windows with added scrollwork detailing.

There are three sharply peaked window hoods/faux cross gables positioned over each bay on the third story. The central hood/gable is larger and is positioned above the pair of windows and includes two half circle fanlights above each window and the words

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<sup>1</sup> Building permit for "1 hall, 48 x 55 ft, 3sty, N W cor 26th and Wharton sts" by Alfred G Clay along with 11 dwellings on N side of Titan west of 26th. Phila Builder's Guide v. 7, 1892, p.1409

“WHARTON HALL” set in the center. The hoods/gables over the east and west bays are smaller with single half-circle fanlights in their centers. These hoods/gables are set on pairs of projecting brick corbels that extend down on either side of the openings below them and there are added scrollwork details and edge and trim details in each hood/gable.

The façade is capped with a cornice containing a decorated line of repeating flowers along its length, a dentilated frieze, and a line of fleur-de-lis decoration on the architrave below. Each end is finished with a decorative bracket with a large decorative medallion in the center and capped with a small domed finial. There is a single chimney projecting from the roof between the west and central bays of the façade.

The east façade on 26<sup>th</sup> Street is four bays wide and many decorative details from main façade wrap around from the west or are repeated including the dark stone water table, lighter stone decorative stringcourses, and roofline decoration. The first floor contains a set of double doors with a narrow rectangular light above them in the north bay all framed in dark stone with the words “Wharton Hall Apts. 1268” painted along the top. The two central bays each feature a set of two closely spaced 12/1 sash windows and the south bay contains a single 12/1 sash window. The second story contains single 12/12 sash windows at either end with two pairs of closely spaced 12/12 sash windows in the center. The third story mirrors the window layout of the second with the addition of decorative panels set above fixed 8-light windows below the larger windows. There are four decorative sharply peaked window hoods/faux cross gables on this façade positioned over each bay. The two central peaks are larger and the two on the ends are smaller.

The North façade is mostly obscured by other buildings and is largely flat, undecorated, and finished with stucco. It has three loose bays with the wall offset and stepping inward at the third bay on the west end. There is also a full height fire escape/set of stairs installed on the west corner. There are two sash windows on the second story in the central and west bays. The third story has one sash window in each bay with half circle fanlights above each. The West façade is similarly undecorated, and the first two stories are covered by neighboring attached rowhouses. It has a brick surface with three loose bays. The south bay shows a bricked over opening and the other two bays have simple sash windows in them.



1268 s 26

Figure 2: South façade of 1268 S 26<sup>th</sup> Street facing North. Source: Cyclomedia.phila.gov





Figure 3: East façade of 1268 S 26<sup>th</sup> Street facing West. Source: Cyclomedia.phila.gov

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Wharton Hall is historically significant and should be listed individually on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Located in the Gray’s Ferry neighborhood, the property satisfies Criteria for Designation H and J as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

H: Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; and

J: Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community

Historic Context:

The modern neighborhood of Gray’s Ferry occupies a portion of South Philadelphia nestled in a bend in the Schuylkill River extending approximately from interstate 76 in the west to 25<sup>th</sup> Street in the east and Gray’s Ferry Avenue in the north, extending down loosely to

Passyunk Avenue to the south. This area of Philadelphia has experienced a long and varied history as a mixed residential and industrial zone. The later years of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries saw neighborhoods in the southern part of Philadelphia County develop from open farmlands and marshes to a mixture of industrial sites combined with blocks of rowhomes to house the many workers from the factories, plants, and refineries in the area. Prior to 1848 the peninsula of South Philadelphia was administratively split approximately in half with the eastern portion called Moyamensing and the western Passyunk. This shifted in 1848 with a new boundary line running east-west along McKean Street with Moyamensing occupying portions north of that line and Passyunk occupying the south.<sup>2</sup> What is now called Gray's Ferry was located at the western end of Moyamensing near the Schuylkill River crossing of the same name.

