

ADDRESS: 1200-08 S BROAD ST

Name of Resource: Order Sons of Italy in America, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania

Proposed Action: Designate

Property Owner: Programs for Exceptional People; Programs Employing People Inc.

Nominator: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, author Kevin McMahon

Staff Contact: Alex Till, alexander.till@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1200-08 S. Broad Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. A Modernist, two-story, steel-frame, institutional building known as the Order Sons of Italy in America, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, designed by the architecture firm of Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, and built in 1954, stands on the property.

The nomination contends that the Order Sons of Italy in America, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J. It argues that the building, owing to its use as the state headquarters for the Order Sons of Italy in America, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, and that organization's importance to the Italian American community in Philadelphia, has significant character, interest, and value as part of the heritage and cultural characteristics of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the Northeastern United States, satisfying Criterion A. In addition, it also exemplifies the cultural, political, social, and historical heritage of the South Philadelphia community, satisfying Criterion J.

The nomination also argues that the building reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style and embodies many of the distinguishing characteristics of the Modern architectural style, satisfying Criteria C & D.

The nomination further argues that the Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen architecture firm, designers of the building, had a significant influence on the development of Modern styles of architecture in the city of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion E.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 1200-08 S. Broad Street satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, D, E, and J and should be designated as historic and listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.



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: 1200-08 S. Broad Street

Postal code: 19146

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Order Sons of Italy in America, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania

Current/Common Name: Programs Employing People (PEP)

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 1954 to 1976

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1954

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: _____

Original owner: Order Sons of Italy in America

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.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia Date July 24, 2023

Name with Title Kevin McMahon, consultant Email advocacy@preservationalliance.com

Street Address 1608 Walnut Street, Suite 1702 Telephone 215-546-1146

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19103

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 7/27/2023

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 8/15/2023

Date of Notice Issuance: 9/15/2023

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Programs for Exceptional People; Programs Employing People Inc.

Address: 1200-08 S Broad St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19146

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

5. Boundary Description

All that certain lot and building known as 1200-08 South Broad Street, southwest corner of Federal Street through to Carlisle Street with dimensions of 125 feet on Broad Street by 178 feet 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches on Federal Street by 133 feet 8 inches on Carlisle Street located in the City of Philadelphia.



Property Boundary Map (Imagery from Pictometry, 2022)

OPA Account# 773682500

6. Physical Description

The Order Sons of Italy, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania is a two-story, C-shaped building in the Modern style. Located at the southwest corner of South Broad Street and Federal Street in Philadelphia, the primary and east elevation faces Broad Street, and the open part of the C, which contains a large courtyard, faces Federal Street to the north. On the south elevation, there is a driveway, which is entered from Broad Street, as well as a narrow pedestrian alley, which is entered from Carlisle Street to the west. Along the west elevation, which faces Carlisle Street, there is a parking area. The building is constructed of reinforced concrete with a facade of Kasota limestone and curtain wall-like aluminum windows. A defining feature of the building is its limestone-clad piers, which project out from the curtain wall on the east and west elevations, including within the courtyard.

The east or Broad Street elevation is seven bays wide ([Photos 1 and 2](#)). On the first story, each bay has storefront-like aluminum windows, which rest on a polished granite base. The first-story windows are currently covered by a reflective film. Two of the bays have replacement aluminum double doors. Above the first-story windows and doors, each bay contains two to four panels of opaque black spandrel glass, which is trimmed in aluminum. At the second story, each bay has a row of single-light aluminum windows matching the width of the spandrel panels below. Above the second-story windows, the spandrel glass is repeated, but the panels are much shorter. Between the bays are square, limestone-clad piers, which rise the full height of the facade from the sidewalk to the underside of the overhanging roof, which is concrete and has a painted aluminum fascia. The lower portion of each pier has been painted.



Photo 1: East elevation, facing Broad Street (July 2023).

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
1200-08 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA



Photo 2: East and north elevations, looking southwest (July 2023).

The north elevation, which faces Federal Street, consists of three parts. The first and third parts – the north elevations of the east and west wings – consist of blank limestone walls, the lower portions of which are currently painted ([Photos 2 and 5](#)). The middle part consists of the central courtyard, which is paved in concrete and has several planted areas with medium-sized trees ([Photos 3 and 4](#)). The courtyard is separated from the sidewalk by a low limestone wall topped by a metal fence. The courtyard-facing east and west elevations are similar in treatment to the primary Broad Street elevation, but have smaller windows at the first story. The facade on the south side of the courtyard continues the curtain wall treatment, but does not have limestone piers between the bays ([Photo 4](#)).



Photo 3: Courtyard, looking south from Federal Street (July 2023).

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
1200-08 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA



Photo 4: Courtyard, looking south from Federal Street (July 2023).

The west elevation, which faces Carlisle Street, is seven bays wide (Photos 5 and 6). Like the east elevation, the bays are divided by limestone piers, but the first-story windows are covered by painted metal panels, the second-story windows have translucent fiberglass rather than clear glass, and the spandrels between the first- and second-story windows consist of white porcelain enamel panels rather than opaque black spandrel glass.



Photo 5: North and west elevations, looking southeast from Federal Street (July 2023).

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
1200-08 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA



Photo 6: West elevation, looking northeast from Carlisle Street (July 2023).

On the south elevation, there is a two-story wing, which is clad in stucco. This part of the building, which is significantly recessed from Broad Street (there is a driveway that extends in from Broad Street, meeting the east elevation of the structure, where there is a loading dock), is strictly utilitarian in design, containing none of the distinctive architectural features of the main building.

The roof of the building is flat, but contains a rectangular glazed monitor above the west wing. A portion of the south wing also rises an additional story, where mechanical spaces are located.

7. Statement of Significance

The Order Sons of Italy in America, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania at 1200-1208 South Broad Street in Philadelphia was built in 1954 as the state headquarters of the country's largest fraternal and social welfare organization for Italian Americans. Founded in 1905 in New York City, the OSIA founded the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in 1913, then located at 7th and Christian Streets. Over the following decades, the organization attracted tens of thousands of members in Philadelphia and across the state, helping Italian immigrants adjust to life in America and later becoming a major force in local politics. In 1954, after decades of growth, the organization built the present Grand Lodge at the southwest corner of South Broad and Federal Streets. The building is an important work in the Modern style by the firm of Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, who were among Philadelphia's best-known and most prolific architects of the mid-century period. For these reasons, the Grand Lodge of the Order Sons of Italy in America merits listing in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places by satisfying the following criteria as established in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance §14-1004 (1):

Criterion 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;

Criterion C

Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;

Criterion D

Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;

Criterion E

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

Criterion J

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

The Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA), also known as *Ordine Figli d'Italia*, was founded in New York City in 1905. Established by the physician and community leader Dr. Vincenzo Sellaro, the mission of this fraternal and mutual aid organization was "to increase the prestige of the Italian people by spreading Italian culture and making known the many contributions of Italians to the progress of America, to promote the advancement of its members and to help charitable associations, and to promote Americanism based upon absolute loyalty to the Constitution."¹ At a time when Italian immigration was at its peak – between 1880 and 1924, more than 4.5 million Italian immigrants settled in the United States, with about half arriving

¹ Ernest L. Biagi, *The Purple Aster: A History of the Order Sons of Italy in America* (New York: Veritas Press, 1961), 26.

between 1900 and 1910 alone – the Sons of Italy was well positioned to play a major role in the lives of newly arrived Italians and their descendants. In 1909, the OSIA became a national organization, and, within just a few years, numerous junior or filial lodges were founded in Italian enclaves across the northeastern United States, including in Philadelphia.

Due to the large concentration of Italian immigrants in Pennsylvania, especially in Philadelphia where they numbered over 76,000 by 1910, it soon became clear that a Grand Lodge was needed to organize and lead the growing ranks of junior or filial lodges in the state. In an effort headed by Italian immigrant Arpino Giuseppe Di Silvestro (1874-1927), a leading figure in Philadelphia's Italian community and, beginning in 1899, publisher of the Italian language weekly newspaper, *Il Popolo*, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was founded on April 27, 1913.² Di Silvestro was elected "Grand Venerable" of the new organization, a post he held for the next ten years, leading all aspects of the lodge's operations. The Grand Lodge was initially located in a building at the northeast corner of 7th and Christian Streets, in the heart of Philadelphia's Italian community.