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the western section of Moyamensing was sparsely populated, but that quickly changed by the end of the century. Railroads were introduced to South Philadelphia in the 1830s, a development that spurred the growth of industrial and manufacturing sites in the area. In 1838, the Philadelphia, Wilmington, & Baltimore Railroad completed a bridge across the Schuylkill at Gray's Ferry with tracks running along Gray's Ferry and Washington Avenues to Broad Street, opening this corridor to industrial development by the middle of the century<sup>3</sup>. The Philadelphia Gas Works was constructed in 1853-54 by the city at Passyunk Road near the Schuylkill River at the southern boundary of the modern Gray's Ferry neighborhood<sup>4</sup>. Several large chemical works were built including Harrison Brothers & Company and other industrial and manufacturing facilities filled in space in the area around Gray's Ferry Avenue.<sup>5</sup> The Pennsylvania Railroad began laying track in the area and in 1853 opened a line extending down 25<sup>th</sup> Street from Washington Avenue to modern day Point Breeze Avenue. This line was later extended to Packer Avenue in 1866. By 1876, Wharton Street appears as a solid line on maps of the city, though many of the streets below it in the vicinity of 26<sup>th</sup> Street are still only sketched out.<sup>6</sup> An 1886 *Perspective of Philadelphia* by Burk & McFetridge shows the built portions of the city. It outlines the railroads constructed across the river at Gray's Ferry and running down 25<sup>th</sup> Street and confirms that most of the land south of Washington and Gray's Ferry Avenues sat open at the time with scattered factories and other industrial sites in the area. There was only a small portion of rowhouse development west of 25<sup>th</sup> Street at that time.

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<sup>2</sup> Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia from actual surveys, R.P. Smith publisher, 1853, Historical Society of Frankford

<sup>3</sup> *Perspective of Philadelphia* by Burk & McFetridge, 1886.

<sup>4</sup> Orr, David G., "Philadelphia as Industrial Archaeological Artifact: A Case Study", *Historical Archaeology*, Vol 11 (1977), pp. 3-14.

<sup>5</sup> Hexamer General Survey #162 "Chemical Works, Harrison Bros. & Co."; Baist's Property Atlas of the City and County of Philadelphia, 1895.

<sup>6</sup> Map of Philadelphia, G.M. Hopkins, 1876, Map Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia.



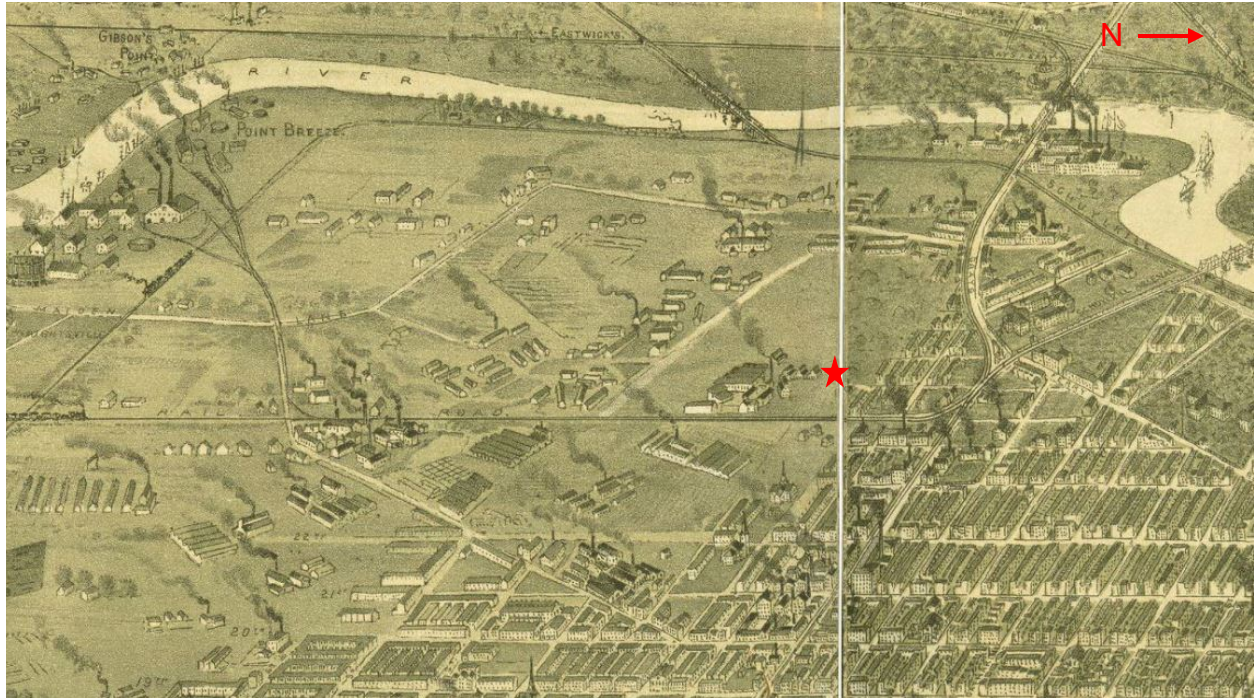


Figure 3: *Perspective of Philadelphia* by Burk & McFetridge, 1886. Showing area of modern Gray's Ferry neighborhood. Note railroad track running across the river along Gray's Ferry Avenue and down 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Mostly open land with scattered industrial sites and likely worker's housing occupies the space below the tracks, but rowhouse blocks are steadily creeping in from north and east. The star indicates the approximate location of Wharton Hall.

By 1895, Wharton Hall appears on *Baist's Property Atlas of the City and county of Philadelphia, Penna.* Along with blocks of rowhouses in the streets to the east, west, and north of 26<sup>th</sup> and Wharton (figure 8). The area to the South was still largely comprised of industry with multiple brick yards, various chemical works, foundries, and similar sites appearing on maps in that area and along the north side of Gray's Ferry Avenue. Over the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the areas north, east, and west of 26<sup>th</sup> and Wharton filled in with blocks of small rowhomes, likely to house the workers for all the plants and factories nearby, but the area south remained largely open with industry concentrated near the river and along the railroad tracks on Gray's Ferry Avenue and 25<sup>th</sup> Street<sup>7</sup>. In the middle part of the century, much of this open space was gradually filled in with residential development with an especially large portion used by the Philadelphia Housing Authority for the Tasker Homes low-income housing project taking up more than 40 acres during the 1940s (figures 4 and 5).<sup>8</sup> By the 1960s, there was little open land left in the area contained by the Schuylkill expressway, itself constructed in the area by 1959. Crossing the Schuylkill east of University Avenue, the highway runs down 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Vare Avenue, along 25<sup>th</sup> Street, and over the former train tracks between Packer Avenue and Pollock Street to the Walt Whitman Bridge, separating the predominantly residential section to the east from an industrial section along the banks of the Schuylkill River (Figure 5).