During his tenure as Grand Venerable, Di Silvestro "gave a vigorous, dynamic and grandiose direction to the Order. In a short time it had its Lodges spread everywhere, rich in membership, full of enthusiasm and always in the forefront of patriotic and social welfare activities."³ Among Di Silvestro's many accomplishments were creating of a death benefit fund (1916); founding of the Sons of Italy State Bank (1916); organizing the Sons of Italy Building and Loan Association (1917); and opening of an orphanage, the Dante School for Children in suburban Concordville, Pennsylvania (1919).⁴ These institutions both reinforced the social welfare mission of the OSIA in Philadelphia and helped to achieve the organization's goal of integrating Italian newcomers into American life. Assimilation and naturalization, Di Silvestro and community leader Charles C.A. Baldi, Jr. believed, would be the community's path toward overcoming the anti-Italian prejudice then so common among Americans of northern European descent, and eventually give the community a voice in how their adopted city would be run. But first-generation Italian Americans remained largely apathetic toward politics in their adopted country, with many harboring sympathy toward Mussolini's fascist regime and hoping one day to return to Italy, making U.S. citizenship unnecessary.⁵ In time, however, this would change, with the OSIA playing a large part in increasing political participation in Philadelphia's Italian community.

Di Silvestro was succeeded as Grand Venerable by Eugene V. Allesandrone (1887-1966) in 1923. Under Allesandrone's leadership, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania became the "strongest, best-organized and richest" OSIA lodge in the United States, with upwards of 40,000

² *Il Popolo* was merged with *La Voce della Colonia*, a periodical published by Di Silvestro's brother Giovanni Di Silvestro in 1906, becoming *La Voce del Popolo*. In 1916, *La Voce del Popolo* was discontinued, but the Di Silvestro brothers replaced it less than a year later with *La Libera Parola*, which became one of the city's most widely read Italian newspapers. For more, see Stefano Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 33-35.

³ Biagi, 135.

⁴ Biagi, 138-146.

⁵ Stefano Luconi, "Bringing Out the Italian-American Vote in Philadelphia," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. CXVII, No. 4 (October 1993), 255-257.

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
1200-08 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA

members by 1941. Due to the growth of the organization, larger quarters were necessary by the early 1920s, when the Grand Lodge acquired and moved into a large, three-story house at 1726 South Broad Street. The OSIA would remain in this building for over 30 years, although by the 1930s it appears to have been used primarily as a clubhouse after the organization's administrative offices relocated to the Sons of Italy bank at the northwest corner of Broad and Tasker streets.

During Allesandroni's time as Grand Venerable, the OSIA continued to encourage its members and Italians more broadly to become U.S. citizens, an effort which, by the late 1920s, finally started to gain traction. The newfound success of the naturalization drive was a result of a number of factors, especially the Immigration Act of 1924. The national origins quotas introduced by the legislation disrupted the flow of Italian immigrants to the United States and, in the words of historian Stefano Luconi "caused Italian-American communities to gradually lose their ties with the motherland."⁶ Another factor, as Luconi explains, is that Italy's Fascist regime strongly encouraged Italian Americans, many of whom were still sympathetic to Mussolini, to become U.S. citizens "in the hope of exploiting their votes later to lobby Congress and the White House."⁷ As more Italian Americans became citizens, they became eligible to vote. In Philadelphia, Allesandroni, working closely with political boss William Vare, harnessed the growing power of the Italian American vote to finally make the community a force in local elections. While their participation in electoral politics brought many patronage jobs, it also led Italian Americans to positions of power within government, in both the Republican and Democratic parties. In 1927, Allesandroni himself was elected as the first Italian American judge on the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas.