<sup>7</sup> *Atlas of the 26th, 36th, and 48th Wards of the City of Philadelphia*, 1928, Smith, Elvino V., C.E., Athenaeum of Philadelphia and *[Aerial Survey of the Philadelphia Region]*, 1928 (circa), Regional Planning Federation of the Philadelphia Tri-State District, Map Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia

<sup>8</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 Aug 1979, Mon, Page 2. Since demolished.



Figure 4 [Aerial Survey of the Philadelphia Region], 1928 (circa), Regional Planning Federation of the Philadelphia Tri-State District, North at top of image, Map Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia. The star indicates the location of Wharton Hall.





Figure 5: *Aerial Photographs of the Delaware Valley 1965, Aerial Photo A32 B33*, North at top of image, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. The star indicates the location of Wharton Hall.

#### Criterion H:

Wharton Hall, with its pronounced height compared to the surrounding blocks of rowhouses and its blend of late 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles, stands out as a distinctive visual feature in the Gray's Ferry neighborhood. At three full stories in height with dramatic peaked hoods above the third-floor windows that extend upward through the cornice line, Wharton Hall is a unique building compared to the numerous two story rowhouses on the surrounding blocks. Its larger proportions reflect the important public role it has played in the neighborhood and puts it on the same physical level as other community resources such as the New Temple Baptist Church building at the other end of Wharton St. Additionally, its architectural features set it apart as a noteworthy visual artifact in the neighborhood. Compared to the relatively plain rowhouses around it, many also built at the same time by the same builder, Wharton Hall impresses with its unique blend of high style Victorian architectural features. The most prominent are the aforementioned sharply peaked windows hoods which give it a gothic flair. Italianate influences appear in the detailed moldings on the cornice, frieze, and architrave adding a classical element to its blend of styles. Finally, its overall robust rectangular shape and prominent stringcourses add a Romanesque sturdiness to its overall appearance. Though the designers of the