In addition to fostering greater political involvement in the Italian American community, Allesandroni expanded the activities and institutions of the Grand Lodge between 1923 and his retirement in 1965, "with repercussions that went beyond the confines of the state of Pennsylvania to bring a beneficent influence across the entire United States."⁸ Among his many accomplishments, in 1936 Allesandroni oversaw the publication of the organization's first official newspaper, the *Ordine Nuovo*, which was replaced by the *Sons of Italy Times* in the 1950s. Additionally, Allesandroni continued the work of the Dante School for Children, created a hospitalization fund for members, expanded the death benefit fund to over \$7.5 million, and organized the Grand Lodge's Women's Division, which grew to nearly 13,000 members by the early 1960s. It was through Allesandroni's work that the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania became the "head of all welfare activities" within the OSIA, and a model for other Grand Lodges across the country.⁹

One of Allesandroni's most visible accomplishments today is the Grand Lodge building at 1200-08 South Broad Street, which the organization built in 1954 as its first purpose-built headquarters. The Grand Lodge had earlier acquired the property, then a vacant lot, in 1945,

⁶ Luconi, Italian American Vote, 259.

⁷ Luconi, Italian American Vote, 259.

⁸ Biagi, 142.

⁹ Biagi, 142.

and began to plan for a new home as early as 1948. With the goal of consolidating the OSIA's offices and social functions into one building, the Grand Lodge hired the architectural firm of Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen to design the new facility, which was built in 1954. The building housed spaces for social gatherings and recreation, such as a club room on the first floor, an assembly room or ballroom on the second floor, and a bowling alley in the basement. There were also spaces for Grand Lodge offices and meetings on the second floor. Additionally, there were several retail spaces on the first floor, along the Broad Street side, which would help to generate revenue for the OSIA. Outdoors, a generous central courtyard reinforced the social aspect of the building. The new Grand Lodge was officially dedicated in June 1955, during the OSIA national convention in Philadelphia.¹⁰ Over the next decade, the building aimed to be a community center for the city's Italian American population, hosting political meetings, social events, educational programs, and musical performances.

By 1976, however, it appears that demand for the Grand Lodge's programs had fallen, and the OSIA sold the building that year, moving its state offices, but not its social facilities, to 1520 Locust Street. The Grand Lodge was acquired by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which planned to use the building as a training center for people with intellectual disabilities. By 1980, this mission was taken over by Programs Employing People (PEP), the non-profit organization that continues to occupy the building today. Since 1980, PEP has preserved much of the building's historic appearance, undertaking few major alterations. While it has not been used by the OSIA since 1976, the building remains a prominent symbol of the progress made by Italian Americans in Philadelphia during the twentieth century, and of OSIA's legacy of important social welfare programs that the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania created to help the community succeed as an immigrant group.

Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, Architects

The Order Sons of Italy in America, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was designed by Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, one of the leading architectural firms in mid-twentieth century Philadelphia. The firm was created in 1946 when William L. Van Alen (1907-2003) joined J. Roy Carroll, Jr. (1904-1990) and John T. Grisdale (1904-1985), who had entered into a partnership the previous year. All three men studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, although Grisdale never earned a degree.¹¹ Despite their reputation as modernists, all three men were trained in the Beaux-Arts tradition under the direction of Paul Cret, the widely influential architect who served as a professor in Penn's architecture department between 1903 and 1937. Grisdale himself worked in Cret's office from 1940 to 1943.

Soon after their partnership began, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen established themselves as one of the top architectural firms in Philadelphia, winning commissions for some of the city's largest projects during the late 1940s and beyond. In 1947, the firm designed the new terminal of the Philadelphia International Airport, a project that was ultimately completed in 1953, and the same

¹⁰ "Mass at Cathedral for Sons of Italy Phila. Convention," *The Catholic Standard and Times*, June 24, 1955; "Envoy Speaks As Sons of Italy Dedicate Home," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 27, 1955.

¹¹ Emily T. Cooperman, biographical information on the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website, accessed July 18, 2023, https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21947.

year was awarded the contract to design the Youth Study Center on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway at 20th Street, which opened in 1950 but was demolished in 2008 to make way for the new Barnes Foundation ([Figures 1 and 2](#)). The airport project showcased many of the defining attributes of the predominant International Style, particularly through its asymmetrical but balanced massing and abundant use of modern materials like stainless steel and glass. The Youth Study Center, however, was more typical of the work for which Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen became well known, which, in the words of architectural historian James F. O’Gorman, “merged Beaux-Arts formality and weighty materials with the thin lines, flat planes, weightless cantilevers, and continuous fenestration of the International Style.”¹² This tendency, O’Gorman argues, was characteristic of Philadelphia architects during the mid-century period, particularly those “trained in traditional methods who continued to work after World War II and to adapt their classical or picturesque educations to ‘modern’ forms.”¹³



Figure 1: The new terminal at the Philadelphia International Airport, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1947-1953 (Jacob Stelman Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia).