building are not identified and did not formally follow one specific architectural style in decorating the building, they pulled pieces from different styles popular at the time in a purposeful way in order to set Wharton Hall apart from the private housing stock that comprises most of the rest of the neighborhood. In doing so, the building makes a strong statement of its importance to the community and establishes itself as a distinctive feature of the neighborhood.

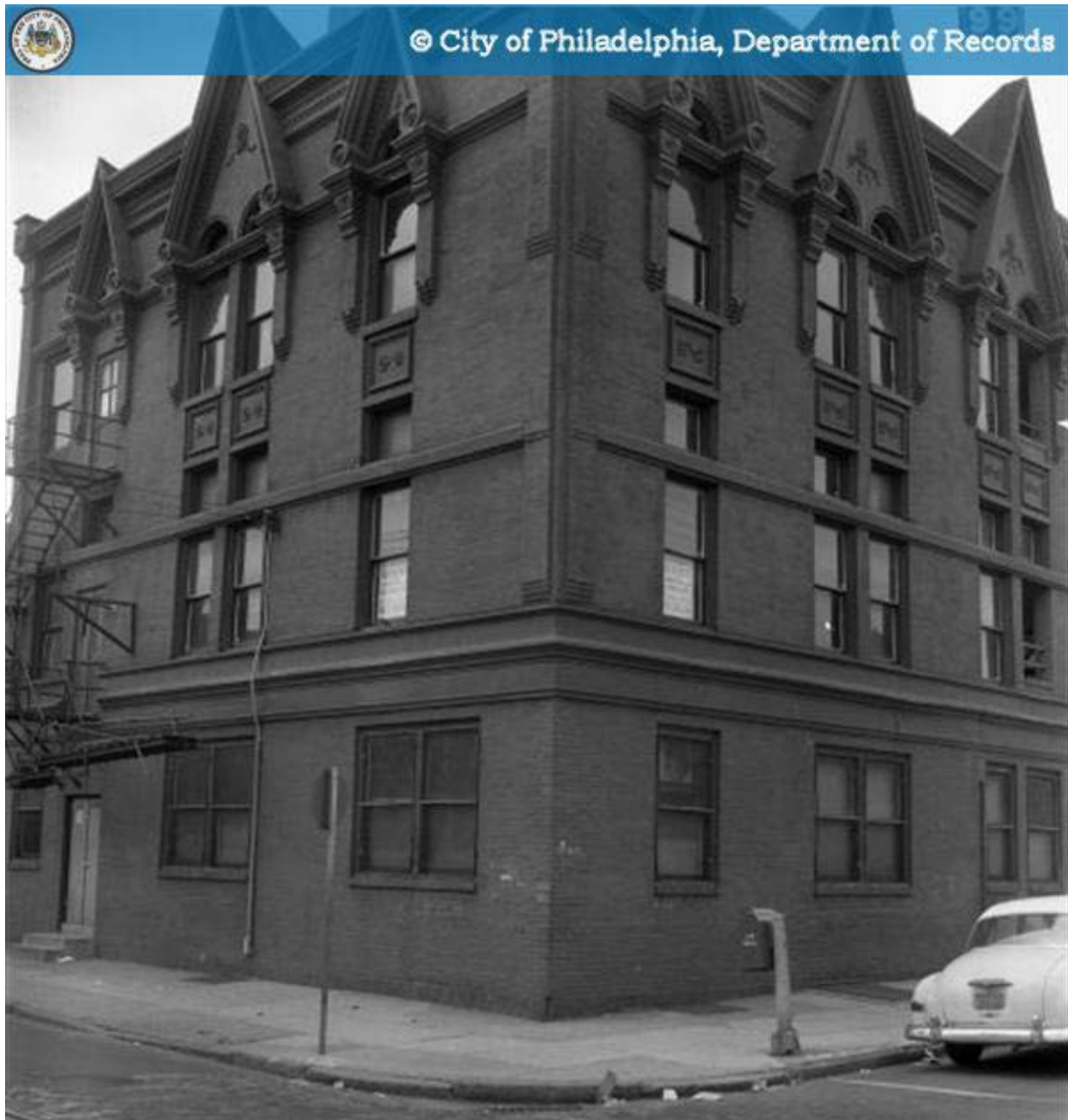


Figure 6: Photograph of Wharton Hall, 1959, Philadelphia Department of Records



Figure 7: Wharton Hall shown in context with the surrounding rowhouses. Source: Cyclomedia.phila.gov

#### Criterion J:

Wharton Hall has led a long and varied life as an integral part of the community of the Gray's Ferry neighborhood. Constructed around 1892 by Alfred G. Clay, a real-estate investor and developer, the hall was built to serve as a multifunctional community and business space for the burgeoning neighborhood. After the first few decades of its existence as the neighborhood developed and filled out, it was converted into a Catholic School in 1932 by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The school lasted until 1956 when the building returned to use as a commercial space and until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it housed a photography supply shop. Currently, the first floors are used as an event space/banquet hall and its uppers floors are apartments, with Wharton Hall serving much the same multifaceted function today as when it was first built.

When Wharton Hall was built at the northwest corner of 26<sup>th</sup> and Wharton Streets between 1892 and 1894, the Gray's Ferry neighborhood around it was still in its early formation. The industry that took hold in the area in the earlier decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century along the river and scattered about the open spaces of the western half of the South Philadelphia peninsula were beginning to be joined by blocks of rowhouses extending southwest from the already established blocks of the city. In this burgeoning neighborhood, Wharton Hall was built as a multipurpose commercial and community space to serve a variety of needs of the growing community. The first mention of a building on the northwest corner of 26<sup>th</sup> and Wharton Streets appears in the *Philadelphia Builder's Guide* in 1892 when Alfred G. Clay applied for a permit for "1 hall, 48 x 55 ft, 3sty, N W cor 26th and Wharton sts" along with another for 11 dwellings along the north side of adjacent Titan



Street.<sup>9</sup> By 1895, the building appears on *Baist's Property Atlas of the City and County of Philadelphia*, along with the Church of the Holy Apostles and a public school on the other end of the block on Wharton St.

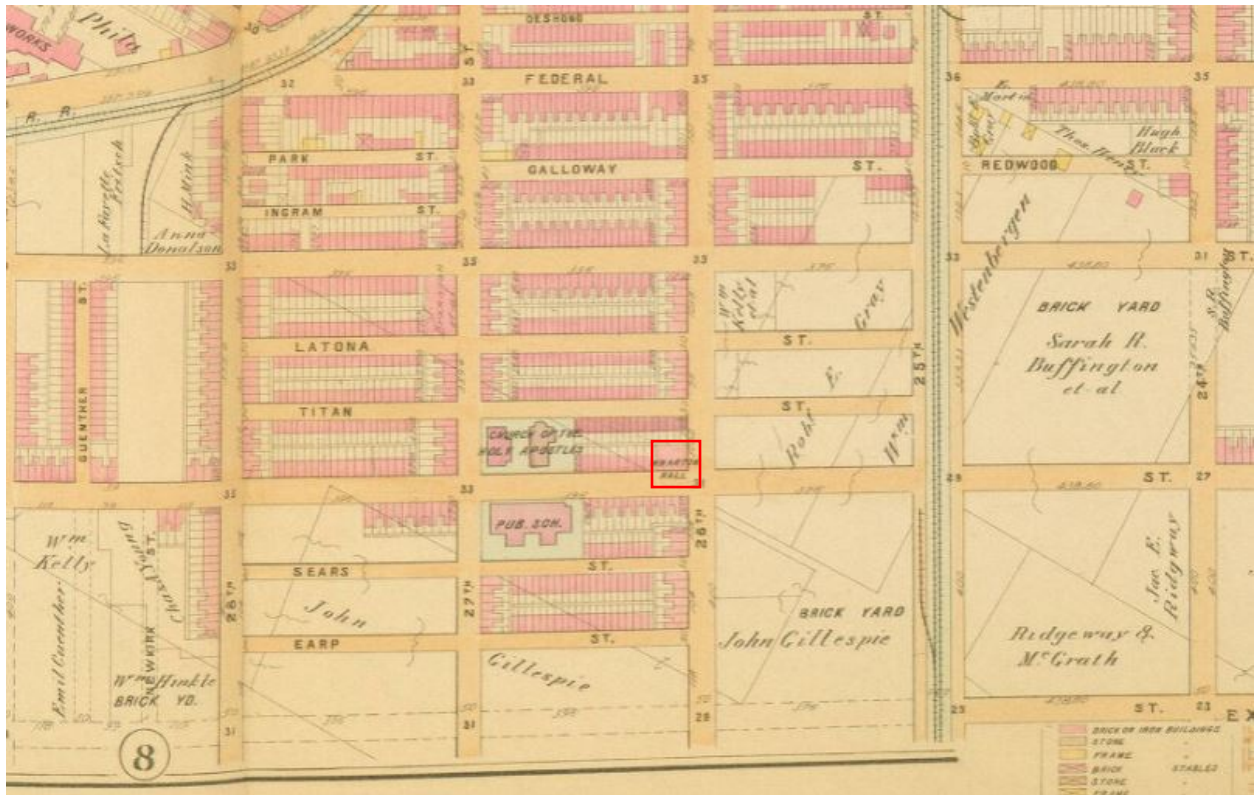


Figure 8: *Baist's Property Atlas of the City and County of Philadelphia*, 1895. First map showing Wharton Hall outlined in red. Note the open spaces immediately to the south of it and the newly developing housing blocks to the north and west. North at top of image.

For the first four decades of the building's life, it served a variety of purposes for the residents of the growing area and featured prominently in the public life of the neighborhood. It is frequently referenced as the host venue for a variety of meetings both public and private and contributed to the early political and social life of neighborhood residents. In June 1894, Federal Council no. 58 of the Legion of the Red Cross was established and planned to hold their weekly meetings at Wharton Hall from that date forward and the Order Shepherds of Bethlehem used the space in 1911 to celebrate their sixth anniversary.<sup>10</sup> In July 1894, the American Railway Union organized its first branch in Philadelphia at Wharton Hall, signing up about 275 men and the Southwark Cloth Workers Association used the space in 1900 to meet and decide on demands to end a strike.<sup>11</sup> There was also a meeting held in 1894 among residents to discuss securing a new bridge over the Schuylkill at Gray's Ferry.<sup>12</sup> The hall also served as a venue for local political events

<sup>9</sup> Phila Builder's Guide v. 7, 1892, p.1409

<sup>10</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 10 Jun 1894, Sun, Page 14; The Philadelphia Inquirer, 19 Mar 1911, Sun, Page 33

<sup>11</sup> The New York Times, 2 Jul 1894, Mon, Page 2; The Philadelphia Inquirer, 15 Jan 1900, Mon, Page 3

<sup>12</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 7 Mar 1894, Wed, Page 2

including a meeting of the Thirty-sixth ward Quay Republicans in 1895 and an event where it seems the superintendent of the nearby Point Breeze Gas Works urged his workers to attend wherein the local Selectman, Hugh Black, campaigned for them all to vote a straight Republican ticket in an upcoming election.<sup>13</sup> Just a few years after Wharton Hall was constructed, it was already being used as a place for its community members, made up of a largely working class population, to meet for a variety of reasons, and it served as a local landmark for city politicians to reach the community in the rapidly growing neighborhood.