Figure 2: The Youth Study Center, Benjamin Franklin Parkway at 20th Street, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1950 (Philadelphia Department of Records).

Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen continued to win major commissions throughout the 1950s and 60s, and their work was regularly featured in architectural magazines like *Architectural Forum*

¹² James F. O’Gorman, “The Philadelphia Architectural Drawing in Its Historical Context,” in *Drawing Toward Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics, 1732-1986*, ed. James F. O’Gorman, Jeffrey A. Cohen, George E. Thomas, and G. Holmes Perkins (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 11.

¹³ O’Gorman, 11.

and *Progressive Architecture*, bringing the firm national recognition. Among the firm's best-known Philadelphia projects from this period are the Pennsylvania State Office Building at Broad and Spring Garden Streets (1957-58; extant), a commission shared with the firms of Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson and Nolen & Swinburne; the United States Courthouse at 6th and Market Streets (1963-68; extant), a commission shared with the firms of Stewart, Noble, Class & Partners and Bellante & Clauss; the national headquarters of the American Society for the Testing of Materials at 1916 Race Street (1964; extant); the new Library Company of Philadelphia building at 1314 Locust Street (1964-65; extant); and the University of Pennsylvania's David Rittenhouse Laboratories at 33rd and Walnut Streets (1964-67; extant), pictured in [Figures 3-7](#). These works, among many others that included public schools, recreation centers, housing, hospitals, and office buildings, symbolized the "spirit of renewal and expansion," in the words of architectural historian Emily T. Cooperman, that defined postwar Philadelphia and made quality modern architecture a part of everyday life for many Philadelphians.¹⁴



Figure 3: The Pennsylvania State Office Building, Broad and Spring Garden Streets, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1957-58 (Jacob Stelman Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia).



Figure 4: The United States Courthouse, 6th and Market Streets, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1947-1953 (Jacob Stelman Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia).

¹⁴ Malcolm Clendenin and Emily T. Cooperman, "Thematic Context Statement, Modernism: 1945 to 1980," prepared for the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and published in July 2009.

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
1200-08 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA



Figure 5: The American Society for the Testing of Materials, 1916 Race Street, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1964 (Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania).



Figure 6: The Library Company of Philadelphia, 1314 Locust Street, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1964-65 (Lawrence S. Williams Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia).

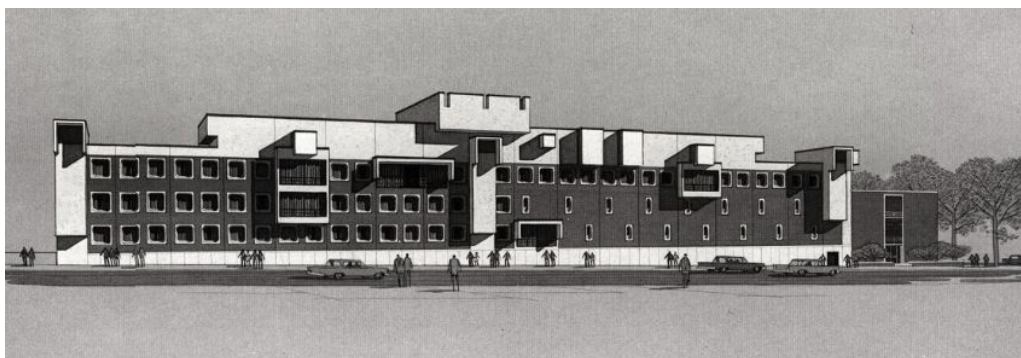


Figure 7: The David Rittenhouse Laboratories, University of Pennsylvania, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1964-67 (Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia).