Beyond being used as a meeting space, Wharton Hall also served its community as a location for entertainment and celebration. It is listed under the “Theaters, Halls, and places of Amusement” section of the 1904 *Boyd's Co-partnership and Residence Business Directory of Philadelphia City*. It appears in numerous newspapers articles for upcoming boxing matches from at least 1900 on and in the 1920s, was being used to host pool tournaments.<sup>14</sup> For George Washington's Birthday in 1898, Wharton Hall was the location of a flag raising ceremony and is listed among other public and municipal buildings including schools, colleges, and churches.<sup>15</sup> Armistice Day was marked at the Hall in 1919 by the local chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.<sup>16</sup> A ball was held by the Southwark Star Lodge of the Shepherds of Bethlehem in 1911 and another was advertised in the Italian language paper, *La Libera Parola* in 1920.<sup>17</sup> It was even used as a wedding reception venue by at least one couple in 1920.<sup>18</sup> Wharton Hall clearly served as an integral part of the community in Gray's Ferry and was frequently used by the locals for celebrations of various kinds and served as a venue for various types of entertainment.

The Hall also served as a space for local businesses to rent for offices and host local businesses. The first floor of the building was divided into three separate office/commercial spaces at least before 1918 when the floor plan is drawn this way on a Sanborn Insurance map (Figure 9). John McDuffee, partner of Alfred G. Clay had a real estate office at the 1262 S 26<sup>th</sup> Street address from 1898 to at least 1900<sup>19</sup>. William T Crothers also maintained a plumbing business at the address in 1898 and 1899.<sup>20</sup> Douglas Ottinger lists a furniture business at 2601 Wharton St in the 1904 Boyd's directory. Michael M. Fox has another real estate office there in 1912.<sup>21</sup> A job advertisement for a Plumber's laborer to apply at an address associated with Wharton Hall was placed in a newspaper in 1911.<sup>22</sup> Wharton Hall hosted a variety of offices and other businesses on its first floor during the first few decades of its life, growing alongside and contributing to the economic life of the community surrounding it.

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<sup>13</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer 14 Aug 1895, Fri, Page 1; The Philadelphia Inquirer, 17 Oct 1896, Sat, Page 1

<sup>14</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 31 Oct 1900, Wed, Page 6, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 19 Jan 1926, Page 21

<sup>15</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 22 Feb 1898, Tue, Page 14

<sup>16</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 26 Oct 1919, Page 27

<sup>17</sup> *La Libera Parola*, 23 May 1920, Sun, Page 3.

<sup>18</sup> Evening Public Ledger, 30 Sep 1920, Thu, Page 9

<sup>19</sup> Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide. V. 6 1891; Boyd's co-partnership and residence business directory 1898, pg 1407.

<sup>20</sup> Boyd's co-partnership and residence business directory 1898, pg 197.

<sup>21</sup> Boyd's Philadelphia City Directory 1912, pg. 680.

<sup>22</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 14 Oct 1911, Sat, Page 12