In 1973, the partnership of Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen dissolved when Carroll left to found his own firm, J. Roy Carroll, Jr. & Partners, which lasted until 1977. After more than a quarter century in practice, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen had left a significant mark on Philadelphia's built environment. Because most of the firm's best-known projects remain standing, their influence is still highly visible today.

The Architecture of the Order Sons of Italy in America, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania

Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen's design for the Order Sons of Italy in America, Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania exemplifies the work of many architects in Philadelphia in the years after World War II, architects who were trained in the Beaux-Arts tradition but were now faced with creating an architecture more relevant to the postwar world. While the building is unmistakably Modern in appearance – through its rectilinear massing and curtain wall-like window bays with stainless steel framing and spandrel glass – certain ideas from Classical architecture shine through. The stone-clad piers that project out from the facade between the window bays, for example, suggest the form of a Classical temple and root the building in the architectural traditions under which Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen were trained. While the firm used this treatment in other projects, such as their Feltonville Recreation Center at 221 East Wyoming Avenue (1951) and the Child Guidance Clinic at Children's Hospital (1952), the reference to the architecture of the Classical world, however modern or abstract its interpretation, was especially relevant to a building devoted to the Italian American community (Figures 8 and 9).



Figure 8: Feltonville Recreation Center, 221 E. Wyoming Avenue, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1951 (*Progressive Architecture*, August 1951).



Figure 9: Child Guidance Clinic at Children's Hospital, Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, 1952 (*Progressive Architecture*, January 1952).

As well as its allusions to principles of Classical architecture, the Grand Lodge's mix of traditional and modern materials were common features of institutional and other building types in Philadelphia during the 1950s and early 1960s. Of a similar scale to the Grand Lodge, the Moore School of Electrical Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania (McKim, Mead & White, 1949-50), the Levine Funeral Home at 7112 North Broad Street (Supowitz & Demchick, 1952), the Morris Leeds Junior High School at 1100 East Mount Pleasant Avenue (Aaron Colish and Frank Hahn, 1953), and the Frederic R. Mann Recreation Center at 5th and Westmoreland (Levy, Supowitz & Demchick, 1955) all display an effort by Philadelphia designers to fuse aspects of the International Style with more context-sensitive materials like brick and stone (Figures 10-13).

Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
1200-08 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA

Like numerous other projects by Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen, the Grand Lodge was prominently featured in a national architecture magazine, in this case, *Progressive Architecture*, in the July 1958 issue (see [Appendix A](#)).



Figure 10: The Moore School of Electrical Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania, McKim, Mead & White, 1949-50 (Lawrence S. Williams Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia).



Figure 11: The Levine Funeral Home, 7112 N. Broad Street, Supowitz & Demchick, 1952 (Jacob Stelman Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia).

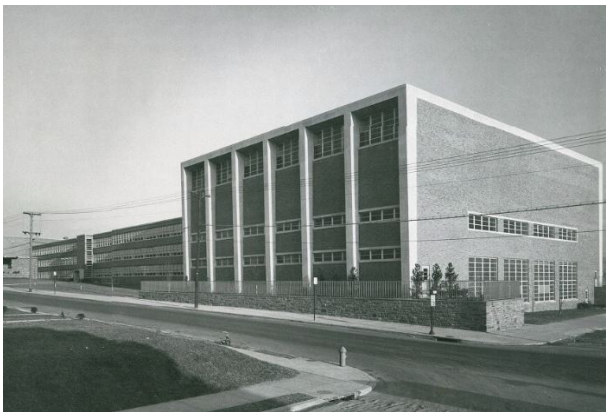
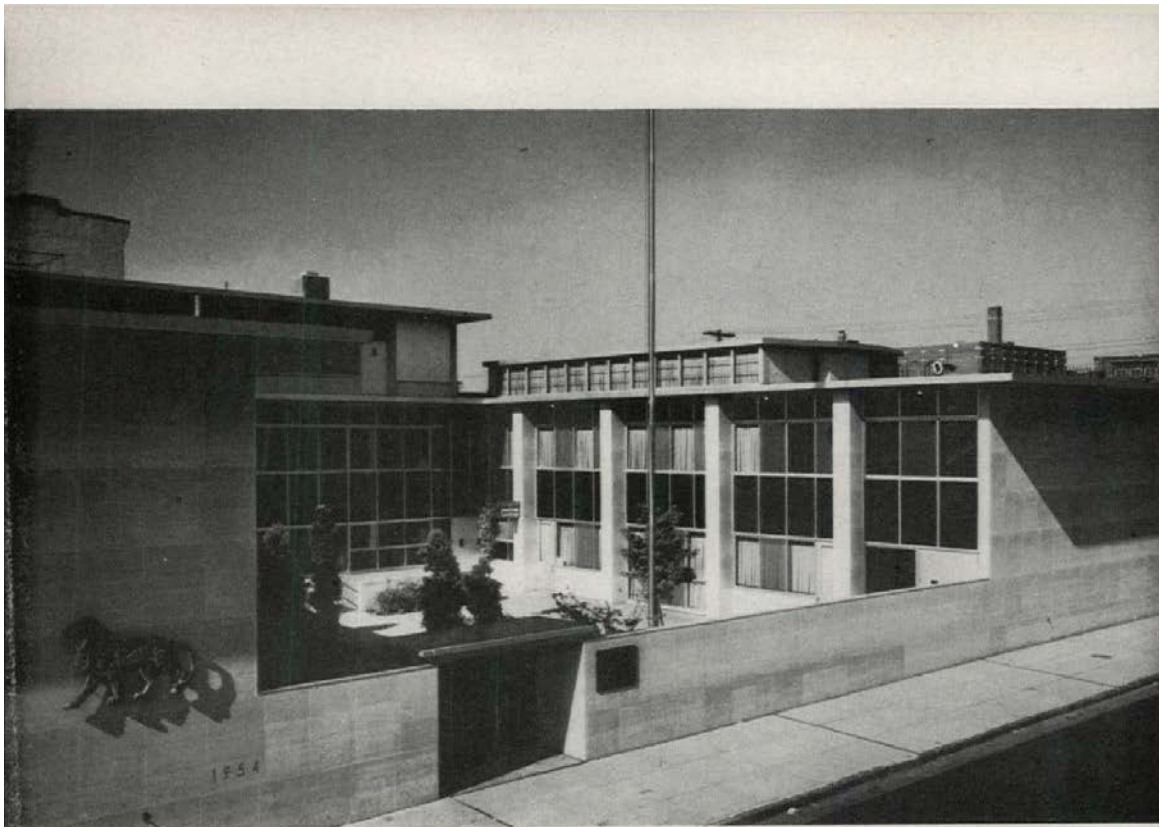


Figure 12: The Morris Leeds Junior High School, 1100 E. Mount Pleasant Avenue, Aaron Colish and Frank Hahn, 1953 (Jacob Stelman Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia).



Figure 13: Frederic R. Mann Recreation Center, 5th and Westmoreland, Levy, Supowitz & Demchick, 1955 (Jacob Stelman Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia).

Appendix A: Progressive Architecture, July 1958



lodge headquarters

location	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
architects	Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen
associate-in-charge	John B. Applegate
associate architect	Frank L. Petrillo

This building for Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania Order of Sons of Italy in America houses the fraternal order's state organization offices, social and recreational facilities, and meeting rooms. Since the corner site faces two heavy-traffic streets, the plan was developed to provide as much privacy as possible for main club spaces. Ground floor on the Broad Street side consists of revenue-producing stores; end walls of wings facing Federal Street are windowless (Sculptor: Tony Greenwood); and an 8-ft-high

wall shields the landscaped entrance court. At basement level, beneath the stores, is a series of meeting rooms; a 6-lane bowling alley occurs beneath the clubroom/bar (*acrosspage*); and mechanical equipment for the air-conditioned building is under the link joining the wings. To give added height to the big assembly room on the second floor (*below*), a clerestory is introduced.