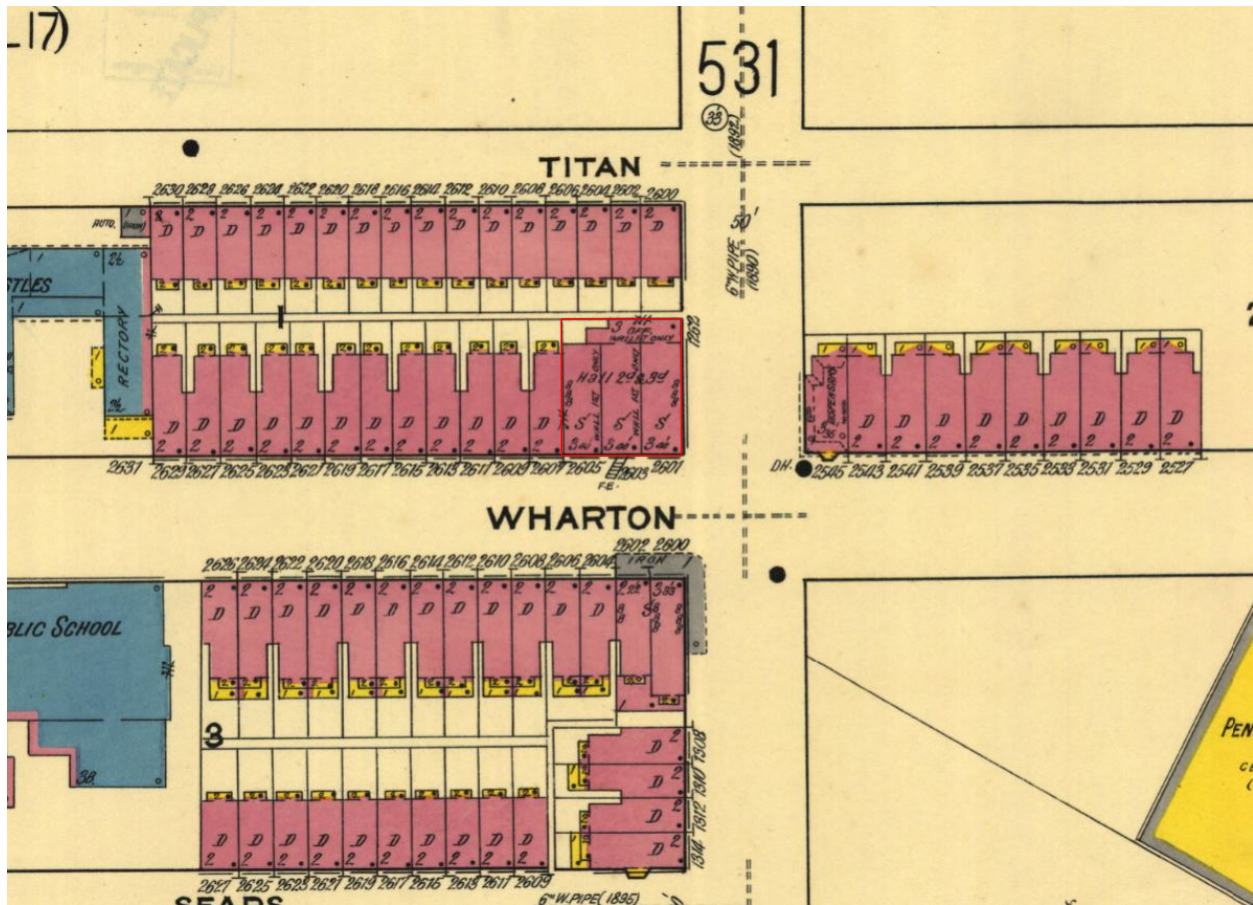


Figure 9: Sanborn Insurance Map, 1918. Fire insurance map showing Wharton Hall outlined in red. The first floor is divided into three separate spaces with addresses 2601, 2603, and 2605 Wharton St. It notes that the "hall" occupies the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. North at top of image.

Wharton Hall eventually changed hands and was purchased by the Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 1927 as established by a deed listing Cardinal Dennis J. Dougherty as the grantee dated April 21, 1927.<sup>23</sup> The first few decades of the 20th century saw an increase in the population of Italian immigrants in the city, many of whom settled in South Philadelphia. The King of Peace Italian Roman Catholic Chapel was established at the opposite end of the block from Wharton Hall in 1926.<sup>24</sup> Soon after, the congregation realized it needed space for an associated school and by 1931, had renovated Wharton Hall to serve this purpose.<sup>25</sup> The school served the Catholic community in the neighborhood for the next twenty years. As early as 1930, the area around the school was being used for church celebrations.<sup>26</sup> The pupils at the school lived active social lives, as reflected in a newspaper article from 1940 about a marbles champion who attended the school.<sup>27</sup> A new school building for King of Peace was eventually constructed at 26<sup>th</sup> and Reed in 1956, leaving Wharton Hall open to a change in use once again.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Deed Book 2589, page 477.

<sup>24</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 26 Apr 1926, pg. 4

<sup>25</sup> Philadelphia Builders Guide, v. 46, 1931.

<sup>26</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 20 Jul 1930, Sun, pg. 26

<sup>27</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 27 May 1940, Mon, pg. 17

<sup>28</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer, 16 Apr 1956, Mon, pg. 15

Eventually, the space was taken over by a local photography services business which occupied the space into the later 1990s. In 1998, the building was sold and made its way to its current owner in 2005. It is currently used for apartments in its upper floors, and as rental hall on its first floor, echoing one of the primary uses it was originally constructed for, and continues to serve as a flexible space for the Gray's Ferry community today.

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