The fireproof structure is of reinforced concrete, with masonry filler walls; exterior surfaces are stone, with structural

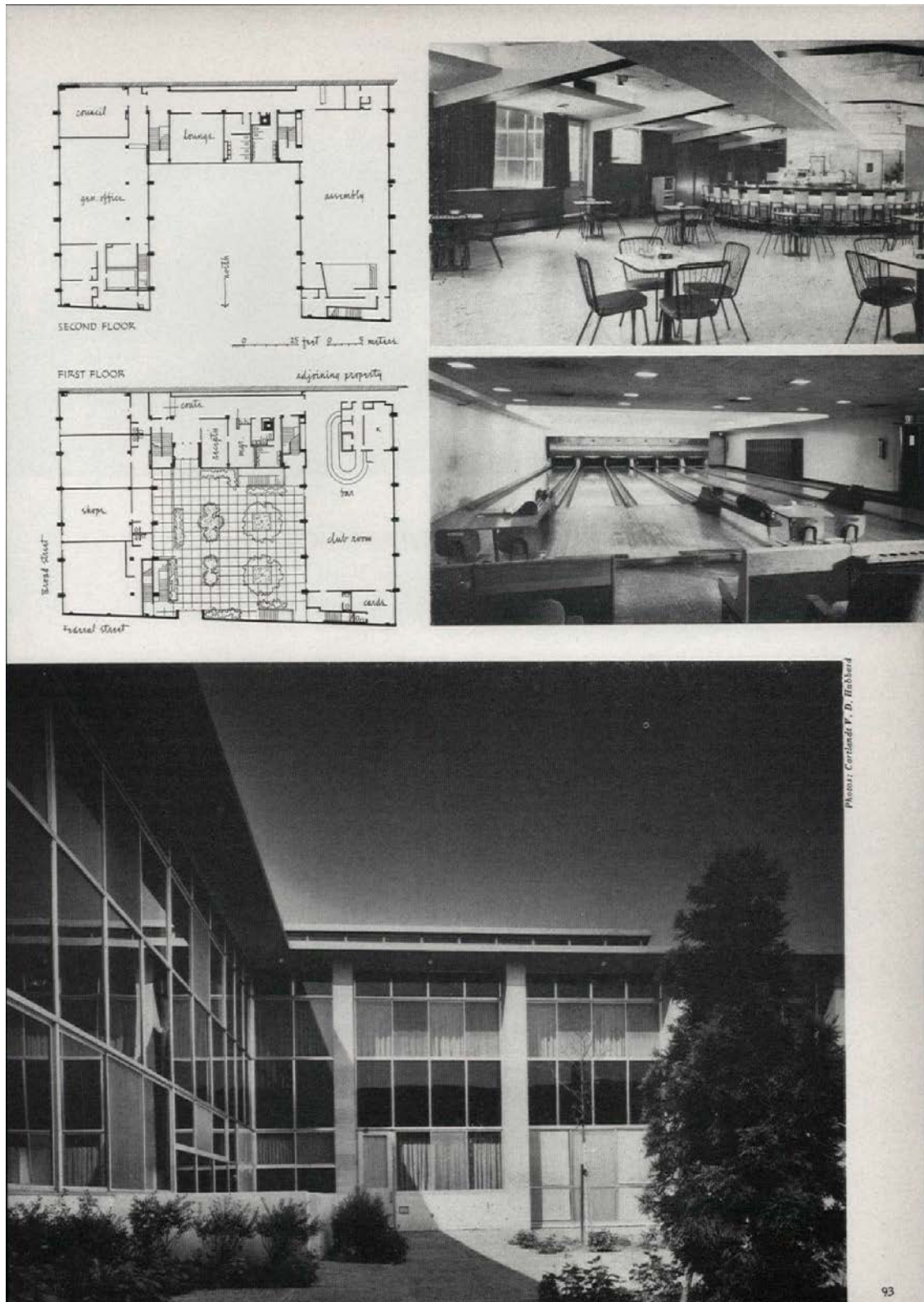
glass used in spandrel areas. Sash are aluminum, glazed with heat-absorbing glass. The building is heated by an oil-fired, low-pressure steam system, with finned tube radiation and air units for ventilation. The cooling tower, air-conditioning equipment, and ventilating fans are enclosed in a rooftop penthouse.

Severud-Elstad-Krueger were Structural Engineers; A. Ernest D'Ambly, Mechanical-Electrical Engineer; Howard L. Post, Food Service Consultant; Fleming Company, General Contractor.



Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
1200-08 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA

Appendix A: Progressive Architecture, July 1958



8. Major Bibliographical References

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